

Planning & Zoning

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Meets last Tuesday of every month at the McLean Community Center

This report covers the activities of the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Committee between May 2011 and September 2011. The P&Z Committee meets every month on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at the McLean Community Center. During the period, the Committee heard a number of presentations from applicants for Rezoning, Special Exceptions and 2232 Reviews, as well as discussions on other subjects of interest to Committee Members. The following is a summary of the Committee's activities.

Committee Activities from April 2011 – October 2011

Rezoning – 6862 Elm Street in Downtown McLean

In June and September 2010 and March 2011, Stu Mendelsohn and a representative of EYA, a townhouse developer, jointly briefed the committee on a proposed 49-unit townhouse development. The site is a 4.43-acre parcel in the C-3 Office zoning district with an existing 8-story office building and a very large surface parking lot. The parking lot has significant frontage along Fleetwood Road.

The existing office building would remain and the rear parking lot would be replaced by 49 townhouse units with a height of 50 feet. The property would be subdivided and the office and the residential parcels would be rezoned to C-4 High Intensity Office and PDH-20 respectively. To compensate for the lost parking spaces, a 60-foot high, 6-story parking structure would be built to the west of the office building with frontage on Elm Street. The proposed parking structure would also have ground floor retail.

The McLean Comprehensive Plan specifically recommends that parking be set behind the building at the center of the block and the committee commented that the proposed parking structure was contrary to Plan guidance. Other concerns were the Plan language does provide for rezoning to the C4 district and commercial parcel would have a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.64, far more dense than any property along Elm Street. The applicant submitted modified plans in response to concerns from county staff but these changes were de minimis and only dealt with the location of open space on the site.

The P&Z committee did not draft a resolution on the Elm Street rezoning because it was not clear the applicant, Elm Street Residential, LLC, had submitted its final plan. The committee held out hope that the applicant would submit changes to the proposed development that addressed the committee's concerns. On June 13, 2011, the applicant requested a deferral of the public hearing.

AT&T Bell Tower at New Life Christian Church

In March 2011, AT&T representative presented P&Z and community residents a proposal to build a bell tower at New Life Christian Church at the corner of Kirby Road and Westmoreland Street.

The 100' bell tower would conceal a cell tower that would support AT&T, T-Mobile and one other wireless carrier. This is a continuation of the effort to provide improved wireless coverage in that general area. The previously proposed location had been on Longfellow Middle School property. The construction of a bell tower would require a Special Exception Permit, a Special Permit amendment and a 2232 Review. This AT&T visit to P&Z was a courtesy briefing as AT&T has not yet filed permit applications with the county. Members of the community expressed very strong opposition to the bell tower. The committee asked if an alternate wireless technology called Distributed Antenna System (DAS) could be employed instead of a cell tower. DAS uses a smaller antenna that is mounted on existing electric utility poles along a street. The AT&T representatives opined that DAS would not provide effective in-house coverage in this area, however they would investigate further and report their findings.

As of October 7, 2011, the applicant, AT&T, is still in the process of filing its permits and will be invited back to P&Z after the permits have been accepted by the county.

JBG Rosenthal Retail – Walmart and Rezoning

In June 2011, JBG Rosenthal Retail made presentations to the committee on the by-right development of the WalMart retail use and the proposed zoning of the 16-acre JBG Sheraton complex. These properties are situated in the Hunter Mill magisterial district and are outside of the McLean Planning Area and are, therefore, outside of MCA's land use purview. However the applicant presented to the P&Z as a courtesy which the committee very much appreciated as the redevelopment of Tysons into a dense urban center is complex and the committee benefits from understanding the scope and nature of all the proposed rezonings.

The WalMart will be incorporated into an existing parking structure to provide convenient parking for patrons. The store, expected to open in year end 2013, will be mainly a grocery. The development will also include a gym, other ground floor retail and an office building. Although JBG had not yet filed a rezoning application, their plans partially include:

- Mid-rise residential builds with 350 apartment units
- Apartments would average 850 square feet with rents envisioned in the \$2,200 range
- \$150 million of improvements to the Sheraton Premiere Hotel
- Contribution for the extension of Boone Blvd to west Tysons
- Work with neighboring properties on developing a street grid

As of October 15, 2011, the JBG rezoning application had been received, but not accepted

Georgelas Group LLP, Rezoning 2010-PR-014-A and 2010-PR-014-B

Georgelas Group is proposing the redevelopment of approximately 30 acres, generally situated between Spring Hill Road and Tyco Road with Route 7 as its southern border. The property abuts the new Tysons Spring Hill Metro Station. The total redevelopment would comprise 7 million square feet of new development to be built out over a period of 25 years or more. Due to its size and complexity, the rezoning was divided into three separate rezoning applications, Parts A, B and C. Parts A and B had a public hearing in September and Part C will be heard in late 2011 or early 2012.

