



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-251: To amend Ord. No. 2024-100, adopted May 13, 2024, which accepted a program of proposed Capital Improvement Projects for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and the four fiscal years thereafter, adopted a Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and determined a means of financing the same, by (i) transferring \$2,000,000.00 from the Department of Public Works' Commerce Road Improvement Project in the Transportation – Federal/State/Regional category; (ii) establishing a new project for the Office of Animal Care and Control in the Capital Investment Opportunities category called the “Richmond Animal Care & Control Adoption Center” project, and (iii) appropriating such transferred funds to the Office of Animal Care and Control's new project in the Capital Investment Opportunities category called the Richmond Animal Care & Control Adoption Center project, all for the purpose of providing funding for the acquisition of the real properties located at 2310 West Cary Street and 2311 Herbert Hamlet Alley in the city of Richmond and for the expansion and operations of the Office of Animal Care and Control's adoption center.

Ord. No. 2024-252: To declare a public necessity for and to authorize the acquisition of the parcels of real property owned by Cary Studios Associates, LLC located at 2310 West Cary Street and 2311 Herbert Hamlet Alley for the purpose of supporting and expanding the operations of the Office of Animal Care and Control.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 1, 2024

PETITIONER

Christie Peters, Director - Richmond Animal Care and Control (RACC)
Gail Johnson, Deputy Director - DPW & Acting Director - DGS
Chris Nizamis, Real Estate Manager - Real Estate Strategies/DED-DGS

LOCATION

2310 West Cary Street and 2311 Herbert Hamlet Alley

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Richmond Animal Care & Control manages and protects the animal population in Richmond, VA, enforces animal ordinances, protects the health and welfare of the citizens, and strives to place as many unwanted animals as possible in loving homes. The mission is to provide a safe and healthy community through professional enforcement of animal related laws, while providing and promoting the humane care of every animal in need. The department mission strives for a City where every companion animal has a safe and loving forever home. As a recognized leader in animal welfare, public safety and operational practices, RACC will continue to grow as a trusted community resource.

RACC has a tremendous following and community support through the City and beyond. RACC is already providing direct services to the citizens in the City through a large community outreach effort, donating animal supplies, food, providing free vaccines and flea treatment to pet owners in need. Any improvement or accommodation that would allow them to help more people and their pets would be welcomed wholeheartedly in the community. RACC wants to grow this outreach

and be able to offer vet care, training classes, behavior follow up after adoption etc. and cannot grow or add programming in our current shelter space.

The current RACC animal shelter at 1600 Chamberlayne Ave was gifted to the City in 2005 by the Richmond SPCA when they left to build a facility that would accommodate their growing needs. The site is assessed at \$1.856 million and has a 15-year maintenance need of \$1.5 million, is zoned M2 and is 55 years old. Renovations in 2012 included the installation of state code compliant large dog runs but they did not offer any additional space to accommodate our growing dog population. The dog runs were built to allow one dog to have two spaces separated by a guillotine in keeping with best practice. Since the number of large dog caging space is inadequate, we are required to place a dog in each side of the run to have enough space for daily housing.

Additionally, there is no large dog isolation space, so they must block off many runs to accommodate one dog and/or sick/contagious large dogs must be housed/treated offsite at a vet clinic which is an added operational expense. The lack of isolation space and its self-containment has been a violation with the state veterinarian for years. They have two isolation rooms with 19 small cages to house sick and contagious small dogs and cats. Previous code violations required creating a retrofitted walkway to accommodate euthanasia without contaminating current isolation space to be code compliant.

This request proposes to supplement the existing RACC facility at 1600 Chamberlayne Ave, which has been determined to be inadequate for current and projected services, with a proposed additional adoption center and community space at the 2310 W. Cary Street location. Each space in the current facility is already multi-purposed and retrofitted to accommodate the growing number of animals in need within the City. The additional proposed space will allow for enhanced service delivery in an accommodating, welcoming environment while striving to meet the City's performance metrics for adoption and minimization of euthanasia. Further, the movement of these services to a new facility will allow the existing facility to operate more effectively for other services. Continuing to defer supplementation of this critical facility will result in continued operational deficiencies and impeded service delivery.

After extensive market research and evaluating numerous properties, the City has determined that the building located at 2310 W. Cary Street site is the most suitable location for such a requirement. Not only does the building meet the programmatic needs of City and can accommodate various potential other uses for the City.

The City has determined that this property would offer more efficient and effective processes related to the City's initiatives. The location will allow for more efficient processing to meet demands, increase City geographic coverage and will ensure long-term, permanent solution in further supporting and possibly solving the on-going crisis and set-forth initiatives.

Acquisition and utilization of the property would also mitigate potential financial and long-term contractual lease obligations to the City. Ownership of this site is an investment for the City. The property is currently vacant and the City intends to restore and revitalize the property to remove a portion of the perceived blight along the portion of W. Cary Street corridor while simultaneously satisfying the noted initiatives. The City intends to improve the building and site conditions to accommodate its needs. The property will also serve as a demonstration of innovative efforts and technologies for new and redevelopment projects within the area.

Staff recommends approval of these ordinances.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject parcels are located at 2310 W. Cary Street and 2311 Herbert Hamlet Alley in The Fan. The subject parcels offer an approximate .273-acres of real estate consisting of a free-standing building of 10,561± square feet of office and warehouse space located within the UB-Urban Business zoning class within Council District 5.

Richmond 300 Master Plan

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the subject parcels as Community Mixed Use, which is described as a "cluster of medium-density, walkable commercial and residential uses that provide neighborhood services to nearby residential communities and sometimes feature regional attractions."

Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context. Uses may be mixed horizontally in several buildings on a block or vertically within the same building. Developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

Ground Floor: Ground floor uses engage with, and enliven, the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal streets. Parking areas are located within the structure and to the rear of buildings and require screening; shared parking requirements are encouraged.

Community Mixed-Use Diagram The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. The common theme among all Community Mixed-Use areas is that a mix of uses are allowed and buildings must address the street.

Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the buildto line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

Primary Uses: Retail/office/ personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Single-family houses, institutional, and government.

Public Engagement

This request is a continuation of on-going efforts and follows various RACC presentations at public meetings that offered public comment. RACC has a tremendous following and community support throughout the City and beyond. RACC is already providing direct services to the citizens in the City through a large community outreach effort, donating animal supplies, food, providing free vaccines and flea treatment to pet owners in need.

Staff Contact:

Michael Nixon-Garrison, Budget and Policy Analyst, Senior

