

CITY OF HYATTSVILLE
PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES
MAY 18, 2021

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_itaE7eEUSQm0tKj3AUu_Rg

1. Introduction of Committee & Guest Members (7:00 PM)

- Maureen Foster, Committee Chair
- Marshall, Committee Member
- Yohannes Bennehoff, Committee Member
- Cliff Mayo, Committee Member
- William Seath, Committee Member
- Greg Barnes, Committee Member

- Ben Simasek, Council Liaison
- Bart Lawrence, Council Liaison
- Joseph Solomon, Council Member

- Chris Hatcher, Presenter
- Mark Ferguson, Presenter
- Larry Taub, Presenter
- Nate Forman, Presenter

- Julie Chawla-Kazer, Attendee
- Peter Burkholder, Attendee
- Rose Fletcher, Attendee
- Scott Wilson, Attendee
- Dave Dukes, Attendee
- Tom Wright, Attendee
- Jim Menasian, Attendee

- Jim Chandler, Staff Liaison
- Kate Powers, City Staff

- Eugene Poverni, Presenter
- Henry Watford, Presenter
- Dan Pascale, Presenter
- James Dankovich, Presenter

- Nick Speech, Attendee
- Vince Biase, Attendee
- Monte Dawla, Attendee
- Sheila Gupta, Attendee
- Emily Palus, Attendee
- Timothy Ng, Attendee
- Sam Denes, Attendee

2. Committee Business

- Welcome New Committee Appointments
- Approve April 2021 minutes
 - Delay minute approval until June meeting

3. PSG East West Storage LLC, DSP-99044-20

- Presentation
 - Lawrence Taub, Representation for the Applicant, O'Malley, Miles, Nysten & Gilmore, P.A.
- Overview of Project
 - The developer has done multiple projects focused on consolidated storage.
 - This project will be unique, as the consolidated storage facility will be housed in a subterranean space below a mall.
 - Numerous dwelling units (multifamily units, townhouses) have been approved in the area around the mall which will increase demand for this type of use.
 - This is a unique situation – we must go through the DSP process though the change to the exterior is very minimal. The project is mostly internal to the mall, occupying existing space. Self-storage is a use that is not permitted in the TDDP and therefore requires approval of a detailed site plan.
 - There is an internal drive aisle already existing in the basement of the mall. It is currently used for truck delivery of inventory. Cars will be able to utilize this one-way drive into the storage facility.
 - As individuals continue along the one-way drive aisle west, they will exit near the former JC Penney.
 - The applicant is proposing 799 storage units, mostly small in size (5' x 5').
 - Facility hours will be 10 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Saturday, and closed on Sundays.
 - The facility will be staffed by 2 full-time staff members.
 - Guests and users will access the facility via key fob until 8 PM.
 - Pedestrian access will reside on the south side of property, using the existing frontage space. It will blend into the existing retail stores. Individuals will enter the mall and take a flight of stairs down to the storage area. Access will be limited by individual codes.
 - The applicant is proposing a monument sign and an access sign, one for pedestrians and one for vehicle ramp.
- Clarifying Questions
 - Yohannes: Will retail delivery still use these ramps? How do you anticipate avoiding conflict between deliveries and storage users?
 1. Dan Pascale: There should only be a few storage users at a time and truck use in the tunnel is limited.
 2. Henry: The storage component will only be on the south side of the mall. Some stores will maintain their underground storage. Many tenants now keep their inventory in the back of their store, with regular shipments being delivered and stored at grade, not sub-grade. Target won't use tunnel, but Macy's will.
 - Will: No clarifying questions at this time.
 - Yohannes: Will signage be added along the drive aisle for personal vehicles?
 1. Applicant: Yes, near Target.

