



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2017-187: To amend Ord. No. 2014-226-207, adopted Nov. 10, 2014, which authorized the special use of the property known as 707 East Main Street for two signs, to permit instead the installation of one new roof sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 2, 2017

PETITIONER

Dominion Energy, Inc.

LOCATION

707 East Main Street

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2014-226-207, adopted Nov. 10, 2014, which authorized the special use of the property known as 707 East Main Street for two signs, to permit instead the installation of one new roof sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property consists of a 0.697 acre (30,361 sq ft) parcel of land improved with a 20-story office building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1976. The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of East Main Street and South 8th Street, in the City Center district of the City of Richmond's Downtown Plan.

The current special use permit authorizes two signs which are identical in content and dimensions. Each authorized sign contains a 12 foot high Dominion logo and the word "Dominion" in letters that are approximately four feet in height. The total area for the signs would be approximately 250 square feet per sign. Both signs would be mounted three feet from the building's edge in front of a mechanical enclosure on the roof of the building, one above the south elevation and on above the west elevation of the building.

The proposed amendment includes removal of the sign from above the south elevation of the building and replacement of the sign above the west elevation. The new sign would contain a 12.5 foot high Dominion logo and the words "Dominion Energy" in letters that are approximately 3.5 feet in height. The total area of the sign would be approximately 335 square feet. The sign would be mounted three feet from the building's edge in front of a mechanical enclosure on the roof of the building, in order to be more visible from the street.

Staff finds that despite being technically located on the roof, the sign would appear to be a wall mounted sign when viewed from the street given the mechanical enclosure located behind the proposed sign. Staff finds that overall the intent of the B-4 district sign regulations regarding large identification signs located at the top of tall buildings in the City Center is met. In addition, staff

finds that the safeguards contained in the City Charter relative to the granting of special use permits are met. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a 0.697 acre (30,361 sq ft) parcel of land improved with a 20-story office building constructed, per tax assessment records, in 1976. The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of East Main Street and South 8th Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

Removal of an existing sign from above the south elevation of the building and replacement of an existing sign above the west elevation with a new sign. The new sign would continue to be mounted above a height of 100 feet.

Master Plan

The Downtown Plan designates the subject property as being in the “Urban Core Area.” This area is characterized by 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. City Center is an example of the urban core condition in Downtown Richmond, with tall buildings that contain a range of office, residential and retail space (p. 3.27).

The Pulse Corridor Plan designates the property for Downtown Mixed-Use land use, which features high-density development with office buildings, apartments, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations (p. xi).

Zoning & Ordinance Conditions

The property is zoned in the B-4 district. Although the B-4 district does not permit roof signs, it does permit wall mounted signs not exceeding 300 square feet identifying the name of a building or an occupant thereof on each face of a building above a height of 100 feet.

A variance was issued by the Board of Zoning Appeals in 1998 (Case Nos. 39-98 & 74-98) to allow an oversized sign at the top of the southern face of the building. The variance did not contemplate signage pertaining to the western face of the building.

The current special use permit authorizes two signs which are identical in content and dimensions. Each authorized sign contains a 12 foot high Dominion logo and the word “Dominion” in letters that are approximately four feet in height. The total area for the signs would be approximately 250 square feet per sign. Both signs would be mounted three feet from the building’s edge in front of a mechanical enclosure on the roof of the building, one above the south elevation and on above the west elevation of the building.

The proposed amendment includes removal of the sign from above the south elevation of the building and replacement of the sign above the west elevation. The new sign would contain a 12.5 foot high Dominion logo and the words “Dominion Energy” in letters that are approximately 3.5 feet in height. The total area of the sign would be approximately 335

square feet. The sign would be mounted three feet from the building's edge in front of a mechanical enclosure on the roof of the building, in order to be more visible from the street.

Surrounding Area

The subject property and adjacent properties are part of the larger B-4 district that encompasses much of the City Center district. A mix of office, commercial, multifamily residential, and governmental land uses are present in the vicinity.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff has received letters of support from the Downtown Neighborhood Association and area businesses as well as letters of no opposition.

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