



City of Richmond

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Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, June 16, 2014

1:30 PM

5th Floor Conference Room

Call To Order

Mr. Poole called the meeting to order at 1:30p.m.

Roll Call

Present 8 - Mr. Rodney Poole
Mr. Melvin Law
Kathy Graziano
Ms. Amy Howard
Ms. Jane Ferrara
Ms. Lynn McAteer
Mr. Jeffrey Sadler
Mr. Doug Cole

Absent 1 - Mr. David Johannas

Staff Present

*Mark Olinger, Director, Planning and Development Review
Lory Markham, Secretary to the City Planning Commission
Matthew Ebinger, Planning and Development Review
Leigh V. Kelley, Planning and Development Review
Willy Thompson, Planning and Development Review
Jeff Eastman, Planning and Development Review
Matthew Welch, Assistant City Attorney*

Others Present

*Gloria Freye
Jennifer Stanley
Brian White*

Chair's Comments

Mr. Poole welcomed everyone who was present.

Approval of Minutes

[ID 14-029](#) Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from 6.2.2014

Attachments: [Draft Meeting Minutes from 6.2.2014](#)

A motion was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Law, that the minutes from the Commission's June 2, 2014 meeting be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Director's Report

Mr. Olinger stated the first of two (2) public meetings will take place tonight on the Virginia Union University Neighborhood Plan, between 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Dovetail Construction Company, 1620 Brook Road. On Thursday, June 19th, 6:00 – 8:00 pm, there will be a report out by the consultant team which is Urban Design Associates out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

- Council Action Update

Ms. Markham stated there is one (1) item that went to Council; the special use permit at 2801 East Main Street, also known as the Pear Street Development, was amended to reduce the height of the proposed building and continued to Council's July 14th meeting.

Consideration of Continuances and Deletions from Agenda

Ms. Markham stated there were no continuances or deletions from today's agenda.

Consent Agenda

There was no public comment on the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Kathy Graziano, seconded by Ms. Lynn McAteer, that the Consent Agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

1. [ORD. 2014-122](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 3210 West Leigh Street for the purposes of multifamily dwelling use with up to thirty (30) dwelling units and accessory parking, upon certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Ord. No. 2014-122](#)
[Survey & Plans](#)
[Application & Applicant's Report](#)
[Letter of Support](#)

This Ordinance was recommended for approval on the Consent Agenda.

2. [ORD. 2014-133](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 3126 N Street for the purpose of a parking area, upon certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Ord. No. 2014-133](#)
[Application & Plans](#)
[Letters of Support](#)

This Ordinance was recommended for approval on the Consent Agenda.

3. [Subd. No. 2014-03](#) Singleton Subdivision at 3501 Old Gun Road East (2 lots)

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Preliminary Plat](#)
[Exception Request](#)

This Tentative Subdivision was approved on the Consent Agenda.

4. [UDC No. 2014-19](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of improvements to Commerce Road, from Bells Road to Bellemeade Road

Attachments: [UDC Report to PC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Application & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was approved on the Consent Agenda.

5. [UDC No. 2014-21](#) Final Location, Character and Extent review of a new building on the site of the Martin Luther King School, to contain a pre-kindergarten program, 1000 Mosby Street

Attachments: [UDC Report to PC](#)
[Staff Report to UDC](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Application & Plans](#)

This Location, Character and Extent Item was approved on the Consent Agenda.

Regular Agenda

6. [ORD. 2014-102](#) To amend Ord. No. 96-168-162, adopted Jun. 24, 1996, as previously amended by Ord. No. 2003-323-313, adopted Nov. 10, 2003, which authorized the special use of the properties known as 7101 Jahnke Road and 500 Hioaks Road, for the purpose of authorizing additional identification and directional signage, upon certain terms and conditions. (Mayor Jones – By Request) {Planning Commission – May 19, 2014} (As Amended)

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Location Map](#)
[Plans Revised May 2014](#)
[Application & Applicant's Report](#)
[Ord. No. 2014-102 - Complete Amended 20140527.pdf](#)

Mr. Willy Thompson provided a presentation as outlined in the staff report.

Ms. Gloria Freye stated she is speaking on behalf of HCA, they are the 3rd largest employer in the area. The hospital is located in the R-73 district that does not permit adequate signage for a large hospital. She stated they need freestanding signs along Chippenham because Chippenham Hospital has the largest volume of Emergency room visits in the state next to Fairfax. They already have two (2) freestanding signs but none on Chippenham. Motorists on Chippenham cannot see the exit ramp northbound until they see the hospital. They need a sign large enough to be seen by motorists in order to safely make the exit. The hospital reduced the size of the sign by 40%, height from 16 feet to 14 feet, width from 12 feet to 10 feet 2 inches, and overall sign area from 138 sq ft to 82.3 sq ft. Further visual impact is reduced by landscaping. Special use consideration should be given to the hospital. Existing B-2 and B-3 districts exist adjacent to Chippenham that permit signs by right that are 35 feet in height with 100 sq ft of sign area. The proposed sign is below those limits and would not change character of Chippenham Parkway. They do not believe there is opposition to the sign. She stated the design and scale of the hospital sign is driven by aesthetics and message legibility.