2. Applicant: Indicators will be included, signifying full parking spaces, to avoid traffic jams and idling cars.
 3. Applicant: The plan includes 17 parking spaces. We anticipate approximately 20 to 30 total vehicle visits in a day. It is unlikely all loading spaces will be occupied at the same time.
- Marshall: Will there be physical traffic control measures for the tunnel and associated area? Will there be any human intervention?
 1. Applicant: We anticipate only 20 trips per day, with the busiest time only having 8 to 10 cars plus one staff member.
 2. Marshall: I am concerned with safety, not volume, specifically the potential conflict between delivery trucks and storage customers.
 3. Applicant: There will be 24-hour security, with patrols through the tunnel every 30 minutes.
 4. Marshall: Of all your storage facilities, how many are housed in the basement of a mall?
 5. Applicant: This is the first one of this type.
 - Cliff: Does the applicant have other storage facilities of similar size and unit count? Are the access hours chosen based on retail delivery times? From 6-8 pm with no staff on duty, will access be available for vehicle or for pedestrians only?
 1. Applicant: The hours of 10 am to 6 pm was chosen to align with the anticipated staffing needs of the facility. After 6 pm, both vehicle and pedestrian access will be available. After 8 pm, the vehicle entrance gates will be closed.
 2. Applicant: The tunnel opens at 6 am by safety patrol. Sometimes there are deliveries until 11 pm. Security officers will respond and open access to tunnel.
 3. Eugene: Our most recent storage facility built was 100,000 square feet. The facility we are proposing for the Mall at Prince George's is 98,000 square feet.
 - Greg: I noticed in the write-up the applicant had mentioned certain smaller items, like golf clubs and holiday decorations. Will the storage units in the basement of mall be strict on the type of items that can be stored there?
 1. Applicant: There are some restrictions outlined in the lease; No automobiles, guns, hazardous chemicals, gasoline, etc. Usually people are storing furniture, extra tools from contractors, and other typical households and small businesses items.
 - Maureen: What else is the space used for now? Is there another way to generate income in the space? Can it be used for anything else?
 1. Applicant: The basement has historically been used as storage for retail tenants, however many retail tenants are no longer interested in using the basement storage. Tenants want on storage on the same floor as their retail space. It allows for faster response time to consumers. For the most part, the basement is dead space. Creating a storage area provides the mall with an opportunity to gain revenue

and tax dollars in a space that does not normally generate revenue. The majority of the basement was unleased storage space, just empty square footage.

- Will: Will pedestrians be able to access the storage area via stairs or publicly accessible elevator?
 1. Applicant: There will be two service elevators and 4 stairwells to access the basement area.
 2. Applicant: The intention is that the storage of goods will occur along the drive aisle and the pedestrian egress is for exiting the area without storage items or for emergency egress.

- Committee Comments

- Maureen: I think the question is, do we support this as a use? There's nothing wild about this plan. This is an appropriate use for subgrade space. Malls reorganized and changed over time. The basement area is currently obsolete and sitting empty. It's not the highest best use but is likely appropriate given the age of the mall.
- Greg: I understand the notion that this is unused space that is currently being wasted. I would like to see the productive use of the space. There may be an issue of security, specifically the storage of inappropriate items and unwanted traffic flow. The responsibilities of the two full time staff members is unclear. This could be a good use for the space but there are some concerns.
- Cliff: I am generally not a fan of storage spaces in dense area. However, in this case, the space is just sitting there. The use seems to appropriately fit in with the existing mall. I don't have a problem with it, I think the use is acceptable.
- Marshall: This is a dungeon space with no windows, I doubt an arts use can be utilized there. I have no issue with placing a storage facility in the basement of the mall, but I do have concerns about traffic.
- Yohannes: I am in agreement with Cliff and Maureen – adaptive reuse is better than no use, as long as it is not completely incongruous to the area. This is not uncommon to other areas of the county.
- Will: I concur. With the state of retail effecting malls, this is a unique opportunity to make vacant space useful.

Recommendation:

The Planning Committee recommends the City Council approve the amendment to the Table of Use to allow the adaptive reuse of unleaseable retail space in the basement of the Mall at Prince George's. Passed unanimously.

