

Reston Planning & Zoning Committee

July 18th, 2016 7:30 PM North County Government Center

In attendance:

Willcox, Hovermale, Jennings, Murphy, Cupina, Kennedy, Straits, Vanell, Weber, Penniman, Thomson,
Harrison

Absent:

Walker, Oak, Cerny, Wyands

Item 1- General Administration:

Discussion on the Committee addressing architectural design review in locations not covered by the Reston Association Design Review Board. The need for review and some form of oversight of the projects being developed outside of the DRB's purview was recognized. However the P & Z Committee does not have any authority to regulate design under their current mandate. General consensus of the Committee was that developers should be encouraged to meet with the DRB (although not required) for a courtesy review to obtain their input.

Willcox advised the Committee that as previously directed, a letter had been sent to Supervisor Hudgins, Chairman Bulova, Planning Commissioner De la Fe regarding the American Press Institute Building. The intent of the letter was to advise the addressees of the Committee's previous approval of the project and that the approval was made without benefit of complete information on the historic nature of the project. The letter emphasized that due to the lack of complete information presented to the Committee on the project that a stringent overview by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors should be performed prior to any further approvals for redevelopment.

Further discussion about the availability and importance of obtaining the Fairfax County Planning and Zoning staff reports as part of an applicant's submission occurred. It was noted that the staff reports are generally released no sooner than two weeks before the Planning Commission hearing. Due to the timing of the Committee's review and vote on an application and the Planning Commission hearing, it is difficult to obtain the final staff report to include in an applicant's presentation for the Committee's review. General consensus was that applicant's should be encouraged to obtain the staff report, preliminary or final, in order to best advise the Committee of County review comments.

Item 2- 11720 Sunrise Valley Drive

Lori Greenleaf of McGuire Woods represented the applicant and presented the project with the intent of obtaining a vote from the Committee for the project . Ms. Greenleaf presented that the project density has been reduced from 56 units to 54 units and that the applicant has been working with County staff on creating improved pedestrian and vehicular access for both interparcel and properties immediately adjacent to the project.

The applicant has also enhanced the “pocket park” in the north portion of the property, site art features in working with IPAR for features such as a memorial to founding Restonians and a butterfly garden.

The applicant informed the Committee that the project, although not required, the project meets the 2014 Storm Water Management regulations.

Vanell: Asked how traffic generated by the project will be addressed. The applicant responded that Fairfax County does not require any type of traffic mitigation for the project. Additionally, the redevelopment of the project will create far less density than what is allowed for the project under its current zoning.

Penniman: Asked for a comparison of the existing parking to the proposed parking. The applicant responded that the existing parking provides for approximately 200 spaces and the proposed parking reduces that amount to 156 spaces.

Penniman: encouraged less parking due to the projects close proximity to Metro. Additionally, when asked about participation in Reston Association (RA) the applicant stated that they will be petitioning for membership to RA.

Strait: Thanked the applicant for providing the County Staff Report. Also encouraged more green space as the project appears to dense, better connectivity of trails in an effort to create a more attractive and walkable community.

Kennedy: Asked for the number of work force housing and affordable dwelling units being provided. The applicant responded that they are providing 5 Workforce Dwelling Units on the property to be administered in accordance with the Board of Supervisor’s Workfore Policy Guidelines. Three of the five units will be affordable to those who’s income qualify at 80% of the area median income and the remaining two shall be affordable to those whose income qualifies at 100% of the area median income.

Cupina: Discussed that despite the ½ mile distance to the Metro it is still a significant (20 minute) walk. He also disagreed with the expressed statement of providing less parking as townhouse neighborhoods such as what is proposed for this project typically require more parking.

Murphy: Asked about the materials on the project to which the applicant stated that the buildings will be constructed with brick and cementitious siding on all four sides. Murphy also commented on the variety of “interesting colors”.

Jennings: Stated that the architecture was agreeable to him. He also stated that the applicant’s proffered contribution to the Park Authority seemed minimal and wished it was more. The applicant responded by stating that due to the lower density of the project that the contribution was acceptable to Fairfax County.

