



August 10, 2018

Mr. Mark Olinger, Director
Department of Planning & Development Review
900 East Broad Street, Suite 511
Richmond, VA 23219
Mark.Olinger@richmondgov.com

RE: Applicant's Report for a Community Unit Plan Amendment at 2100 Sheila Lane

Dear Mr. Olinger,

Please accept this letter as the Applicant's Report for the Community Unit Plan (CUP) amendment application for the property at 2100 Sheila Lane. With this application the property owner and the contractor purchaser of the property, Mike Hanky of Hanky LLC, is petitioning the City Council for a CUP amendment to authorize the development of a self-storage facility.

Documents submitted as part of this application contain in detail the proposed layout of the site as well as the character of the proposed improvements. Therefore, we are requesting that the preliminary plan also serve as the final plan to be approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in accordance with Sec. 30-456.9 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Site

This vacant property is located in the Huguenot Planning District off Forest Hill Avenue at the end of Sheila Lane. The property has a land area of 7.75 acres and is part of the 63-acre Chippenham Forest Square Community Unit Plan that was approved by City Council in 1995. Currently, Chippenham Forest Square is developed as a shopping area with large retailers including a Walmart Super Center, and a Lowes Home Improvement Center, and numerous smaller retailers, restaurants, and other commercial, and service establishments.

Zoning and CUP Ordinance Conditions

The property is located in an R-2 Single-Family Residential district. Ordinance No. 95-198-192 authorized a Community Unit Plan on the site in 1995 and has been amended several times since then. The latest amendment was adopted by City Council in 2002 via Ordinance No. 2002-70-101. While the R-2 district prohibits any commercial uses, the CUP ordinance authorizes a wide variety of commercial uses for the property and details requirements for floor area, building height, parking, screening, signage, and other regulations specific to the CUP.

Proposal

We propose to develop a self-storage facility with a three-story main building and five single-story storage buildings on the site and an area for screened outdoor vehicle storage. All features of the development including building height, floor area, parking, landscaping, signage will meet the regulations of the CUP. The proposed self-storage facility is considered a warehouse use under the City's Zoning Ordinance and is not specifically listed in the permitted uses in the existing CUP.

Prior to the selection of Chippenham Forest Square as the development site, we explored the possibility of development on two other sites along Forest Hill Avenue. As part of our due diligence, we reached out to the surrounding neighborhoods and property owners for input. Because we understand the potential impact of the proposed development on the community, we sincerely appreciated and considered the input we received from the stakeholders. Their significant opposition to the development of each of the two sites convinced us that the proposed development would be better suited elsewhere.

Following a thorough search for a viable development site, and after careful consideration and analysis, we concluded that Chippenham Forest Square is the ideal location for the proposed self-storage facility. We have had positive preliminary discussions with stakeholders in the area, including a cooperative infrastructure agreement with an adjacent property owner that will significantly reduce the development's impact to the City and environment. As a result, we believe that the proposed development will produce the lowest negative impact to surrounding properties while contributing positively to the community for the following reasons:

- 1) The site is the last undeveloped parcel at Chippenham Forest Square and is currently a wooded and vacant lot. Like many other underutilized properties in the City, the site is currently used as an area to conduct illegal activities that are detrimental to the surrounding community. The proposal would transform this underutilized property into a modern, well-maintained, and secure state-of-the-art self-storage facility that will increase the public safety for the surrounding community.
- 2) To the north and east of the property is the existing shopping area that is part of Chippenham Forest Square. To the south is a rail line and a large wooded and undeveloped area in Chesterfield County. The proposed self-storage facility would integrate well as part of the shopping area by providing a new commercial service and complement the existing businesses by not creating additional competition. In addition, the self-storage facility would potentially attract new customers for the existing businesses who may not otherwise visit the shopping area.
- 3) The self-storage facility is a much less intense use than other uses permitted by the CUP ordinance such as big-box retailers, bars and restaurants, or entertainment facility such as clubs or theaters. The alternative development of the site for these other uses would likely create substantially more traffic, congestion, and noise than the self-storage facility.
- 4) To the west of the property is an existing multifamily residential area. While any commercial development would impact these residents, we propose to create a 40-foot wide, landscape buffer, as required by the CUP ordinance, along the western edge of the property that will mitigate any impact to the residents to a negligible level.

- 5) Impacts to the environment and City infrastructure will also be minimized. After meeting with City staff from DPU and surrounding property owners, we have agreed to replace initial plans for a septic system for sanitation with an agreement to use the pump station for the apartment complex to the west to connect to existing sanitary sewers. This cooperation between our development team, surrounding property owners, and DPU will lead to a much more sustainable development that will ultimately benefit the entire community.

Master Plan

The City's Master Plan recommends General Commercial land uses for the property. Primary uses include a broad range of office, retail, general commercial, wholesale, and services uses, typically located along a major transportation corridor (page 135). Recommended zoning is B-3 General Business in which warehouse establishments are a permitted use.

Specific to the Chippenham Forest shopping center, the plan states that the current boundaries should be maintained with no allowances for an expansion of commercial activities into the surrounding residential area (p.199). This proposal is fully compatible with this recommendation and will not expand the existing boundary of the Chippenham Forest Square CUP.

City Charter Conditions

This is a unique opportunity to bring new commercial service a vacant portion of the Chippenham Forest Square CUP. We trust that you will agree with us that this proposed CUP amendment meets the City Charter criteria and the City Code criteria for the granting of CUPs as the project will adequately safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the occupants of the adjoining and surrounding property; will not unreasonably impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property; will not unreasonably increase congestion in streets; will not unreasonably increase public danger from fire or otherwise unreasonably affect public safety; and will not diminish or impair the established values of property in surrounding areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. Please feel free to contact me at lory@markhamplanning.com or (804) 248-2561 if you have any questions or require additional materials to process the application.

Very Truly Yours,



Lory Markham

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Kristen Larson
Matthew Ebinger, Secretary to the City Planning Commission