



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**Ord. No. 2020-271:** To authorize the special use of the property known as 7048 Forest Hill Avenue for the purpose of a freestanding sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** January 4, 2021

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#### **PETITIONER**

Rob Worrell for BGC Land, LLC

#### **LOCATION**

7048 Forest Hill Avenue

#### **PURPOSE**

To authorize the special use of the property known as 7048 Forest Hill Avenue for the purpose of a freestanding sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The subject property contains an automated carwash. The property is zoned B-2 Community Business and is located in the Stratford Hills neighborhood. The proposed signage exceeds the maximum aggregate area permitted by the Zoning Ordinance in the B-2 District. A special use permit is therefore required.

Staff finds that, with the removal of the existing wall sign and due in part to the landscaping and materials to be used, the proposed freestanding sign can be supported.

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 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.

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#### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

##### **Site Description**

The .81 acre subject property, known as 7048 Forest Hill Avenue, contains a carwash. The property is zoned B-2 Community Business and is located in the Stratford Hills neighborhood on Forest Hill Avenue between Chippenham Parkway and Cherokee Road.

##### **Proposed Use of the Property**

The proposed special use permit would authorize a freestanding sign.

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### **Richmond 300**

The Richmond 300 Master Plan designates a future land use for the subject property as Corridor Mixed Use. Such areas are found along major commercial corridors and envisioned to provide for medium- to medium high-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development. Among the noted primary uses in this district are retail and personal services. The property is also within the Shops at Stratford Hills Regional Node which calls for the implementation of design standards to create a high quality and well-designed regional node.

### **Zoning Ordinance and Conditions**

The subject property is located in the B-2 Community Business District. In the B-2 district, the aggregate area of all signs directed toward or intended to be viewed from any street frontage shall not exceed one square foot for each linear foot of lot frontage along the street nor in any case 250 square feet for each street frontage. According to the Real Estate Assessor's records, the property has 135 linear feet of lot frontage. Therefore, the aggregate area of all signs shall not exceed 135 square feet.

A sign permit (SIGN-042079-2018) was approved for six (6) wall signs with an aggregate area of 121.68 square feet and those signs were installed.

Zoning Administration has confirmed the square footage of the proposed monument sign to be 97 square feet, which includes the faces of the signage (approximately 48.5 square feet) as well as the architectural base of the signage (approximately 48.5 square feet). The applicant, per condition of the special use permit, will remove one 36 square foot wall sign.

With removal of the 36 square foot wall sign, installation of the proposed freestanding sign would exceed the aggregate area of signage permitted on the property. However, if the square footage of the architectural base of the signage is not included in the area calculation, the aggregate area requirement would not be exceeded. The architectural base shall not display any communication elements and shall be screened with landscaping.

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If approved, the Special Use Permit would impose conditions on the property, including:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as a freestanding sign, substantially as shown on the Plans.
- (b) The height and dimensions of the Special Use shall not exceed the height and dimensions shown on the Plans.
- (c) The freestanding sign shall be internally illuminated.
- (d) Landscaping for the freestanding sign shall be provided substantially as shown on the Plans. The shrub species shall consist of green velvet boxwood or similar species and shall be maintained at three feet in height.
- (e) The message or image shown on the digital screen portion of the freestanding sign shall change not more than once over the course of one minute and shall not flash.
- (f) One existing round wall sign shall be removed, substantially as shown on sheet A201 of the Plans.
- (g) 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 subject property and those properties to the east, west and south are located in the B-2 Community Business District. Land uses in this area contain a variety of commercial uses. Adjacent to the north are single-family homes on properties located in the R-2 Single-Family Residential District.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

Staff notified adjacent property owners, residents, the Southampton Citizens Association, and the Cherokee Neighbors Association. No communication of support or opposition was received.



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