4. Clay Property, CSP-20007

- Presentation
 - Chris Hatcher, Representation for the Applicant, Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chtd.
- Overview of Project
 - Introduction by Chris Hatcher and Mark Ferguson.
 - Second time this zoning request has come before the Planning Committee. The last time was in November 2020.
 - The comments received from this committee in November revolved around affordability levels and administration. The developer will come to general terms with the selected affordable housing provider (Habitat for Humanity) in terms of affordability administration. Currently, we are discussing 10% units with a range of 60% to 80% average median income (AMI).
 - Another issue discussed was the enforceability of the developer's proffers. This has been taken care of, as the applicant has changed the format of their request from a zoning rewrite to rezoning through a Conceptual Site Plan (CSP) application.
 - The layout of the site will be determined during the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision (PPS).
 - We heard the Committee's issues and addressed those issues specifically.
 - For new Committee members, the Clay Property is within the Prince George's Plaza Transit Development Overlay Zone, a regional transit district. This area has an intensity of uses and is one of three regional downtowns, where the County is directing development regrowth.
 - Clay is at the northern end of the transit development overlay zone.
 - The Landy Development Phase 2 was on the agenda at the last City Council meeting. Phase 1 will soon be breaking ground once permits are secured.
 - The Prince George's Plaza Metro station is the heart of the transit district.
 - The Clay Property is a bit further away in the Neighborhood Edge character area. The intention of this area is to transition the high intensity downtown core to the outside residential area.
 - We have been tracking staff comments closely and integrating them into our revisions. The applicant has included an enhanced buffer along the existing single family dwelling units to the east. The connection to Calverton Drive will solely accommodate pedestrian, bike, and emergency vehicle traffic.
 - 100-year stormwater management will occur on-site through local environmental design.
 - As seen on the Tree Conservation Plan (TCP), the western side of the site has steep slopes and a concentration of specimen trees. Soltez has revised the site plan in response to these environmental features, moving the park connection on the west side of the site further north.
 - There will be an opportunity to save some trees with more sensitive grading.
 - The revisions also include the alignment of the interior roadway with Calverton Drive.
 - Revised plans will be made available to the city shortly.

- We initially presented the plan to the public while seeking rezoning through the Countywide Map Amendment (CMA). We brought the proposal back as a Conceptual Site Plan (CSP).
- Another component of the project is the potential land swap with Park and Planning, a suggested action in the TDDP. We have been discussing this option with the Parks Department.
- The site layout will likely change with the land swap.
- The Parks Department will reach out to the City when starting the swap process.
- Clarifying Questions
 - Cliff: Can the presenters clarify how this proposed development meets the mix of housing types described in the Neighborhood Edge Character Area definition?
 1. Applicant: The Neighborhood Edge Character Area does not state that single family detached (SF-D) housing must be present.
 2. Cliff: Why proposed a development made up of only townhouses when it is the only property in the Neighborhood Edge zoned for single family detached housing?
 3. Mark: Looking at this from a big picture planning standpoint, ideally this area would be high density (40 units/acre), as it is adjacent to a downtown transit district.
 4. Cliff: Is it the explicit goal of the applicant to increase density as much as possible on the property?
 5. Chris: I don't believe that is an accurate summary. The R-20 zone does allow a broader array of residential uses. The current layout is a placeholder. It was our impression from previous public meetings that the community preferred a 50-foot landscaped buffer on site over the inclusion of single family detached homes directly adjacent to the existing neighborhood.
 - Yohannes: I do not have any clarifying questions at this time.
 - Greg: With the current layout at a placeholder and a 16.33 units per acre cap on R-20 properties, can you provide use with a rough idea of the square footage of individual units?
 1. Chris: This may be a little premature. The applicant envisions the Clay Property would look similar to the Landy project. Townhomes at Landy will range from 1800 sf to 2200 sf at the largest.
 2. Mark: Yes, it is a bit too early to talk about the specific units. Stanley Martin is the likely builder, who worked on the Whole Foods project and will construct the Landy townhouses. Currently, we are requesting rezoning, not specific housing types. The townhouse units will have a range of different widths. We do not intend to pursue multifamily products as there is major resistance.
 - Marshall: Is the applicant requesting the entire parcel be rezoned to R-20, or just a portion of the property be rezoned?

