

## Saunders, Richard L. - PDR

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**From:** Greg Lucyk <gglucy@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 18, 2021 8:38 PM  
**To:** Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR  
**Subject:** Special Use Permit No. 2021-196 5605 Grove Avenue on PC docket for Monday, July 19th

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Dear Mr. Ebinger,

I will appreciate if you would distribute this correspondence to the members of the Planning Commission before the meeting on Monday afternoon, and I would ask you to post this in the record on Legistar with the other papers in this Special Use Permit application. Thank you.

To: Members of the Richmond Planning Commission,

I am writing to express opposition to the referenced Special Use Permit on the docket for Monday's Planning Commission meeting. The SUP would allow the demolition of the former Faison Antiques shop (a 2,700 square foot former residence) and replace it with a three-story, 11,300 square foot big-box office building. The property is in an R-4 Residential District and directly abuts the Tuckahoe Terrace and Glenburnie neighborhoods. The proposed building is nearly four times larger than the existing structure and every other building on the block.

You should know that the Glenburnie Civic Association conducted a survey last week among neighborhood residents for their views on the 5605 Grove SUP. Households were given the documents posted by the city (the Applicant's Report, the architect's plans, and a one page summary of existing zoning requirements and what the SUP would approve). It was a one question survey sent to each household – "Do you support, oppose or take no position on the SUP?" Survey Monkey released the results last Wednesday and 59 households in Glenburnie responded as follows:

Oppose	- 84.7% (50)
Support	- 10.7% (6)
No position	- 5.0% (3)

This overwhelming opposition among these Westhampton residents is based on the size and design of the building that is totally out of character with the adjacent neighborhoods. It violates all existing zoning requirements for height, front and side yard setbacks and is much closer to the sidewalk – permanently disfiguring the Grove Avenue streetscape. A grossly inadequate parking allocation (providing only 15 on site spaces when the SUP authorizes 30 employees for the building) will increase parking and traffic congestion in the already burdened adjacent neighborhoods. Also, a "rooftop patio" some four stories high intended for employee's outdoor lunches and happy-hour cocktail parties violates the expectation of privacy and completely undermines the purpose of the many privacy fences maintained by bordering Tuckahoe Terrace and Glenburnie residents. Finally, I object to the extensive exterior lighting, particularly in the rear parking area, given that it will result in unwanted illumination of neighboring residential properties from dusk to dawn.

Even more concerning is that despite numerous meetings with the Westhampton Citizens Association and the Glenburnie Association, the applicant has adamantly refused to address any of these concerns. While the applicant has changed the color of the bricks and windows, and sketched in proposed landscaping, the enormous size and extreme setback reductions have not changed by one single foot, and the lack of adequate parking for building occupants and

business visitors (which could be remedied by reducing the size of the project) remains a serious concern for congestion in the adjacent streets and neighborhoods. Approval of the SUP under these circumstances will send a message to developers that they really don't need to work with residents or neighborhood groups to address concerns or achieve consensus. That is not the message we should be sending.

The City Charter requires that prior to approval; it must be shown that a proposed special use, among other things, will not:

- \* be detrimental to the safety, health, morals and general welfare of the community involved;
- \*create congestion in streets, roads, alleys and other public ways and places in the area involved;
- \*tend to cause overcrowding of land and an undue concentration of population.

This proposed SUP fails to meet all these requirements. First, it has gravely divided and polarized the Westhampton community and approval of the SUP without addressing residents' concerns will be highly detrimental to the general welfare of the community involved. Second, PDR is disregarding well-settled parking standards with no showing this will not create congestion in adjacent roads or streets unduly burdening adjacent neighborhoods. And third, the wholesale repeal of setback requirements will result in future development "building to the sidewalk," all of which will cause overcrowding of land and irreparable damage to the Grove Avenue streetscape.

We are not opposed to development that is compatible with the neighborhood, but this proposal does not meet that standard. We are asking the Planning Commission to decline action on the SUP at this time, and instead, carry it over with instructions to the applicant to come back with a revised proposal that makes a good faith effort to address residents' concerns. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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