



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review ***Staff Report***

Ord. No. 2015-227: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1712 Bellevue Avenue for the purpose of commercial events as a permitted principal use, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: November 2, 2015

PETITIONER

Gloria L. Freye
McGuire Woods LLP
901 East Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219

LOCATION

1712 Bellevue Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1712 Bellevue Avenue for the purpose of commercial events as a permitted principal use, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is located on a parcel 10.45 acres in size and is improved with a 34,023 square foot two-story brick Temple Building, a 6,233 square foot one-story brick Activity Building, and a paved parking lot containing a total of 376 spaces.

The subject property is owned by ACCA Shrine Temple and has been used as a fraternal lodge/community center operated by the Shriners since 1959. The property is zoned R-53 Multi-family Residential, which permits the existing not-for-profit fraternal community center and its accessory uses. The proposed commercial events use would not be considered an accessory use, but rather a principal use.

The proposed non-Shriners events would include corporate meetings and training sessions, wedding receptions, and large group meetings. The special use permit ordinance would limit the number of attendees on the property at one time to 500 persons. For hours of operation, the ending times Monday through Thursday would be 10:00 p.m.; 12:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday; 7:00 p.m. Sundays; and 2:00 a.m. January 1st. Security officers would be required to be present at any event serving alcoholic beverages and a management plan has been submitted as part of the special use permit.

The Master Plan recommends "Institutional" for this property. "Primary uses include institutional uses, such as places of worship, private schools, universities, museums, hospitals and other care facilities" (p. 135).

Staff finds that the proposed commercial events will be controlled by the same policies as currently applied to Shriners events, including providing adequate parking, and buildings and facilities equipped to accommodate event uses. Furthermore, the special use ordinance includes a number of conditions tailored to effectively minimize the impacts of the proposed events.

Staff finds that the proposal meets the City Charter criteria for the granting of special use permits. Specifically, the proposal would not be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community established by the City's Master Plan and R-53 zoning district. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the special use permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property is located on a parcel 10.45 acres in size and is improved with a 34,023 square foot two-story brick Temple Building, a 6,233 square foot one-story brick Activity Building, and a paved parking lot containing a total of 376 spaces. Since 1959, the property has been used as a fraternal lodge/community center operated by the Shriners, a not for profit fraternal organization, for its members and charitable fundraising events sponsored by its members.

Proposed Use of the Property

The Shriners are requesting a Special Use Permit to allow the property to be rented as a special events venue to non-Shrine members. The R-53 Multi-Family zoning restricts non-Shrine events to four (4) events within 12 months. The Shriners want to establish a reliable source of revenue to fund its charitable and fraternal mission and to maintain the 56 year old property by renting the facilities for community and private events throughout the year.

Master Plan

The Master Plan recommends "Institutional" for this property. "Primary uses include institutional uses, such as places of worship, private schools, universities, museums, hospitals and other care facilities" (p. 135).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

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Surrounding Area

The property is bordered by Interstate 95 on the west, by the Scottish Rite Temple on the north (R-53), single-family homes on the east (R-1) and a retirement facility (R-73) on the south.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has contacted 3rd District Council Representative, Chris Hilbert, the Bellevue Civic Association, and Friends of Bryan Park. Staff has received no letters of support nor opposition.

Staff Contact: Willy Thompson, Senior Planner, (804) 646-5734