



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2023-102 To amend and reordain Ord. No. 2019-080, adopted Apr. 8, 2019, which authorized the special use of the property known as 326 East Broad Street for the purpose of permitting signs with an aggregate area exceeding that permitted by the underlying zoning regulations, to authorize additional square footage of aggregate area for signs, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: April 17, 2023

PETITIONER

Michael Garris, Garris Signs Inc.

LOCATION

326 E. Broad Street

PURPOSE

To amend and reordain Ord. No. 2019-080, adopted Apr. 8, 2019, which authorized the special use of the property known as 326 East Broad Street for the purpose of permitting signs with an aggregate area exceeding that permitted by the underlying zoning regulations, to authorize additional square footage of aggregate area for signs, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

In the B-4 Central Business District, the aggregate area of all signs shall not exceed two square feet per linear foot of lot. The property has 44 linear feet of lot frontage. Therefore, the aggregate area of all signs shall not exceed 87.34 square feet. The proposed aggregate area for the wall sign (60 square feet) and projecting sign (103.5 square feet) is 163.5 square feet. A special use permit is therefore required in order to allow an additional 76.16 square feet of aggregate area.

Staff finds that the proposed would not be disruptive to the historic pattern of development in the area as the property is surrounded by a mix of commercial, institutional, and mixed-use residential uses, some of which display comparable signage.

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 is consistent with other uses in the community and would not create congestion in the streets in the area involved.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit amendment request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The subject property, known as 326 East Broad Street, is comprised of 0.126 acres and is located mid-block between North 3rd Street and North 5th Street.

Proposed Use of the Property

The use will be a restaurant trading as ML Steak Modern Chophouse.

Master Plan

The subject property is designated for Downtown Mixed-Use land use by Richmond 300 Master Plan. This land use category is described as the Central business district of the Richmond region features high-density development with office buildings, residential buildings, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations in a highly-walkable urban environment.

Development Style:

Higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. Historic buildings are adapted for new uses. Future development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than existing context. Plazas and setbacks create an engaging street life. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. New developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

Ground Floor:

Ground floor uses engage with and enliven the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Active commercial ground floor uses required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

Intensity:

Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

Primary Use:

Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, institutional, government, and open space.

Secondary Uses:

Not applicable.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The proposed signage exceeds what was permitted by existing Ord No. 2019-080, therefore the SUP must be amended to increase permitted sign area per submitted plans.

The special use permit ordinance will impose conditions on the property, including:

- a) The Special Use of the Property shall be as signs, substantially as shown on the Plans, of the aggregate area shown on the Plans, in addition to other uses permitted in the underlying zoning district in which the Property is situated. Signs permitted in all districts pursuant to section 30-505 of the Code of the City of Richmond 2020, as amended, shall also be permitted on the Property.
- b) 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 is located in the B-4 Central Business District, as are properties to the south and west. Properties to the adjacent to the north and east are zoned DCC Downtown Civic and Cultural District. The Greater Richmond Civic Center abuts to the east and north. A variety of commercial uses are in the remaining surrounding area.

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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