Thomson: questioned the formula that determines the applicant’s contribution for the Reston Road Fund Contribution. The applicant responded that it is based upon a standard Fairfax County equation.

Thomson: Encouraged more Work Force Housing for the project.

A motion was made for a vote for approval of the project as submitted – the Committee voted to approve the project - 11 for and 0 opposed.

Item 3: The Lofts at Reston Station – informational presentation only.

Brian Winterhalter of Cooley LLC represented the applicant and gave a general overview of the project. The applicant will return to the Committee at a future date and be requesting a vote at that time. Currently the project is scheduled for a Planning Commission Hearing in late September.

Thomson: Inquired about what influenced the design of the project and if the project has been coordinated with the adjacent landowners. The applicant responded that the project has been and will continue to be coordinated with the adjacent property owners.

Willcox: Commented that the strong rectilinear character of the project felt rigid and unwelcoming.

Hovemale: Commented that the streetscape design was successful.

Jennings: Commented that the park contribution was applauded and that the urban character of the project was successful.

Murphy: Commented that the design was successful and noted the use of both pervious and non-pervious pavement in the design.

Cupina: Inquired if the applicant had committed to join RA as well as committing to the use of the open space on the project to the public to which the applicant responded affirmatively on both comments.

Strait: Supported “contemporary design” of the project. Expressed that she wished the project had more open space and encouraged the use of green roofs.. The applicant responded the waiver of the open space requirement for the project was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Penniman: Expressed concern with the lack of “urban space” contemplated for this area, no retail space being provided, minimal open space and no real community space. The applicant responded by stating

the developer of the project is proffering a contribution to the county for development within the area for additional community space.

Vanell: Expressed that he was generally supportive of the project.

Item 4: Commerce Metro Center

(Note Committee member Thompson had to depart before the presentation)

Greg Riegler of McGuire Woods represented the applicant and gave a detailed overview of the project. The applicant was seeking a vote on the project and anticipated a Planning Commission hearing in mid-September.

Weber: Expressed strong concerns with increased traffic flow in and out of the project, a lack of coordinated bus circulation and drop off as well as traffic signaling along the public right of way. Specific emphasis on the proposed right in right out only access was noted as well as the proposed development's impact on the intersection of South Lakes Drive and Sunrise Valley due to the very heavy traffic volume already being experienced in the area.

The applicant responded by stating that facilitating internal circulation onto adjacent parcels within the general development was not within their control due to separate ownership entities. The applicant has approached these entities to discuss improving the overall circulation of the development however they are unable to provide any assurance that the adjacent owners will open up their roads to the applicant.

The applicant also responded that a comprehensive traffic study for the project will be prepared in accordance with Fairfax County requirements however the South Lakes intersection is not required to be part of that study.

Vanell: Expressed concern with a lack of bus access. Also commented that the internal public areas are very well designed but provide limited access to the general public. Also expressed that the proposed design of the initial building to be developed for the project (building A) is not as compelling as the public areas.

Penniman: Encouraged the applicant to work with the adjacent property owners to open up the road network to the public. He also encouraged the applicant to consider developing the retail component of the project during the initial phase of the project. He also felt that Building A was notably long.

Strait: Expressed her opinion on the successful design of the public spaces and circulation paths.

Kennedy: Inquired about the building height and number of stories, commitment to Work Force housing and RA participation. The applicant responded that the building is 85 feet high and 7 stories. The applicant stated that they are committed to 15% Work Force Housing and that RA participation is being explored.

Murphy: Inquired whether the applicant was willing to have a courtesy review by RA DRB to which the applicant stated the overall development has its own internal architectural review and that they will not commit to RA DRB review.

Jennings: Stated that the open space design was good but due to the applicant not having any proffers to present limits his ability to comment.

Hovemale: Acknowledge that traffic in and around the project is his biggest concern but also realizes that there is not much that can be done by the developer as the surrounding road network is the bigger problem that only the county can address.

A motion to deny the project was made Weber due to traffic issues and bus access improvements being weak. No second was made to Weber's motion.

A motion to approve the project was made by Murphy and seconded by Kennedy. The motion to approve resulted in a vote of 6 against and 4 for the approval. Application denied.