



SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SP #441 2000 Clarendon Boulevard (Bush at Courthouse)

SPRC Meeting #1, December 7, 2015

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Rosemary Ciotti (Chair), Ginger Brown, Steve Cole, Erik Gutshall, Steve Hughes, Nancy Iacomini, James Schroll, Jane Siegel

MEETING AGENDA

This was the first Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting for a proposed rezoning from "C-2" and "RA8-18" to "RA4.8", and a site plan for a 15-story, 178-foot tall residential building with 91 residential units and 1,900 square feet of ground floor retail.

The staff presentation concentrated on adopted County planning guidance for the site, and major issues, including the relationship of the ground floor residential unit to the street and the adjacent pocket park, the prominence of the garage entrance, and the effect of the blank walls on the pedestrian path (a public path between Clarendon Boulevard and 15th Street located on the Odyssey's land) next to the property line. The applicant made a general introduction to the project, especially focusing on the architecture and the relation of the proposed building to adjacent properties.

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

- 1) Informational Presentation
 - a) Overview of Initial Approval and Requested Site Plan Amendments (Staff)
 - b) Presentation of Site Plan Proposal (Applicant)

- 2) Land Use & Zoning
 - a) Relationship of site to GLUP, sector plans, etc.
 - i) Requested changes
 - ii) Justification for requested changes
 - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
 - i) Special site designations (historic district, etc.)
 - ii) Requested bonus density, height, etc.
 - iii) Requested modification of use regulations

SPRC DISCUSSION

Land Use and Zoning:

- Commissioner Cole stated that staff should detail the requested exemptions in the staff report so that the Planning Commission can be informed of them, because they ultimately have to vote on them as a modification. Also requested that staff walk them through how the density is calculated, especially because of the split zoning.
- Commissioner Ciotti also recommended that the information be brought to the next meeting.
 - Staff will bring the requested information.
- Commissioner Iacomini asked staff to explain both the “split GLUP and “Split Zoning” for the site, its precedent, and also asked about the implications for the remaining property on the block that the developer could not assemble into his site. There were also general questions about how close to the property line development could occur.
 - Staff explained that buildings can be built right to the property line, subject to fire codes (no windows are permitted on the property line). The neighboring property could in theory also build right to the property line, however redevelopment of the lot according to the Sector Plan may be unlikely due to the size of the lot.
- Commissioner Gutshall asked if there was a reason the Odyssey did not build on the “C-O” portion of the lot.
 - Staff stated that they did not find evidence it was for a zoning reason, most likely to provide the open space between commercial and residential that the Sector Plan recommends.
- General SPRC discussion of whether construction on this property creates hardship for the remaining undeveloped property on the block.
- Commissioner Gutshall and others stated that the proposed residential unit on the ground floor on Clarendon Boulevard was not acceptable.
 - Staff stated that the street was a “Blue” street where retail and retail equivalent was recommended. Continuous retail was required only on “Red” streets.
 - Commissioner Schroll stated that he thought staff was abandoning a relatively new policy.
- Commissioner Cole asked staff to research other projects where the affordable housing contribution for residential projects has been split between cash and on-site units.

Site Design and Characteristics:

- Tammy Bagnato of the Odyssey HOA thought that the buildings were too close together.
 - Staff stated that the separation between the two towers is 40 feet, which meets or exceeds an informal policy for separation between residential buildings.

- Commissioner Ciotti requested that the applicant at the next SPRC come with plats of the property, showing setbacks, sidewalk widths, streetscape, etc., and an exhibit showing the closest point between the proposed building and the Odyssey.
- Tom Korn stated that he would need to know more with the relationship between this proposed building and the Odyssey.
- Commissioner Hughes wanted to know more about the bonus density the developer is asking.
 - Staff explained the bonus density, and would and as was suggested earlier, would walk the SPRC through how the density is calculated.
- Commissioners Siegel and Gutshall wanted to know about the potential impact of the proposed project on area parks. Schools, and adjacent parking.
 - Staff replied that that information is not currently systematically studies (except for schools). Staff promised to bring school generation numbers to the next SPRC, a map of area parks, and details of the parking the applicant is proposing, but as of this date there is no established procedure for assessing impacts on parks and neighborhood parking. Staff pointed out that the site was adjacent to two public open spaces, a pocket park on the 1515 Courthouse Road office building property and another on the Odyssey property behind this site.
- Commissioner Gutshall stated that the proposal seemed generally consistent with the GLUP and was looking forward to a discussion of the building architecture.
- Bill Ross stated that the County has done well lately with buildings that successfully address open spaces and hoped that this project would integrate with the adjacent open spaces. Also felt that the County should really push for on-site affordable units here.
- Commissioner Iacomini stated that one needs to be mindful of the effect of this proposal on adjacent properties, and vice versa. The ground floor residential is not a good idea. The garage has an impact on the pedestrian experience.
- Commissioner Cole suggested the developer flip the garage entrance, and put the retail at that corner, would create a node that would help both this property and the Odyssey's retail. Also stated that the West façade seems undeveloped, but it would be the most prominent one, as cars drive that direction. Finally, he stated that the developer should be open to comments and suggestions from SPRC in order to get a better result in the end, especially as regards architecture.
- Commissioner Ciotti stated that she would like to see an alternative design, the parking garage is intrusive, and there should be no ground floor residential on Clarendon Boulevard.
- Commissioner Schroll stated he was also concerned about the parking and loading location, wants more ground floor retail. Will have comments on the architecture at a future SPRC.

- Tom Kornis stated that there is a difference between rental and condominium parking needs, would like to know if staff had any information on that. Also suggested that the building will have great views to the North, suggested larger/more windows to take advantage of that.
- Tammy Bagnato stated that there was an increase in traffic in the area due to the new developments, as well as double-parking of delivery trucks. Thought location of parking garage was a problem.
- Commissioner Brown stated that she was glad that the units were condos. Would like retail to replace the unit on the ground floor. Also had parking questions for the next meeting.