



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: November 19, 2018
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of Barack Obama Elementary School Signage, 3101 Fendall Avenue; UDC 2018-45**

I. APPLICANT

Robert (Bobby) Hathaway

II. LOCATION

3101 Fendall Avenue

Property Owner:

City of Richmond School Board

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final Location, Character, and Extent review of signage identifying Barack Obama Elementary School, 3101 Fendall Avenue.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The project involves the installation of two signs. One is proposed to replace the existing wooden sign with a freestanding, two-sided illuminated sign in the front lawn of the school, similar to other schools in the city. The second sign is proposed to be affixed on the building façade of the school.

Staff is supportive of the sign and finds the sign to be consistent with other school signs found within the city. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval with the following conditions:

- That the applicant consider the use of a more neutral color for the signage.
- That the brick of the proposed free standing sign matches the brick of the school as closely as possible.

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

Barack Obama Elementary School is surrounded by single-family detached homes on all sides. It sits on approximately 2 acres that is within an area zoned R-6 (Single-Family Attached Residential District).

b. Scope of Review

The proposed signage is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a "public building or structure".

c. Project Description

The Richmond public school system is proposing to install a new lighted marquee sign in place of the old degraded original wooden sign. The proposed marquee is consistent with other schools in the district. In addition to the marquee, they are proposing to change the name at the top of the school building. The changes to the signage will complete what the Richmond School Board started in June 2018.

J.E.B Stuart elementary was opened in 1922 and has existed for 96 years. In May of 2018, the new Richmond Public Schools administration and Richmond School Board voted to hold a 30 day public comment period to hear comments on renaming the school located at 3101 Fendall Ave. The community embraced the name change as well as the new direction of the administration. The Richmond School Board voted overwhelmingly on June 18, 2018 to change the name from J.E.B Stuart to Barack Obama Elementary.

Much of the funding for this project was raised by the t-shirt fundraiser promoted by the administration.

Richmond Public Schools would like to proceed as quickly as possible with the proposed changes.

d. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any relevant, previously reviewed UDC projects for the subject property.

e. Master Plan

This project falls within the North Planning District of the Master Plan. Aside from illustrating the property to remain as a public/institutional use, Barack Obama Elementary is not highlighted in the plans.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that "sign lettering should be 4" to 14" high and should be in proportion to the area in which it will be displayed. The Guidelines also note that "freestanding signs should be landscaped with appropriate evergreen shrubs, ground cover planting, annuals and/or perennials" (page 24).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**