



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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May 14, 2013

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT:

- 2. 1700 Lee Highway (Colony House)**
 - A. GP-326-11-1** General Land Use Plan Amendment for a property known as 1700 Lee Hwy (RPC #16-025-008), generally located on the northeast portion of the block bounded by Lee Hwy to the north, N. Quinn St. to the east, and N. Scott St. to the south and west from “Low-Medium” Residential (16-36 units/acre) to “Low” Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 1.5 FAR office; up to 72 units/acre residential; up to 110 units/acre hotel).
 - B. Z-2551-11-1** Rezoning from “C-2” Service Commercial-Community Business Districts to “C-O-1.5” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment Districts and related update to ACZO Map 34-1 to indicate the Zoning District and extend Line A around the property boundary where necessary; 1700 Lee Hwy (RPC# 16-025-008).
 - C. SP #423** Site Plan to construct a hotel with up to 168 rooms and modifications of zoning ordinance requirements for the parking ratio, tandem parking spaces, compact parking ratio, bonus density for LEED Gold certification, and other modifications as necessary to achieve the proposed development plan; located at 1700 Lee Hwy (RPC# 16-025-008).

- RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- A. Adopt the resolution to approve an amendment to the General Land Use Plan from “Low-Medium” Residential (16-36 units/acre) to “Low” Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 1.5 FAR office; up to 72 units/acre residential; up to 110 units/acre hotel) for the property known as 1700 Lee Highway, generally located on the northeast portion of the block bounded by Lee Highway to the north, North Quinn**

P.C. #

Street to the east, and North Scott Street to the south and west.

- B. Adopt the resolution to approve the rezoning request from “C-2” to “C-O-1.5” and related update to the ACZO Map 34-1 to indicate the Zoning District and extend Line A around the property boundary.**

- C. Adopt the ordinance approving a site plan consisting of a hotel with up to 168 rooms, located at 1700 Lee Highway, with the following modifications:**
 - 1. Staff clarify that the level of service “F” pertains to the off-ramp from I-66 onto east-bound Lee Highway.**
 - 2. Staff correct the typo in Condition #39 (third paragraph), changing the word from “torage” to “storage”.**
 - 3. For the County Board meeting, the applicant should submit plans and elevations to confirm the depths in the façade treatment in key areas.**

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard these items at its May 6, 2013 meeting. The development team for the applicant was present, including Mary Beth Avedesian, applicant (1700 Lee Highway, LLC); Jon Kinney, attorney ((Bean, Kinney and Korman)); John Torti, architect (Torti Gallas and Partners); and Daniel Duke, engineer (Bohler Engineering). Mr. Kinney provided an overview of the proposed site plan and how the building design has evolved throughout the public review process. He described the challenges of the site, including its extreme topography, and how the applicant sited the building in order to preserve the trees at the rear. He also identified the various community benefits, including widening the sidewalk on North Quinn Street, several transportation-related improvements, provision of a LEED Gold certified building, agreement to the condition for in-building wireless communication through the building, provision of a green roof, contributions to the affordable housing fund, and ADA-accessible shuttle service to the Court House and Rosslyn Metro Stations for both guests and employees. Mr. Torti described the building architecture and design, and details of the façade treatment including sample building materials. He described how the building would activate the site and the Lee Highway frontage, and how it complements the adjacent neighborhood to the south.

Elizabeth Kays, of CPHD Planning, provided an overview of the proposal’s planning implications, including the GLUP and zoning requests and the proposed site plan. She provided background on the site, including the zoning history and the recommendations of the special GLUP study. Ms. Kays also described the public review process and the proposed community benefits. Also present were Bob Duffy of CPHD Planning, and Lisa Maher and Melanie Jesick of DES Planning.

Public Speakers

There were no public speakers.

Planning Commission Reports

Site Plan Review Committee Report

Commissioner Klein reported that the SPRC conducted five meetings on the site plan. Two key issues during the discussions involved transportation-related concerns and building architecture. The applicant was very cooperative and responsive to the issues raised during the SPRC meetings; at the conclusion of the process there were no outstanding issues. Commissioner Klein suggested that the Commission discussion follow the outline in the SPRC report: Land Use, Rezoning, and for the Site Plan discussion – Site Design and Characteristics, Transportation, Architectural Design, and Community Benefits.

