

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Red Cross/Trenton Street Residential (SP #446)

SPRC Meeting #3

January 22, 2018

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Stephen Hughes (Chair), Nancy Iacomini, Jane Siegel, James Schroll

Meeting Agenda

- 1) Transportation
 - a) Infrastructure
 - i) Mass transit facilities and access
 - ii) Street systems (w/existing and proposed cross sections)
 - iii) Vehicular and pedestrian routes
 - iv) Bicycle routes and parking
 - b) Traffic Demand Management Plan
 - c) Automobile Parking
 - i) Proposed v. required (tenant, visitor, compact, handicapped, etc.)
 - ii) Access (curb cuts, driveway & drive aisle widths)
 - d) Delivery Issues
 - i) Drop offs
 - ii) Loading docks
 - e) Signage (parking, wayfinding, etc.)
- 2) Open Space and Landscaping
 - a) Orientation and use of open spaces
 - b) Relationship to scenic vistas, natural features and/or adjacent public spaces
 - c) Compliance with existing planning documents and policies
 - d) Landscape plan
- 3) Affordable Housing

SPRC Discussion

Presentations

- The applicant presented two sets of slides covering transportation information, and open space and landscaping.

Transportation

- A committee member asked if testing one day is typical calculation methodology for traffic analysis, suggesting that seems open to error. Staff responded that it is typical practice and provides usable data.
- A member asked if pedestrians would circulate through the drive aisles? Cutting through the site. The applicant noted there are three paths available from N. Thomas Street, which would connect to new sidewalks through the site.
- Noting the staff report, a member asked if additional bike parking being considered. Staff replied they are seeking ways to retrofit parking in and outside existing buildings, and still evaluating the project.
- A member asked about the map showing bike routes around the site, noting that some are substandard and highlighting the need for a two-way bike route on the Arlington Boulevard Service Road.
- A member asked if there will be speed calming mitigation on the Service Drive. Staff noted that mitigation measures are limited due to VDOT control, and on-site measures such as tree planting could be considered.
- A member asked if restricted parking would be implemented around the site (primarily N. Thomas Street). Staff answered no, and no restrictions would be pursued at this time on N. Thomas Street.
- A member asked if the pedestrian tunnel beneath Arlington Boulevard could be improved. Staff noted that it's in relatively good order compared to similar pedestrian underpasses in the County.
- A member commented on N. Thomas St. parking, which is partially front in, partially parallel parking, noting concern over double parking for drop-off, delivery to the site.

Open Space and Landscaping

- The applicant noted:
 - That an east-west ADA accessible route is being added from the Service Drive.
 - The building design is being revised, and lowering the building floor elevation will allow for less steps into the entrance along the Service Drive.
 - A community garden is shown in the Whitefield Commons corner open space.
 - A pollinator garden with wildflowers was shown in a utility easement area adjacent to the proposed playground.
- A member asked how large the pollinator area is.
- A member asked if this project is consistent with the tree replacement policy. Staff confirmed the tree replacement policy is a requirement, and the applicant noted options for meeting tree replacement requirements such as new plantings on the

Whitefield Commons portion of the site, off-site planting, or paying into the Arlington County Tree Fund.

- A member asked what types of trees, such as ornamental/understory trees, are being planted adjacent to mature trees, noting concern that adding more trees to the Whitefield Commons area could change the nature or character of the existing development. Staff responded that this aspect of the proposal would be further evaluated by Urban Design staff.
- A member commented if the Committee suggestions are “overamenitizing” the space, with respect to a community garden vs. maintaining open space in the corner open space.
- Members were not clear on why adjacent trees are being counted for preservation if they are off-site. Staff noted that off-site trees are typically shown on tree survey plans as they may be impacted by on-site development and are evaluated for preservation. A committee member suggested off-site trees should be shown as a different color dot on the exhibit.
- Members asked if specific mature trees next to the townhouses be saved, another member noting big trees along the fence line shouldn’t be removed, and suggesting the townhouses should be pushed back to save large N. Trenton Street trees.
- A member asked if some preliminary discussions of Arlington Boulevard redesign be used, so that this serves as a prototype for that effort, or is there any opportunity here. Staff responded that there is not enough information at this time.
- The committee member asked if there are opportunities for community gathering/use on the site.
- A member asked why is there an open space at the end of the townhouses. That is a fire access lane.

Affordable Housing

- A member asked what the affordability status is for Whitefield Commons. Staff responded that Whitefield Commons is 13 years into the first of two 15-year period with affordability restrictions, under a federal tax credit program.
- A member commented that the size of the units and income criteria seem to be what we’re looking for in Arlington.
- A member commented that there is too much concentration of affordable housing in the Buckingham neighborhood.

Public Comment

- An Arlington Oaks resident asked what is considered “acceptable levels” of traffic.

- A resident suggested there is not a lot of open space along N. Trenton Street, and that pushing the townhouses back would be more consistent with the neighborhood.
- A resident asked where are guests going to park.
- A resident voiced concern over loss of open space, loss of large mature trees, and that they would like a better sample/analysis for the traffic study.
- A resident was concerned that the new building frontages don't align with existing apartments.

Committee Member Closing Thoughts

- Several committee members passed with no further comment.
- Bernie Berne: would like to see a two-way bike route along the service road, a pollinator garden in the corner, and asked the applicant to look at trees that can be saved.
- Nancy Iacomini: what will be covered at 4th meeting? Would like some distinction in the tree survey exhibit.
- Bill Braswell asked for a chart comparing affordable housing unit number to unit size.
- Chris Donahue: Arlington Oaks residents would like to see the project scaled back to address traffic and open space concerns.
- A member asked how big are the townhouses in terms of floor area. A Madison Homes representative replied they are, on average, approximately 2300 sf.
- Tom Korn: looking for opportunities for places that can be gathering places.
- Chris Slatt: would also like to see two-way bike route on the Service Drive, even if as a temporary measure prior to long-term redesign.

Next Steps

- SPRC meeting #4 will be held on February 1, 2018