



CITY OF RICHMOND

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

Ord. No. 2023-282: To amend Ord. No. 2006-194-200, adopted Jul. 24, 2006, and last amended by Ord. No. 2013-197-186, adopted Oct. 14, 2013, which authorized the special use of the property known as 900 West Franklin Street for the purpose of the expansion of a nonconforming retail bookstore, additional signage, and an increase in the radius within which required parking must be provided, to authorize uses permitted in the B-5 Central Business District and to waive parking requirements for those uses, upon certain terms and conditions.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: October 16, 2023

PETITIONER

NWJ Chesterfield Apartments represented by Markham Planning

LOCATION

900 W. Franklin Street

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2006-194-200, adopted Jul. 24, 2006, and last amended by Ord. No. 2013-197-186, adopted Oct. 14, 2013, which authorized the special use of the property known as 900 West Franklin Street for the purpose of the expansion of a nonconforming retail bookstore, additional signage, and an increase in the radius within which required parking must be provided, to authorize uses permitted in the B-5 Central Business District and to waive parking requirements for those uses, upon certain terms and conditions.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is zoned R-73 Multifamily Residential District, which allows for single-family multi-family, and office uses. General commercial uses are not permitted. The proposed requested amendment will authorize those uses permitted in the B-5 Central Business District to be permitted uses on the first floor and basement level of the building. The uses authorized in the B-5 Central Business District are typical for downtown areas. The permitted uses include retail, restaurants, and personal services. Parking requirements for these uses, as stated in the current special use permit, will also be waived.

Staff finds that the proposed development would be consistent with the recommendations of the Richmond 300 Master Plan, which identifies the Future Land Use as Institutional. Retail, office, personal service, and multi-family are all appropriate secondary uses in the Institutional land use designation.

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 amendment 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 to authorize B-5 Central Business District uses in the basement and first floor areas and the waiving of parking requirements for these uses.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Site Description

The .281 acre subject property, known as 900 West Franklin Street, is located on the western corner of West Franklin Street and Shafer Street, in an area surrounded by commercial, institutional, and mixed-use buildings.

Proposed Use of the Property

The proposed amendment to the special use ordinance will authorize B-5 Central Business District uses on the first floor and in the basement areas of the building.

Master Plan

The Richmond 300 designates the property for Institutional land use. These areas call for public and quasi-public entities, such as local, state, and federal government, hospitals, universities, schools, and religious institutions. The plan states that residential uses may be permitted in certain sections of the areas designated as institutional and lists retail, office, personal service, and multi-family as a secondary use in these areas.

Development Style: Several buildings owned by an institution are often connected by an engaging character that creates a campus-like environment.

Ground Floor: Active commercial ground floor uses are required on street-oriented commercial frontages. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor in certain sections of the area. Regardless, ground floor residential units should still have street-oriented façades with setbacks, front yards, and balconies where appropriate.

Mobility: Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. New driveway entrances are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages and minimal driveway entrances are allowed on secondary streets. Ground floor parking is prohibited on principal street frontages.

Intensity: Varies.

Primary Uses: Institutional, cultural, government, and open space.

Secondary: Retail/office/personal service and multi-family.

Zoning and Ordinance Conditions

The subject property is currently located in the R-73 Multi-Family Residential District. This request would amend Ord. 2013-197-186 to authorize permitted principal uses in the B-5 Central Business District in the basement and first floor of an existing building and to waive parking requirements for these uses.

Surrounding Area

The surrounding properties are part of the VCU academic campus along with commercial uses located on West Grace Street.

Neighborhood Participation

Staff notified Fan District Association and the Fan Area Business Alliance, nearby residents and property owners. No comments of opposition or support have been received.

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