Ms. Freye stated there are six (6) jurisdiction findings needed to support approval of a special use permit and provided justification:

- This sign will not be detrimental to safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community. In fact, we believe it will promote the general welfare of the community, by identifying the hospital and its Emergency Room Services.
- The sign will not cause congestion in the streets, it will actually promote timely and safe vehicle movements to the proper exit to reach the hospital.
- The sign will not create hazards from fire, panic and other dangers; instead it will direct people to needed medical attention.
- The sign will not overcrowd the land or cause an undue concentration of population.
- The sign will not adversely affect or interfere with any public or private schools, parks, water, sewer or other public requirements or conveniences.
- The sign will not interfere with adequate light or air to adjacent properties.

She stated because they feel that all the jurisdictional requirements have been met and believe the sign is appropriately sized, designed and conditioned by the special use permit, they are asking that the proposed sign be recommended for approval.

Mr. Sadler asked are the large signs/billboards mentioned in the presentation within the City.

Ms. Freye stated yes.

Mr. Poole asked what if they want to change the content of message.

Ms. Freye stated she acknowledges as part of the special use permit that they cannot change the message. The hospital can only building the sign they are proposing to build.

Mr. Poole asked if there is specific language from the Planning Commission stating support of this amendment would be a special exception because it is for a hospital offering essential medical services, would that address staff's concerns of a proliferation of signage along Chippenham.

Ms. Markham stated it would limit the precedent setting nature.

Ms. Howard asked if it is the busiest Emergency Room in the state, people are obviously getting there.

Ms. Jennifer Stanley stated the majority of the traffic is from the ambulance not from the general public. The ambulance knows where the hospitals and Emergency Rooms are.

Mr. Poole opened the public hearing and asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of or in opposition to any item on the consent agenda.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Graziano moved to recommend approval of the special use permit amendment with the understanding it is only being recommended for approval because of the special circumstance of it being for a hospital.

Mr. Sadler stated concern over the Average Emergency Room wait time. This portion of the sign is 20% larger than the rest of the sign. The proposed sign is more for branding than for wayfinding. They already have an "H" sign for wayfinding.

Ms. McAteer stated it is becoming standard for hospitals to advertise wait time.

Ms. Graziano stated blue signs are not adequate in emergency, this is not a billboard and would not set precedent, it is to help people in emergency situations.

The Commission specifically found that the hospital use, which is a large institutional use, warranted additional signage along Chippenham Parkway. The Commission discussed the distinction between the proposed sign for the hospital use and the possibility of other commercial signage or billboards along the corridor and found that allowing the signage for the hospital use would not set a precedent for future commercial signage along the Parkway. The Commission found that the signage was necessary to help people find the emergency room. The Commission also found that the small scale of the proposed sign and the landscaping would help to mitigate the visual impact of the sign along the Parkway.

A motion was made by Ms. Graziano, seconded by Ms. McAteer, that this Ordinance be recommended for approval to the City Council. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Mr. Poole, Mr. Law, Graziano, Ms. Ferrara, Ms. McAteer and Mr. Cole

No: 2 - Ms. Howard and Mr. Sadler

7. [ORD. 2014-121](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 1650 Overbrook Road for the purpose of a use(s) permitted in the B-7 Mixed-Use Business zoning district and up to one hundred and seventy-three multifamily (173) dwelling units and other site amenities, upon certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)[Location Map](#)[Ord. No. 2014-121](#)[Plans](#)[Application](#)

Mr. Willy Thompson provided a presentation as outlined in the staff report.

Mr. Poole asked with M-1 surrounding on the north and M-2 on the south is this an invasion of industrial, is it bad to lose industrial or is it not viable for industrial.

Mr. Thompson stated it is not viable for industrial.

Mr. Olinger agrees that residential is coming and industrial is going because of historic designation.

Mr. Poole compares this situation to Scott's Addition. He is supportive, but it is the beginning of a transition.

Mr. Olinger stated they lost the battle with the Department of Historic Resources. The City will lose jobs for residential if it keeps converting these buildings.

Mr. Poole stated the property just to the south of Overbrook is a perfect example, it was a family owned business that sold John Deere products, they moved out. A good industrial use moved in. The effect of this trend is detrimental to these types of smaller industrial users. However, Mr. Poole stated his support of this proposal because it is a good proposal for a building that has sat vacant.

Mr. Poole asked the developer to state that there will be no windowless units.

Mr. White stated absolutely. They intend to use historic tax credits and will have windows in every unit facing out. They wouldn't create windowless units even if they could.

Mr. Poole opened the public hearing and asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of or in opposition to any item on the consent agenda.

There was no public comment.

The Commission discussed the industrial character of the area surrounding this proposed residential development. The Commission found that if this development is approved it would be the beginning of a transition away from industrial and commercial uses in the area towards more residential and mixed uses. The Commission expressed some concern about the loss of industrial property in the City in general and in this area specifically. However, the Commission found that this property, in particular, had remained vacant for some time and the viability of its use for industrial or commercial purposes was limited. The Commission also expressed their support for the proposal given the provision of windows in every dwelling unit and the useable open space and amenities.

A motion was made by Ms. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Sadler, that this Ordinance be recommended for approval to the City Council. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Upcoming Items

Ms. Markham stated that the following item will be on the next Planning Commission agenda on July 7, 2014.

1. Special use permit for 90 dwelling units and accessory parking at 3200 West Clay Street
2. Rezoning of 2323 East Main Street from M-1 to B-5
3. Special use permit amendment for a nightclub at 1619 & 1621 West Broad Street

Adjournment

Mr. Poole adjourned the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

Rodney M. Poole, Chair

Lory P. Markham, Secretary