



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-163: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3001 Commerce Road for the purposes of parking areas and drive aisles illuminated by lighting structures in excess of 35 feet in height, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: June 21, 2022

PETITIONER

Deepwater I, LLC, property owner, represented by T. Preston Lloyd Jr. of Williams Mullen

LOCATION

3001 Commerce

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 3001 Commerce Road for the purposes of parking areas and drive aisles illuminated by lighting structures in excess of 35 feet in height, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is located in the M-1 Light Industrial zoning district and lighting is a permitted use; however, Section 30-408.7 of the zoning ordinance states that no building or structure shall exceed 35 feet in height. The proposed lighting plans call for lighting structures that are no taller than 45 feet in height; therefore, a special use permit is necessary for this request.

The applicant wishes to use lighting towers that exceed the maximum height allowed by zoning in order to provide adequate lighting for the parking and access areas surrounding proposed warehouse use (proposed for construction as a separate application) while utilizing fewer lighting structures. The applicant states that the higher structures also have the benefit of causing less light spillover onto adjacent properties and less visual clutter.

The use of the properties remains consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan where the primary uses include industrial uses.

Staff finds that the proposed lighting plan for the areas surrounding the subject warehouses (proposed for construction as a separate application) do not pose negative externalities on surrounding properties such as light nuisance to residential zones, as shown on the photometric plans submitted by the applicant.

Staff finds that with the ordinance conditions the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, are met. Specifically, staff finds

that the proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved and would not create additional congestion in the streets in the area involved.

A second parcel, known as 2301 Commerce Road (Parcel ID: S0080601053), was referenced in the application materials and shown on the plans, but was inadvertently omitted from the special use permit ordinance.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit, with an amendment to include the parcel known as 2301 Commerce Road (Parcel ID: S0080601053) in the ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is an 18 acre parcel located in the Commerce Road Industrial Area on Commerce Road between Bellemeade and Ruffin Roads.

Proposed Use of the Property

The property was previously used for industrial uses, but has been cleared with the intention of providing a new industrial center primarily consisting of distribution warehouses (approval subject to a separate application).

The proposed lighting does not introduce a new use for the properties and will facilitate the long standing use of the properties as industrial and distribution structures.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Industrial future land use. These areas typically consist of manufacturing and production areas that primarily feature processing, research and development, warehousing, and distribution.

Development Style: The arrangement of structures, parking and circulation areas, and open spaces should recognize the unique needs of industrial users. Industrial areas have a design aesthetic that buffers industrial uses from other adjacent uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access is accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Parking lots and parking areas are located to the rear of street-facing buildings. Vehicle entrances are located off alleys or secondary streets.

Intensity: One to three stories with exceptions for unique building features relating to that industrial use.

Primary Uses: Industrial and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The Property is currently located within the M-1 Light Industrial District. The maximum height allowed in the M-1 District is 35 feet.

The special use permit ordinance would impose certain conditions on the property, including:

(a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as parking areas and parking aisles illuminated by lighting structures in excess of 35 feet in height, substantially as shown on the Plans.

(b) Wireless communications equipment may be co-located on the lighting structures at or below the height authorized in this ordinance, subject to the applicable provisions of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

Surrounding Area

To the east, the property fronts Commerce Road and the Richmond Petersburg Turnpike (Interstate I-95). Industrial uses are directly located to the north, west, and south of the subject property, as well as a park to the southwest. A residential neighborhood is located farther to the south and across Ruffin Road.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners. No letters have been received in relation to this application.

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