



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2015-021: To authorize the special use of the property known as 3500 Kensington Avenue for the purpose of multifamily dwellings containing up to 50 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 86-32-38, adopted Feb. 24, 1986, Ord. No. 91-361-331, adopted Nov. 25, 1991, and Ord. No. 92-41-47, adopted Mar. 9, 1992.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: February 17, 2015

PETITIONER

Justin Oliver - Oliver Properties
PO Box 7411
Richmond, VA 23221

LOCATION

3500 Kensington Avenue

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 3500 Kensington Avenue for the purpose of multifamily dwellings containing up to 50 dwelling units, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 86-32-38, adopted Feb. 24, 1986, Ord. No. 91-361-331, adopted Nov. 25, 1991, and Ord. No. 92-41-47, adopted Mar. 9, 1992.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of a 1.33 acre (57,935 sq ft) parcel of land improved with an unscreened surface parking area and a 17,683 sq ft 1-story medical office building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1959.

The property comprises the block bound by Patterson Avenue, N. Thompson Street, Kensington Avenue, and N. Nansemond Street in the Museum District neighborhood of the Near West planning district. The property is also located within the West of the Boulevard design overlay district and the proposed development has been reviewed by the Secretary to the Urban Design Committee.

Currently, the subject property is zoned in the R-48 Multifamily Residential district, which allows multifamily use but does not allow the proposed residential density of approximately 38 dwelling units per acre. The applicant has therefore requested a special use permit.

Staff finds that while the proposed multifamily use is not consistent with the general Single-family (Medium Density) land use recommendation, it is an infill development of like density, scale, and use for the neighborhood, and is in keeping with the traditional residential development pattern within the Near West Planning District that is supported by the Master Plan. Furthermore, the proposed multifamily use would replace a non-residential use of

inappropriate scale and has been deemed by the Secretary of the Urban Design Committee to be compliant with the West of the Boulevard Design Overlay District Background and Design Guidelines.

Staff further finds that the proposed use should not cause an undue burden on the existing supply of on-street parking due to the ratio of one parking space per unit achieved on the site. Moreover, the on-site parking spaces will be adequately screened from public view, particularly in comparison to the existing parking area.

Staff further finds that with the conditions of the new ordinance, the safeguards contained within the City Charter, relative to the granting of special use permits, are met. Staff therefore recommends approval of the proposed special use permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 1.33 acre (57,935 sq ft) parcel of land improved with an unscreened surface parking area and a 17,683 sq ft 1-story medical office building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1959.

The property comprises the block bound by Patterson Avenue, N. Thompson Street, Kensington Avenue, and N. Nansemond Street in the Museum District neighborhood of the Near West planning district. The property is also located within the West of the Boulevard design overlay district and the proposed development has been reviewed by the Secretary to the Urban Design Committee.

Proposed Use of the Property

A multifamily development containing a total of 50 dwelling units and a leasing office contained within a total of four buildings, which would be served by 54 on-site, surface parking spaces. Three of the buildings would contain 15 units each, the third building would contain the leasing office and five units.

Master Plan

The City of Richmond's Master Plan recommends Single-family (Medium Density) land uses for the property. The Master Plan defines the primary uses for this category as single-family and two-family detached and attached dwellings at densities of 8 to 20 units per acre, and includes residential support uses such as schools, places of worship, and neighborhood parks, among others (p. 133).

The Master Plan also states "infill development of like density, scale, and use is appropriate" (p. 230) as a guiding land use principle for the Near West planning district. More specifically, the Plan States that "in keeping with traditional residential development patterns within the District, higher-density mixed residential uses are appropriate in both the Fan and West of the Boulevard neighborhoods. Concentrations of small, multifamily structures (6-12 units) are scattered throughout these areas and contribute to a strong sense of social and economic diversity. This residential mix is appropriate and desirable, as long as single-family residential uses continue to prevail" (p. 234).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

Currently, the subject property is zoned in the R-48 Multifamily Residential district, which allows multifamily use but does not allow the proposed residential density of approximately 38 dwelling units per acre. A special use permit was approved in 1986 and last amended in 1992, pertaining to the expanded uses within the existing nonconforming medical office building. The medical office building use is to be abandoned, therefore the associated ordinances will be repealed.

The new special use permit ordinance would authorize the subject property to be used for multifamily dwellings containing up to 50 dwelling units and a leasing office, served by an on-site parking area that contains up to 54 surface parking spaces and is screened.

Pole mounted site lighting would be limited to a height from 12 to 18 feet. Landscaping of the site and installation of street trees would be required and signage would be limited to four freestanding signs as shown on the SUP plans.

Any exterior alterations and site improvements would be subject to the provisions of any applicable West of the Boulevard design overlay district design guidelines and any applicable approvals for design overlay district design review applications issued by the Urban Design Committee.

Surrounding Area

All surrounding properties are located within the same R-48 zoning district as the subject property. A mix of institutional, public-open space, government, mixed-use, and residential (single-, two-, and multifamily) land uses are present in the vicinity. The multifamily developments immediately surrounding the property to the north, southeast, and south range in residential density from 26 to 54 dwelling units per acre.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has received a letter of no opposition from the Museum District Association and a letter of support from an owner of adjacent property.

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