Part A consists of a single, multi-family high-rise building on 1.5 acres within ¼-mile of the Tysons Spring Hill Metro station. This 300-foot, 400-unit residential building will be located behind the existing Container Store on Route 7. Construction of this building is expected to start within 6 months once all the approvals have been obtained. Part B comprises 4 residential buildings on a 5.5-acre property located on Spring Hill Road. These buildings, to be constructed in 3-5 years, would provide 1,900 dwelling units. The majority of the site lies within ¼-mile of the Metro station and these 290-foot, multi-family high-rises would replace the existing 150,000 square foot, one-story commercial building.

Of the 2,300 dwelling units proposed in these two applications, 20% will be affordable workforce units.

MCA supports placing the highest density within close walking distance to the Metro stations in Tysons and these proposed redevelopments accomplish this. In addition, the applicant is proffering to extend Greensboro Drive from Spring Hill Road to Tyco Road and build a new road, referred to as Condominium Drive, that will run roughly parallel to Route 7 and some day will be extended across Westpark Drive all the way to the SAIC site.

While the applicant has also proffered to purchase 2.8 acres of land that will be dedicated to the Fairfax County Park Authority and has proffered other private and public recreation facilities, staff has indicated, and MCA concurs, that there is still a deficit of some 4 acres of recreational space. The Part C rezoning, with its 24 acres of proposed redevelopment, is by far the largest of the 3 rezonings. The provision of recreational space, and specifically athletic fields, has long been a key concern of MCA and MCA is strongly urging the county to acquire additional recreational space during the county's review of the Part C rezoning application over the next 3-6 months.

On September 7, the MCA Board passed a resolution in support of the Part A and B rezonings. These cases are large and very complex and the two MCA resolutions summarize well the facts of each case. http://mcleancitizens.org/MCAResolution_GeorgelasRezoningPartA.pdf
http://mcleancitizens.org/MCAResolution_GeorgelasRezoningPartB.pdf

Trinity Group, LLP Special Exception Amendment SEA 00-D-006-04

This SEA seeks to incorporate a church use at 850 Balls Hill Road. For the last 10 years, Oakcrest School has operated a school of private education for girls on this site under SEA 00-D-006-03. The site contains a building that is a combined chapel and school and Holy Trinity proposes to add a church use that would operate on days and hours that are non-concurrent with school activities. In 2014, Oakcrest School is planning to relocate to Reston, Virginia and the Holy Trinity would then operate a school of its own.

The school currently operates under development conditions that require all parking to be on-site, limit school enrollment and establish dates and hours of school-related activities. In addition, the development conditions permit the use of two modular trailers until August 2015, at which time they must be removed. With the proposed church use, additional development conditions were added to limit the potential impact of church activities on the neighborhood, including the requirement for all parking to be on-site and the use of parking marshals.

Oakcrest School has maintained a good relationship with the community for the last 10 years. Trinity likewise engaged the community and sought input when drafting the proposed development conditions. Two local residents, Messrs. Paul and Schmitt, who serve as community liaison, wrote MCA a letter describing their collaboration with the applicant and expressing their support for the SEA. On October 5, the MCA Board of Directors passed a resolution supporting the Special Exception Amendment. <http://mcleancitizens.org/MCAResolutionTrinitySEA.pdf>

Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority (MWAA) Special Exception Amendment 2008-MD-034-1

This case was vetted by both the Transportation and P&Z committees.

In 2008, Fairfax County approved a Special Exception to permit the operation of a Metrorail station at the corner of Route 7 and Spring Hill Road, recently renamed the Tysons Spring Hill Metro Station. The SE proposed a Kiss & Ride (KR) facility some 600 feet from the Metro station and a northern station entrance contained in a pavilion parallel and adjacent to Route 7.

MWAA is proposing to amend the SE as follows: 1) reposition the entrance pavilion to place it between two future office buildings, and 2) move the Kiss & Ride facility KR to be adjacent to the entrance pavilion. The Kiss & Ride would have surface parking now, however after the two office buildings are constructed, the Kiss & Ride would be located on the first floor of the Georgelas office building next to Spring Hill Road. In addition, the entrance pavilion would be under cover.

The entrance to the both the temporary and permanent Kiss & Ride facility would be on Spring Hill Road, close to the Rt. 7 and Spring Hill intersection. The proximity of this access driveway to the intersection would require VDOT approval which the applicant has filed for. But it would also require a right-hand turn in and out of the Kiss & Ride facility, plus a right-only turn at Rt. 7.

When the two proposed office building are constructed, there will be a road behind them, currently referred to in Georgelas' rezoning application as Retail Circle, that will provide additional access to the Kiss & Ride facility. This second access point will preclude drivers from having to make u-turns or driving around the block in order to enter the facility from the Spring Hill Road entrance. Given the inadequate access to the Kiss & Ride facility until a second access point is provided via Retail Circle, the MCA Board adopted a resolution supporting the SEA only if Retail Circle or a temporary access road is provided when the Kiss & Ride facility becomes operational.

<http://mcleancitizens.org/MCAResolutionTysonsWestMetroSEA.pdf>