1. Applicant: Yes, we are requesting the L-shape property be rezoned to R-20, but the land swap may alter the footprint of the development area.
- Will: Can you clarify the approximate change in grade from east to west on the property?
 1. Applicant: The west end of the property down to the adjacent parkland is about a 20 ft drop. There is an approximate change in grade of 20 to 30 feet west to east across the property.
- Public Comment: Are the elements agreed upon by the applicant binding?
 1. Applicant: The CSP associated with the rezoning is a bubble plan. Some elements are binding; for example, the buffers reflected on the bubble plan would be binding unless the CSP is revised. It is not uncommon that the zoning of the property permits greater density that the developer wants. We cannot fit the max number of units associated with R-20 zoning on this property.
- Peter Burkholder: Can you explain why the Landy Property was clear cut in 2016-2017 and left to grow wild for four plus years? Will the Clay Property receive this same thoughtless treatment?
 1. Applicant: The forest harvest at the Landy Property was specifically a response to the Police Department and Northwestern High School. Unwanted activity was occurring in the woods and there was a strong desire for better visibility and less cover. I can't speak to the possibility of this happening again, but the Clay Property has different circumstances than the Landy Property.
- Peter: On page 28 of the packet materials, there is a 50 ft buffer on east side of the property, but it appears that specimen trees are being removed in that area.
 1. Applicant: We look at the health status of the specimen tree to determine if it will be preserved or removed.
- Cliff: Has the applicant explored the possibility of including stacked townhouses or 2-over-2 units on the property?
 1. Applicant: There are no obvious impediments to this, however in my experience laying out projects, they are unfriendly to small sites. These units need a larger footprint and flatter surface area. They do not tend to work well from an urban design standpoint. I'm personally not a fan. Also, condos are harder to finance and are not a fee simple product. It may be possible, but it is likely we would need a bigger, flatter site.
- Maureen: What is the difference between the 10-ft south side buffer and the 50-ft buffer along Bridal Path?
 1. Applicant: The required buffers for the perimeter of the property is zero. TDDP Section 4.7 does not apply in the TDOZ. WE have a 10 ft buffer currently on the plan, as this is a common buffer width between townhomes and multifamily products. There is a hierarchy of buffers based on what is perceived to be appropriate. The buffer

for Hitching Post was initially 50 feet, but we found that to be inadequate, so it was revised to 150 feet. We believe a 50-foot buffer between the single family attached homes on the Clay Property and the existing single family detached homes is an appropriate transition.

- Committee Comments
 - *The Planning Committee supports City Staff recommendation to preserve specimen tress on the west side of the Clay Property. The Planning Committee supports the preservation of as many specimen trees as possible on site.*
 - 1. In Favor: Cliff, Yohannes, Will, Greg, Marshall, Maureen **(Passes 6-0)**
 - *The Planning Committee supports the 150-foot buffer to the north of the site as well as the potential land swap with M-NCPPC.*
 - 1. In Favor: Marshall, Greg, Will, Yohannes, Cliff, Maureen **(Passes 6-0)**
 - *If the 50-foot buffer is established on the east side of the property, this land should be incorporated into private lots to ensure its maintenance.*
 - 1. In Favor: Marshall, Cliff, Yohannes, Will, Greg, Maureen **(Passes 6-0)**

*The Planning Committee recommends the City Council support the Clay Property rezoning to R-20. 3 in favor (Marshall, Yohannes, Will), 3 opposed (Cliff, Greg, Maureen). **Motion does not pass.***

*The Planning Committee recommends the Clay Property zoning remain R-80. 3 in favor (Cliff, Greg, Maureen), 3 opposed (Marshall, Yohannes, Will). **Motion does not pass.***

No consensus reached.

5. Development Update

- Hamilton Manor Acquisition – *County Right of First Refusal*
 - Closing early next month
 - Capital improvements details currently unknown.
- Affordable Housing Strategy – *Plan Adoption May 3, 2021.*

6. Additional Questions & Discussion

7. Adjourn (9:45 PM)