



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-318: To authorize the special use of the properties known as 3731 Grubbs Lane, 3731-A Grubbs Lane, 4045 Walmsley Boulevard, and 4057 Walmsley Boulevard for the purpose of up to ten multifamily dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: November 6, 2023

PETITIONER

Brian Jackson – Hirschler Fleischer

LOCATION

3731 Grubbs Lane, 3731-A Grubbs Lane, 4045 Walmsley Boulevard, and 4057 Walmsley Boulevard

PURPOSE

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for the purpose of constructing up to 10 multifamily dwellings containing an aggregate of up to 70 dwelling units within the R-3 Single Family Residential zoning district. The proposed use is not permitted within the R-3 zone. A Special Use Permit is, therefore, required.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds the proposed development to be generally consistent with the Residential land use recommendation of the Richmond 300 Master Plan, in that the proposed units are designed to have the appearance of single-family attached dwellings. Further, the proposed units support the goals of the Major Residential Street typology within the Richmond 300 Master Plan by introducing new, higher-intensity, residential units along Walmsley Boulevard, installing new street trees, and creating new sidewalks.

Staff finds that the proposed use supports Objective 14.3, to “Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for low- and very low-income households over the next 10 years.” The proposed units are intended to be affordable to households that are within 60% to 80% of the Regional Area Median Income.

Staff also finds that the proposed site design supports well-designed neighborhoods through Objectives 4.1(i) and 4.1(o) which state “Encourage design approaches that support creative solutions for transitions among varying intensities of building types and land uses” and “Increase building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level”, respectively. The exteriors of the proposed duplex units are designed to appear as single-family units and will therefore be an appropriate transition in densities within the vicinity. Existing street frontage will include units that properly address the street and will include new public sidewalks and tree-lawns. Staff also worked with the applicant

on creating an interior site design that maximized green-space and while minimizing impervious surfaces. This was intended to implement Objective 17.3e which seeks to “Increase the tree canopy and overall green spaces throughout the city” (pp. 100 and 171)

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 congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The property consists of four contiguous parcels that together, consist of a total of 62,116 sq. ft. (1.4 acre) parcel of land. 3731 Grubbs Lane consists of a 1.5 story, 1,476 sq. ft., single-family dwelling constructed in 1949. 4057 Walmsley Boulevard consists of a single story, 875 sq. ft., single-family dwelling constructed in 1933. 3731-A Grubbs Lane and 4045 Walmsley Boulevard, which constitute the remaining properties in question, are both unimproved. The parcels are located in the McGuire Manor neighborhood. The area is primarily single family residential, with some commercial present in the vicinity.

Proposed Use of the Property

Up to 10 multifamily dwellings containing an aggregate of up to 70 dwelling units. The proposed density is approximately 51 units per acre.

Master Plan

The City’s Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Residential, which is defined as “Neighborhood consisting primarily of single-family houses on large or medium sized lots more homogeneous in nature.”

Development Style:

Houses on medium-sized and large-sized lots in a largely auto-dependent environment. Homes are setback from the street. Future developments continue and/or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity. Future single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family residential buildings are built to a scale and design that is consistent with existing buildings.

Mobility:

Bicycle and pedestrian access are prioritized and accommodated. Low residential density means that it is not possible to provide frequent transit within these areas; however, frequent transit may be found at the edges of these areas within more intense future land use designations. Many homes have driveways and/or garages, which are located off an alley behind the home if an alley is present.

Intensity: Buildings are generally one to three stories. Lot sizes generally range up to 5,000 to 20,000+ sq. ft. Residential density of 2 to 10 housing units per acre.

Primary Uses:

Single family houses, accessory dwelling units, and open space.

Secondary Uses:

Duplexes and small multi-family buildings (typically 3-10 units), institutional, and cultural. Secondary uses may be found along major streets (p. 54)

The properties are located on a designated Great Street and are categorized as a Major Residential Street which, according to the Richmond 300 Plan, are intended to:

- Carry high volumes of vehicles, as well as pedestrians and bicycles, through residential neighborhoods
- Prioritize for creating sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install street trees as a buffer between sidewalk and street
- Ideal locations for transit routes and transit stops
- Ensure low street speed by utilizing traffic calming measures

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for this property is R-3 Single Family Residential. All adjacent properties are located within the same R-3 Residential Zone.

The proposed multifamily use is not a permitted principal use in the R-3 district. The special use permit would allow the use and impose conditions on the property, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be as up to ten multifamily dwellings, substantially as shown on the Plans. The Special Use shall not exceed an aggregate of 72 dwelling units.
- Up to 90 parking spaces shall be provided on the Property, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The height of the Special Use shall not exceed two stories, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- All building types, elevations, and site improvements, including landscaping, shall be substantially as shown on the Plans. Brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, masonry, vinyl, fiber cement, and engineered wood shall be permitted building siding materials. Vinyl siding shall have a minimum wall thickness of 0.044 inches, as evidenced by the manufacturer's printed literature.
- Signs on the Property shall not be internally illuminated.
- All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Affordability

Median Family Income Richmond region = \$109,400 per year.*

Affordability threshold = 30% of household income towards housing costs.

= \$32,820 per year

= \$2,735 per month

Est. price provided by Applicant: \$190,000

Est. monthly payment = \$1,011

**(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023)*

*** (Virginia Housing, assuming 7% interest, 20% down payment, 30-year term)*

Surrounding Area

The properties are within a large segment of R-3 Single Family Residential zoning. A mix of single-family residential housing dominates the area, with some commercial uses nearby.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Deerbourne Civic Association of the proposed Special Use Permit. Staff has not received a letter of support or opposition for this application from the Civic Association. Letters of opposition and support have been received from nearby residents.

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