



April 17, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Rodney Poole, Esquire
Chair
Richmond Planning Commission, Room 511
900 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219 USA

Re: SUP Ordinance 2023-068 for 3600 Grove Avenue

This letter is in regard to the application to authorize the special use of the property known as 3600 Grove Avenue.

Scope: The applicant requests authorization for the special use of the property known as 3600 Grove Avenue, which is situated in a R-48 Multifamily Residential District, desires to use such property for the purpose of a multifamily dwelling containing up to 260 dwelling units and amenity spaces, with off-street parking, which use, among other things, is not currently allowed by sections 30-416.1, concerning permitted principal uses, 30-416.4(b), concerning lot area and width, 30-416.5(1), concerning front yards, 30-416.5(2)(b), concerning side and rear yards, 30-416.6, concerning usable open space, and 30-416.8, concerning height, of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended.

The MDA Zoning and Land Use Committee has met with the applicant, reviewed the updated plans, and provided an updated recommendation to not oppose the SUP to the MDA Board of Directors. After review and consideration, the MDA Board of Directors voted to advise you that we:

Do not oppose this request, as presented in the attached city ordinance (see comments below). Please note that this is NOT a letter of endorsement. We continue to have concerns about this project (as shared below). However, recognizing that the developer has made significant changes at our request, the MDA will not be standing in opposition of this project.

The Museum District Board of Directors voted 12-1 to not oppose the Special Use Permit request for the property at 3600 Grove Ave (Ordinance 2023-068). We, however, would encourage city planning commission to consider the following continued concerns:

1. While we appreciate the added step backs along Thompson and Grove as well as updates to the sidewalk, we continue to feel this project should ideally be no more than 4 stories



along Thompson due to the narrow width of the street and how that will compound the oversized appearance of the building in a neighborhood with few other properties of this size.

2. The MDA welcomes density and increased inventory, and we recognize that Richmond300 supports this type of development at a location designated as Community Mixed-Use and at the intersection of two major streets. However, we are concerned about how future developers may point to this project as setting precedent for the Museum District. The designation of community mixed-use and this property's location backing up to the interstate were key reasons for our vote of "not opposed." We hope the city Planning Commission and Planning staff will continue to enforce their approach that all SUPs are reviewed independently, and none should be precedent-setting.
3. We remain concerned about the increased traffic along this narrow stretch of Thompson that will come with 253 new dwellings. City staff and others have said a project of this magnitude may help instigate improvements on an already overburdened and pedestrian-unfriendly street – we look forward to working with the city to help these improvements happen.
4. Finally, we hope that the city Planning Commission will continue to consider that there is still great opposition to the project by concerned Museum District residents.

Sincerely,

Janine Doyle
President, Museum District Association

Cc: Andreas Addison, 1st District City Councilman
Whitney Brown, 1st District City Council Liaison
Jonathan Brown, Senior Planner - Land Use Administration
Matthew Ebinger, Secretary- City Planning Commission
Jennifer Mullen, Roth Jackson