



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2015-018: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1621 Grove Avenue and 1617 Rear Grove Avenue for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling and parking area, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 94-239-223, adopted Oct. 24, 1994.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 17, 2015

PETITIONER

Lynn McAteer - Better Housing Coalition
PO Box 12117
Richmond, VA 23241

LOCATION

1621 Grove Avenue
1617 Rear Grove Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the properties known as 1621 Grove Avenue and 1617 Rear Grove Avenue for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling and parking area, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 94-239-223, adopted Oct. 24, 1994.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of two parcels of land within the block bound by Grove Avenue, North Vine Street, Floyd Avenue, and North Lombardy Street in The Fan neighborhood of the Near West planning district. A special use permit (Ord. No. 94-239-223) was approved on October 24, 1994, authorizing a total of 28 multifamily dwelling units in two dwellings and 40 accessory parking spaces on the subject property and 1617 Grove Avenue and 120 North Lombardy Street.

The property owner that operated both multifamily dwellings under the current special use permit has requested it to be repealed so that the two multifamily dwellings can be held under separate ownership and operated under the authorization of separate special use permits. The layout of the site and buildings, density of the multifamily use, and the number of parking spaces provided on site will not be changed. 29 of the current parking spaces will be designated for use by the 21 multifamily dwelling units located at 1621 Grove Avenue, the remaining 11 spaces will be designated for use by the 7 multifamily dwelling units at 1617 Grove Avenue.

Staff finds that repealing the existing special use permit ordinance and establishing two separate special use permits is a reasonable request. The current requirements would still apply to all affected properties, and the effect of two separate ordinances rather than the existing ordinance would be of negligible impact to the neighborhood.

Staff further finds that while the use of the historic multifamily structure on the subject property is not consistent with the general Single-family (Medium Density) land use recommendation, it is in keeping with the traditional residential development pattern within the Near West Planning District that is supported by the Master Plan.

Staff further finds that with the conditions of the new ordinance, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of special use permits, are met. Staff therefore recommends approval of the proposed special use permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of two parcels of land within the block bound by Grove Avenue, North Vine Street, Floyd Avenue, and North Lombardy Street in The Fan neighborhood of the Near West planning district.

1621 Grove Avenue consists of 0.42 acres of land improved with a 21-unit multifamily dwelling constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1920 and eight surface parking spaces. 1617 Rear Grove Avenue consists of 0.14 acres of land located in the interior of the block and improved with a 21-space parking area.

Proposed Use of the Property

Continued use of the property as a 21-unit multifamily dwelling, which will be served by 29 accessory parking spaces.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Single-family (Medium Density) land uses for the property. The Master Plan defines the primary uses for this category as single-family and two-family detached and attached dwellings at densities of 8 to 20 units per acre, and includes residential support uses such as schools, places of worship, and neighborhood parks, among others (p. 133).

The Master Plan also states that "in keeping with traditional residential development patterns within the [Near West Planning] District, higher-density mixed residential uses are appropriate in both the Fan and West of the Boulevard neighborhoods. Concentrations of small, multifamily structures (6-12 units) are scattered throughout these areas and contribute to a strong sense of social and economic diversity. This residential mix is appropriate and desirable, as long as single-family residential uses continue to prevail" (p. 234).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

Currently, the subject property is zoned in the R-6 Single-Family Attached Residential District, which does not allow multifamily use or parking areas as a principal use.

A special use permit (Ord. No. 94-239-223) was approved on October 24, 1994, authorizing a total of 28 multifamily dwelling units and 40 accessory parking spaces on the subject property and 1617 Grove Avenue and 120 North Lombardy Street.

The new special use permit would authorize a multifamily dwelling containing up to 21 dwelling units, served by a minimum of 29 off-street surface parking spaces, 21 of which would be provided at 1617 Rear Grove Avenue and eight of which would be provided at 1621 Grove Avenue.

Ord. No. 94-239-223 contains requirements regarding the condition of the parking areas, drive aisles, landscaping, lighting, and signage, which will be carried over to the new special use permit ordinance, if approved.

Surrounding Area

All surrounding properties are located within the same R-6 zoning district as the subject property. A mix of single- and multifamily uses prevails in the area, with some institutional, public-open space, mixed-use, and commercial land uses present as well.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has received a letter of no objection from the Fan District Association.

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