



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2021-361: To authorize the special use of the property known as 4300 Commerce Road for the purpose of one off-premises sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: January 18, 2022

PETITIONER

Anne Miller, Balzer and Associates, Inc.

LOCATION

4300 Commerce Road

PURPOSE

To authorize the special use of the property known as 4300 Commerce Road for the purpose of one off-premises sign, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The applicant is requesting to authorize the special use of the property known as 4300 Commerce Road for the purpose of an off-premises sign, upon certain terms and conditions. The property is located within the M-2 Heavy Industrial District, which permits off-premises signs, however the proximity to an interstate interchange and height do not meet the specific requirements related to off-premises signs in the M-2 Heavy Industrial District.

Staff finds that the proposed off-premises sign is consistent with the recommendations of Richmond 300, however it does not meet state and federal requirements related to the proximity of off-premises signs to an interchange. If this item were to be adopted, it could compromise the ability of the City of Richmond to receive all of the funding available from the Virginia Department of Transportation to maintain its public streets.

Therefore, staff recommends denial of the special use permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property consists of a single parcel of land that has a lot area of 100,319 square feet (2.303 acres) and is improved with a four-story hotel. The property is located in the Commerce Road Industrial Area and abuts Interstate 95.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed Special Use Permit would allow for an off-premises sign to be erected on an existing pole located on the subject property.

Master Plan

The City's Richmond 300 Master Plan designates the property as Industrial. This land use category is described as manufacturing and production areas that primarily feature processing, research and development, warehousing, and distribution.

Development Style: The arrangement of structures, parking and circulation areas, and open spaces should recognize the unique needs of industrial users. Industrial areas have a design aesthetic that buffers industrial uses from other adjacent uses.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access is accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Parking lots and parking areas are located to the rear of street facing buildings. Vehicle entrances are located off alleys or secondary streets.

Intensity: One to three stories with exceptions for unique building features relating to that industrial use.

Primary Uses: Industrial and open space

Secondary Uses: Retail/office/personal service

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The property is located in an M-2 Heavy Industrial District. The special use permit is necessary because the height and proximity to an interstate interchange do not meet the zoning requirements for off-premises signage in an M-2 District. The special use would be conditioned upon the following:

- (a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as one off-premises sign, substantially as shown on the Plans. The face of the sign may be changed.
- (b) The sign area of the Special Use shall not exceed the area shown on the Plans.
- (c) The height of the Special Use shall not exceed 60 feet.
- (d) The structural integrity of the Special Use shall be verified by a certified professional engineer prior to the issuance of a building permit for the Special Use.
- (e) All loose and peeling paint must be removed from the Special Use after which the portions of the sign or sign structure from which paint has been removed shall be painted black.

Surrounding Area

The property is located in the Commerce Road Industrial Area. All surrounding properties are also zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial District. Commercial and industrial properties are located to the north, west, and south. Interstate 95 is located to the east.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified area property owners (there are no residents in the vicinity of the proposed sign). Staff has not received any letters of support or opposition.

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