Planning Commission Discussion

General Land Use Plan Amendment

Commissioner Sockwell inquired about the special study and asked if it concluded that the proposed zoning change is consistent with surrounding sites, to which Ms. Kays responded affirmatively. Commissioner Sockwell also asked if the special study had any recommendations with regard to building height and its consistency with surrounding sites and structures. Ms. Kays responded that there were no specific recommendations on building height, but it was discussed that, because of the topography of the site, additional height could be accommodated without negatively impacting surrounding uses. While the garage has been determined to be the building's basement level, if it is included in the height, the building would be considered to be 10 stories. Commissioner Sockwell confirmed that technically the building is eight stories. Ms. Kays agreed but added that from Lee Highway the building is effectively 10 stories (because of the two-story garage), which is still within the height limits of the zoning district. Commissioner Sockwell asked Ms. Kays if in her opinion eight stories is consistent with surrounding buildings, to which Ms. Kays responded yes. The applicant presented drawings at SPRC showing that the proposed building is the same height at the roofline as adjacent buildings; therefore she believes the proposed building height is appropriate.

Commissioner Iacomini referred to an older building constructed in the 1950's or 60's that is located adjacent to the rear of the proposed building. She asked if the height of the proposed building is equal to or below the height at the roofline of the adjacent building, to which Ms. Kays responded that the proposed height is equal to the height at the roofline of the adjacent building. Commissioner Iacomini, as a point of reference, asked if the top of the existing Colony House building is the same height as the top of the first occupiable level of the proposed hotel or the garage level of the proposed building. Ms. Kays responded that the level of the second floor of the building (comprising two levels of garage plus the ground floor) is approximately the same height of the existing Colony House building. Commissioner Iacomini acknowledged that the proposed building height will be consistent with the height of the adjacent building to the rear, but noted that there will be a change along Lee Highway and I-66 at this point. The proposed building will be the closest building to Lee Highway and I-66 along this stretch of the right-of-way. Most of the other sites have more trees and their structures are set back more from the street.

Rezoning

There was no Commission discussion on this item.

Site Plan

SPRC Discussion Outline

- Site Design and Characteristics, and Architectural Design.

Mr. Torti described the various materials on a sample materials board, after which Commissioner Cole asked Mr. Torti to provide more information on the acrylic stucco material. Mr. Torti explained that the material would have an acrylic base that would be applied to exterior sheathing. It is a more durable, longer lasting material than other types of stucco. It was also noted that this would have a cementitious base.

Commissioner Monfort stated that he likes the proposed building design a lot better than the previous design, but that it does not include the level of detail on the façade of the Clarendon Center building, which Mr. Torti also designed. He was disappointed that the proposed building is not as interesting as the Clarendon Center building. Mr. Torti responded by providing more information on the details of the proposed architecture and façade treatment.

Commissioner Iacomini stated that the drawings appear to have more articulation in the panels between the windows. Mr. Torti responded that the panels would include a design motif that is repeated in every panel.

Commissioner Kumm congratulated the applicant on the proposed site plan, and for accommodating the challenging access points, the treatment of the Lee Highway frontage, and improving the bike experience. She agreed with Commissioner Monfort that the north elevation lacks sufficient detail. She also stated that the building massing between the two towers should be broken up. Commissioner Kumm asked the architect if he would consider more articulation on the north elevation. Mr. Torti responded that the design team prefers the proposed design because it is cleaner and purer. It was a considered decision to provide articulation in the building massing on the south elevation, which is the pedestrian side, and design the north elevation to be simpler because it is considered the vehicular side. As a designer, Mr. Torti recommended against adding more articulation to the north elevation.

Commissioner Siegel asked if LED lighting would be used for the street lights, to which Ms. Kays responded yes, the street lights will comply with the County standards and will include LED lighting. Commissioner Siegel commented that new LED lighting would make a huge difference in activating the street. She followed asking if LED lighting will be used inside the hotel rooms, as part of the LEED Gold certification. Mr. Torti responded that all ceiling mounted fixtures would be LED.

Commissioner Harner asked about the elevation drawings and renderings and if there is sufficient information in the drawing about building details, such as the depth of the reveals where shadow

lines are indicated. Ms. Kays responded that the line drawings provide some of the information. Commissioner Harner suggested that for the County Board meeting the applicant provide a certain level of detail in the drawings to make those distinctions. He also inquired about the darker, green-tinted glass labeled in the drawings, and noted that the County has been moving away from the use of darker tinted glass. Mr. Torti stated that the glass will not appear dark and tinted on the building, and that the same glass has been used on high-end condominium projects.

