



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2014-242: To authorize the special use of the property known as The Greater Richmond Convention Center at 416 East Broad Street for the purpose of installation of a rooftop wireless communications facility, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: December 1, 2014

PETITIONER

Drew Patterson, Verizon Wireless, 416 East Broad Street

LOCATION

416 East Broad Street

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as The Greater Richmond Convention Center at 416 East Broad Street for the purpose of installation of a rooftop wireless communications facility, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is the Richmond Convention Center and is located in the DCC Downtown Civic and Cultural zoning district, which does not permit the location of telecommunications equipment in the DCC district. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a special use permit.

The proposed telecommunications equipment will be set on the existing 71.5 feet multi-story convention center. The proposed equipment cabinets and 50kW NG generator will be located on new elevated steel platforms attached to the existing building's main roof. The proposed 12 panel antennas are to be mounted to a sled on the building's ballroom rooftop and on pipe mounts attached to the building's façade. These attachment points are located at the intersections of East Broad and North 5th Streets and East Broad and North 3rd Streets. The equipment will be small in size and therefore not visible from the street.

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Downtown Urban Core district land use for the subject property. This category includes high density, an intense mix of uses, and civic buildings of regional significance distributed along urban blocks with wide sidewalks, regular street tree plantings, and buildings that front the street. (p. 13.27).

Staff finds the subject property to be suitable for the provision of wireless telecommunications equipment due to the design, size, and placement of the antennas. Moreover, staff finds that with the proposed use of the property, 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 subject property is located near the intersection of East Broad and North 5th Streets and consists of a parcel with approximately 97,796 square feet of land area. The property is currently improved with the Richmond Convention Center constructed in 2004.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is requesting to be able to install telecommunications equipment located at the Greater Richmond Convention Center at 416 East Broad Street. If approved, the ordinance would authorize the placement of telecommunications equipment to be located on an alternative support structure in the DCC Downtown Civic and Cultural zoning district, which does not permit telecommunications equipment.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Downtown Urban Core district land use for the subject property. This category includes high density, an intense mix of uses, and civic buildings of regional significance distributed along urban blocks with wide sidewalks, regular street tree plantings, and buildings that front the street. (p. 13.27).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is located in the DCC Downtown Civic and Cultural zoning district, which does not permit telecommunications equipment. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a special use permit. The proposed telecommunications equipment will be set on the existing 71.5 feet multi-story convention center. The proposed equipment cabinets and 50kW NG generator will be located on new elevated steel platforms attached to the existing building's main roof. The proposed 12 panel antennas are to be mounted to a sled on the building's ballroom rooftop and on pipe mounts attached to the building's façade. These attachment points are located at the intersections of East Broad and North 5th Streets and East Broad and North 3rd Streets. The equipment will be small in size and therefore not visible from the street.

Surrounding Area

Surrounding properties include the northern portion of the Richmond Convention Center, two hotels and commercial properties. Parcels to the south are located within the B-4 the Central Business District and parcels to the north are located within DCC Downtown Civic and Cultural zoning district.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified the Historic Jackson Ward Association and Downtown Neighborhood Associations and Councilwoman Ellen F. Robertson regarding the request. Staff has received no letters of support or opposition at this time.

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