



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2017-129: To authorize the special use of the property known as 1704 Arlington Road for the purpose of an illuminated canopy with canopy signage, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: July 17, 2017

PETITIONER

Henry Moore – Superior Signs, LLC

LOCATION

1704 Arlington Road

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 1704 Arlington Road for the purpose of an illuminated canopy with canopy signage, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of a 28,567 SF or .656 acre parcel of land improved with a convenience store / gas and service station constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1988. The property is located in the Near West Planning District at the intersection of Arlington Road and North Boulevard, along Interstate 95.

The applicant is proposing an illuminated canopy with canopy signage. An illuminated canopy, as proposed, is not permitted by the zoning ordinance. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that the proposed illuminated canopy is a use expressly prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance, regardless of dimensions or the number of canopy sides that are illuminated.

Staff further finds that the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of Special Use Permits, would not be met by this proposal. Specifically, staff finds that the proposed use would be detrimental to the general welfare of the community in that it would not contribute to the Master Plan's goal to help revitalize and improve the appearance of the corridor, provide an attractive gateway into the City, and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Therefore, staff recommends denial of the Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 28,567 SF or .656 acre parcel of land improved with a convenience store / gas and service station constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1988. The property is located in the Near West Planning District at the intersection of Arlington Road and North Boulevard, along Interstate 95. The area is considered by the Master Plan to be a gateway into the City.

Proposed Use of the Property

The applicant is proposing to construct and rehabilitate an existing gas station site to include an illuminated canopy with canopy signage. The full length of the three sides of the canopy facing public rights-of-way are intended to be illuminated. The canopy signage would also be illuminated.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's current Master Plan designates a land use category for the subject property as General Commercial. Primary uses for this category are "...a broad range of office, retail, general commercial, wholesale and service uses, typically located along major transportation corridors and serving large portions of the City, the region or the traveling public. Land uses in this category are typically of larger scale and intensity than Community Commercial uses, and may not always be highly compatible with residential areas." (Richmond Master Plan, Chapter 10, Land Use, p. 135)

The City's Master Plan makes further recommendations for that portion of the Boulevard where the above referenced property is located. "The commercial designation is meant to serve highway traffic as well as visitors to the Diamond and Sports Backers stadiums... (and) ...to support linkages to the Museum and tourist activities on the Boulevard, Hermitage Road and Broad Street. Streetscape, design and traffic circulation improvements should be implemented to help revitalize and improve the appearance of the corridor providing an attractive gateway into the City, and enhanced pedestrian environment." (Ibid. p. 240)

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The current zoning for the property in question is M-2 Heavy Industrial. Section 30-504 of the Zoning Ordinance does not allow for awnings or canopy signs to be illuminated and requires signs displayed upon service station canopies not to exceed ten (10) sq. ft. in area. The applicant's plan for said sign type is to have illuminated canopies on three (3) sides as well as an illuminated sign on two sides of the canopy, each of which would be 12.45 sq. ft. in area.

Conditions will be imposed by the special use permit ordinance, including:

- The Special Use of the Property shall be an illuminated canopy with canopy signage, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- The dimensions of the signage and canopy shall not exceed the dimensions shown on the Plans.
- Illumination of the signage and canopy shall be substantially as shown on the Plans.

-Storm or surface water shall not be allowed to accumulate on the land. The Owner, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide and maintain at all times adequate facilities for the drainage of storm or surface water from the Property so as not to adversely affect or damage any other property or public streets and the use thereof.

-Facilities for the collection of refuse shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Director of Public Works. Such facilities shall be located or screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public streets.

Surrounding Area

Adjacent and nearby properties are primarily zoned M-1 and M-2. The surrounding properties are a combination of medium and large tract light industrial uses with some vacant properties directly to the south and east along the Boulevard. The Diamond baseball stadium, Parker Field Annex, and the Arthur Ashe Junior Athletic Center are also in close proximity.

Neighborhood Participation

No letters of support or opposition have been received from the community or neighboring property owners for this application.

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