- Transportation, Parking, and Lee Highway

Commissioner Forinash stated that the site is in a very desolate area of Lee Highway and the proposal will result in a significant improvement. Commissioner Forinash inquired about the location of the relocated bus stop, to which Mr. Kinney responded that the current bus stop is located on the east side of North Quinn Street and the applicant has been asked to move it closer to the relocated curb on Lee Highway. Commissioner Forinash asked about the changes to the Lee Highway and North Quinn Street cross-section. Ms. Jesick explained that the changes include removing the acceleration lane, constructing curb and gutter, installing a new 12 foot sidewalk and grass planting strip, construction an ADA-compliant bus pad and bus schedule on a flag, and installation of new street lights. Commissioner Forinash asked if the curb radius would be tightened at the intersection of North Quinn Street and Lee Highway. Mr. Duke responded that the existing curb radius from northbound North Quinn Street to Lee Highway is 25 – 30 feet, and that the proposed radius would be tightened to 15 – 20 feet. Commissioner Forinash inquired about the Lee Highway, North Rhodes Street, I-66 turning movement that has an existing level of service “F”. Ms. Jesick responded that this area refers to the I-66 off ramp merging onto Lee Highway. Commissioner Forinash suggested that this be clarified in the staff report before it is heard by the County Board. He also asked about the type of street lights that will be installed on Lee Highway, to which Ms. Jesick responded that staff believes VDOT will not have a problem with the installation of County standard street lights, instead of cobra lights.

Commissioner Monfort inquired about the treatment and ownership of the residual land after the relocation of the Lee Highway curb line. Ms. Kays responded that the VDOT-owned right-of-way would be planted with lawn and added that the land contiguous to it is under the same ownership as the adjacent apartment building and therefore future redevelopment would not be impacted in the same way as the VDOT-owned property.

Commissioner Sockwell inquired about the justification for the proposed hotel parking ratio of 0.6, and 0.7 with additional managed spaces. Ms. Jesick responded that staff supports the reduced parking ratio due the provision of off-site transportation elements, including relocation of the bus stop, provision of shuttle services to the Metro Stations, and the extensive TDM plan. Mr. Duffy added that the proposed parking ratio is similar to other approved hotels of this type, and is consistent with comparable projects in terms of their distance from Metro stations. With provision of the shuttle program, the proposed parking ratio is not inconsistent with County policies.

Commissioner Cole stated that he was confused about the comparables, noting that this is an extended- stay hotel located approximately one-half mile from a Metro station. He added that he thinks guests of extended stay hotels may be more likely to drive cars than guests at regular hotels. He stated that using hotels near Metro stations is troubling to him. He asked if there are

comparables in the County for extended-stay hotels not located near a Metro station. Mr. Duffy responded that when considering parking ratios, staff factors in the travel patterns, length of stay, site characteristics, and hotel operations. Staff is comfortable with the proposal and believes this is the right use for the site. Commissioner Cole stated that, from the perspective of future proposals, decisions are better when they are data-driven and based on actual experience in similar circumstances. Mr. Duffy responded that staff looks to quantify its decisions and will continue to work closely with DES on such issues. Ms. Kays added that the applicant has provided comparables of hotels they researched, of which the Virginian Suites on Arlington Boulevard was identified as a comparable. It has a similar parking ratio of 0.69 and the parking has not been fully utilized. Also, there are other extended-stay hotels approved by site plan with similar parking ratios.

- Community Benefits

Commissioner Cole stated that he will make a motion to amend Condition #64 related to public art to require a contribution only and that the funds be used for public art in the Rosslyn Station area outside of the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District and north of Wilson Boulevard. He believes that if the purpose of the condition is to benefit the general public, a broader area beyond the applicant's own property should be considered. He added that the Public Art Committee (PAC), and not the applicant, should determine where the public art funds should be used, even if they determine that the funds could be used on the site.

Commissioner Harner stated that he supports Commissioner Cole, and opposes micro-targeting specific locations for the public art as part of site plan conditions. Mr. Kinney responded that while most developers prefer making the contribution because of the process and the significant cost of providing art on-site, in this case the applicant has a history of supporting public art. If the applicant provides public art on their site, the cost will be well beyond the \$75,000 contribution requirement. Mr. Kinney asked that the applicant be given the opportunity to explore its options and to keep the requirement open as outlined in Condition #64.

Commissioner Cole followed that the Clarendon Center project showcased public art, but in this case he does not see where the public art could be displayed. There are very narrow sidewalks on Lee Highway and North Quinn Street. He further noted that the contribution amount should be increased if the on-site art requires a greater cost. Ms. Avedesian responded that a lot of design work and cost went into preparing the Clarendon Center site to receive the public art, and they are confident that they can hire an artist to provide a beautiful public art piece for the Colony House site. She indicated that they are willing to go through the PAC process.

Commissioner Monfort stated that he likes the idea of providing public art on the site. Thousands of people and vehicles travel by this site every day.

Commissioner Harner stated that this discussion should be with the PAC, and that the Planning Commission should trust the process.

Commissioner Malis asked for clarification regarding the affordable housing contribution, and whether it is based on the base and bonus density. Ms. Kays explained that the base contribution

without the GLUP change is \$110,000, and the amount attributed to the GLUP change is \$400,000 based on the provision of approximately 46 units above the base.

