



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2015-209: To declare as surplus and authorize the conveyance of the City-owned property located at 2238 VENABLE STREET (Tax Parcel #E0000423019) to the BETTER HOUSING COALITION, a Virginia limited liability company (Purchaser).

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 5, 2015

PETITIONER

City of Richmond
Department of Economic & Community Development

LOCATION

2238 Venable Street

PURPOSE

To declare as surplus and authorize the conveyance of the City-owned property located at 2238 VENABLE STREET (Tax Parcel #E0000423019) to the BETTER HOUSING COALITION, a Virginia limited liability company (Purchaser).

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This property was formerly and is now owned and maintained by the Department of Public Works. Currently, the property is a vacant lot and is underutilized. The Department of Public Works reports that the property is not being actively used and agrees that selling the property is in the best interest of the City. A viable offer has been made to acquire and develop this property as more fully described below. By selling this property the City will stimulate private investment, job creation and economic development in the area.

The purchaser has offered \$5,000 for the property. The property including existing improvements is currently assessed at \$15,000.

It is recommended that the City accept the offer to purchase from the Better Housing Coalition and convey the property with a development agreement that stipulates the terms and development plans. The project will stimulate private investment, job creation and economic development in the area.

The City Administration, and Economic Development and Community Development, therefore recommend approval of the proposed transaction and development concept.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property is located in the Union Hill neighborhood in the City's East End which has recently experienced redevelopment with residential and some commercial uses. The 2238 Venable Street property consists of a 0.027 acre parcel of undeveloped land. According to tax records the City acquired the property in 2004.

Proposed Use of the Property

The Better Housing Coalition wishes to acquire 2238 Venable Street as part of their plan to acquire the entire block bounded by Venable Street, Tulip Street, Jessamine Street and Carrington Street. Their intent is to redevelop this block with up to 60 affordable residential units and their estimated total development cost is between \$6.9 and \$7.2 million. The Better Housing Coalition has already acquired the 1.1 acre Citadel of Hope property at 2230 Venable Street and is in the process of reaching out to other property owners with the intent to acquiring as much of the block as possible by the end of 2015.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Mixed Use (Residential) land use for the property. The Master Plan defines the primary uses for this category as single-, two-, and multifamily dwellings, live/work units and neighborhood-serving commercial uses developed in a traditional urban form. The typical zoning classification recommended to accommodate this land use category is R-63 (p. 304). A maximum residential density is not specified for the Mixed Use (Residential) land use designation.

In regard to the East District, the Master Plan states there is a "continued need...to stabilize older low-income residential neighborhoods throughout the District, particularly north of Broad Street in the Church Hill, Oakwood/Chimborazo, and Fairmount neighborhoods" (p. 163) and that "existing historic preservation design controls should be maintained" (p. 166). "Commercial uses in the East District should be concentrated within existing commercial service centers and mixed use areas" (p. 169).

Zoning

The property is zoned in the R-63 Multifamily Urban Residential District. The intent of the R-63 district is to encourage development of medium density neighborhoods comprised of a mix of residential uses and to promote a pedestrian oriented urban environment that is primarily residential in character, but that includes limited nonresidential uses that serve many of the day-to-day convenience needs of neighborhood residents and provide opportunities for residents to live and work within the neighborhood.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent properties are part of the larger R-63 district that encompasses the majority of the neighborhood. A mix of vacant, residential (single-, two-, and multi-family), commercial, institutional, and some mixed-use land uses are present in the area.

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