



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2022-265: To authorize the special use of the property known as 6228 Forest Hill Avenue for the purpose of a wall, upon certain terms and conditions. (4th District)

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 3, 2022

PETITIONER

Willow Oaks Country Club Inc.

LOCATION

6228 Forest Hill Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 6228 Forest Hill Avenue for the purpose of a wall, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit which would allow the construction of an ornamental masonry wall with signage. The property is located in the R-2 Single-Family Residential District where the height limit for fences or walls is four feet. The proposed height the support columns for masonry wall exceeds four feet. Therefore a special use permit is required.

Staff finds that the proposed development would be consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 master plan. The recommended land use is Institutional and the proposed wall signage for the country club conforms to this recommendation.

Staff finds the proposed special use became necessary when the existing wall and signage were demolished as part of a city road widening project. The wall is part of a landscaped entrance and enhances the Forest Hill corridor.

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 special 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.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The Willow Oaks Country Club is situated on a 152 acre property located on the north side of Forest Hill Avenue. The access road to the property is located between the intersections of Hawthorne Road and Glyndon Lane.

Proposed Use of the Property

The area on both sides of the entrance road was well landscaped and contained an ornamental brick wall. Recently Forest Hill Avenue was widened and in doing so this landscaping and a portion of the existing walls were removed. The applicant proposes to reestablish this entranceway amenity. Among other features, the proposal includes the installation of a masonry wall four feet in height and supported by five foot tall columns.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property for Institutional uses which consists of Public and quasi-public entities, such as local, state, and federal government, hospitals, universities, schools, and religious institutions.

Development Style: Several buildings owned by an institution are often connected by an engaging character that creates a campus-like environment.

Ground Floor: Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor in certain sections of the area. Regardless, ground floor residential units should still have street-oriented façades with setbacks, front yards, and balconies where appropriate.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Ground floor parking is prohibited on principal street frontages.

Intensity: Varies.

Primary Uses: Institutional, cultural, government, and open space.

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service and multi-family.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is located in the R-2 Single-Family Residential District where ornamental walls no taller than four feet are permitted uses. The special use is requested in order to permit a wall with columns that are five feet in height.

Staff recommends the approval of the requested special use permit with the following conditions:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a wall, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed the height as shown on the Plans.
- (c) All building materials and elevations pertaining to the Special Use shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (d) Signs pertaining to the Special Use shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (e) All mechanical equipment serving the Property shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.

Surrounding Area

The James River abuts to the north of the property. Powhite Parkway abuts to the east. Properties to the south and west contain single-family neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area residents and property owners and the Cherokee Area Neighbors Civic Association. No comments of opposition or support have been received.

Staff Contact: David Watson, Senior Planner, PDR, Land Use Administration, 804-646-1036