Planning Commission Motion

A. General Land Use Plan Amendment

Commissioner Klein moved that that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the resolution to approve an amendment to the General Land Use Plan from “Low-Medium” Residential (16-36 units/acre) to “Low” Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 1.5 FAR office; up to 72 units/acre residential; up to 110 units/acre hotel) for the property known as 1700 Lee Highway, generally located on the northeast portion of the block bounded by Lee Highway to the north, North Quinn Street to the east, and North Scott Street to the south and west. Commissioner Siegel seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 12-0 to support the motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Siegel and Sockwell supported the motion.

B. Rezoning

Commissioner Klein moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the resolution to approve the rezoning request from “C-2” to “C-O-1.5” and related update to the ACZO Map 34-1 to indicate the Zoning District and extend Line A around the property boundary. Commissioner Ciotti seconded the motion.

Commissioner Sockwell stated that the County is in danger of losing its policy on parking. This site is not located close enough to transit to justify the reduced parking ratio. The County needs to be more rigorous in the evaluation of parking proposals relative to its parking policy. Commissioner Sockwell stated that he would still support the site plan because it is a good project and reflects a good use of the land.

Commissioner Fallon stated that he is reluctant to support the proposed rezoning because better alternative uses of “C-2” properties should be identified; however, he will support the motion in its entirety because the site is unique and isolated. He believes an extended stay hotel is probably the most viable use of the land. The proposed building is attractive and will visually improve this section of Arlington. He commended the applicant for the proposed intersection improvements and affordable housing contribution.

Commissioner Harner associated himself with the comments of Commissioner Sockwell about the proposed parking ratio relative to County policies.

The Planning Commission voted 12-0 to support the motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Siegel and Sockwell supported the motion.

C. Site Plan

Commissioner Klein moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the ordinance approving a site plan consisting of a hotel with up to 168 rooms, located at 1700 Lee Highway, with the following modifications:

1. Staff clarify that the level of service “F” pertains to the off-ramp from I-66 onto east-bound Lee Highway.
2. Staff correct the typo in Condition #39 (third paragraph), changing the word from “torage” to “storage”.
3. For the County Board meeting, the applicant shall submit plans and elevations to confirm the depths in the façade treatment in key areas.

Commissioner Iacomini seconded the motion.

Commissioner Cole asked for unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board amend Condition #64 to delete the entire text with the exception of the last paragraph. The last paragraph should be changed to read *“The developer ~~may choose to~~ shall make a contribution of \$75,000 to the Public Art Fund to fund County-initiated public art projects ~~in the Rosslyn metro/or other specified area in lieu of commissioning public art through the process set forth above.~~ Such contribution shall be made to the Public Art Fund prior to issuance of the first above grade building permit. If the contribution is made more than 12 months after site plan approval, the contribution amount will be adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index for urban consumers.”* There was an objection. Commissioner Cole moved to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board amend Condition #64 to delete the delete the entire text with the exception of the last paragraph. The last paragraph should be changed to read *“The developer ~~may choose to~~ shall make a contribution of \$75,000 to the Public Art Fund to fund County-initiated public art projects ~~in the Rosslyn metro/or other specified area in lieu of commissioning public art through the process set forth above.~~ Such contribution shall be made to the Public Art Fund prior to issuance of the first above grade building permit. If the contribution is made more than 12 months after site plan approval, the contribution amount will be adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index for urban consumers.”*

Commissioner Harner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Iacomini stated that she will not support the motion because this is a different situation than the Pierce Queen Site Plan, since the applicant is very interested in pursuing public art with the PAC and has a successful track record of working with the PAC to provide art that really serves the public. She is willing to let Condition #64 play out as it has with past projects.

Commissioner Kumm stated that she will not support the motion because the applicant has a proven and successful track record of providing art on their sites. This site is highly visible from Lee Highway.

Commissioner Klein stated that she will not support the motion. She looks for opportunities where public art is integrated with the building architecture. This project provides a great opportunity for significant visibility and the applicant wants to ensure that there will be an integral and unified approach to the art and building architecture.

Commissioner Harner stated that the Planning Commission should allow the PAC process to work, rather than micro-manage the site plan.

Commissioner Monfort stated that it appears the applicant wants to work with the PAC and he appreciates that.

The Planning Commission voted 2-10 to oppose the amended motion. Commissioners Cole and Harner supported the amended motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Fallon, Forinash, Iacomini, Klein, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Siegel and Sockwell opposed the amended motion. The amended motion failed, so it was not incorporated into the main motion.

The Planning Commission voted 12-0 to support the main motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Siegel and Sockwell supported the main motion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Harner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Harner
Planning Commission Chair