

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 September 21, 2008 and January 8, 2009. 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 Special Exceptions and 2232 Reviews, as well as discussions on other subjects of interest to Committee Members. Following is a summary of the Committee's activities.

APPLICATIONS BEFORE THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tysons Task Force Recommendations: After three years of work, the Tysons Task Force presented its land use recommendations for the redevelopment of Tysons Corner to the Board of Supervisors who forwarded them to the Planning Commission for its action. By Virginia State Code, the Board of Supervisors can only take action on Comprehensive Plan amendments that have been recommended by the Planning Commission. Subsequently, the Planning Commission created a Tysons Committee comprised of five Commissioners to vet the Task Force's recommendations and solicit input from the local community and various stakeholders. Between county planning staff and the Tysons Committee, there are several months of study, planning analysis and workshops scheduled that include examining the transportation, infrastructure and economic impacts of redeveloping Tysons.

On October 1, 2008, MCA passed a resolution critical of the Tysons Task Force's recommendations because the recommendations were drafted before much of the requisite analysis and due diligence were performed. As an indication of the work left undone by the Task Force, it will take county staff and the Planning Commission 10 months to complete its analysis before it can draft and forward Comprehensive Plan text to the Board of Supervisors for action.

Among MCA criticisms were:

- The land use recommendations comprised 120 million square feet of development (Tysons currently has 45 million SF of development). This far exceeded the 127 million SF prototype the Task Force had presented to the public in February 2008.
- The land use recommendations encouraged high growth outside of the Metro station areas, also referred to as Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas, contradicting the county's 2007 TOD policy that specifically encourages development near Metro stations to promote increased transit ridership.
- Land use objectives and recommendations were made before performing any infrastructure or transportation impact studies.
- An earlier transportation study revealed that even at 127 million SF of development, there would be in excess of one million automobile trips per day in Tysons.

- The Task Force failed to demonstrate it addressed transportation impacts and protected the surrounding communities as it was specifically charged to do.
- The recommendation did not take into account a growth forecast provided by George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis.

Accordingly, the resolution recommended that:

- The Planning Commission propose new land use recommendations taking into account the GMU growth forecast.
- All increased density recommended for Tysons be in close proximity of the Metro stations.
- A full and comprehensive infrastructure and transportation analysis be performed.
- Future development be phased with the construction of needed infrastructure improvements such that development does not exceed the capacity of public facilities.

The resolution may be read at <http://www.mcleancitizens.org/mca/default.asp> .

AT&T Mobility: At the October P&Z meeting, we heard from AT&T who is proposing a 125-foot cell tower at the Westmoreland New Life Christian Church at the corner of Westmoreland Street and Kirby Road. AT&T first proposed a 140-foot tower, but lowered the height due to concerns from the Supervisor's office. Installation of a cell tower in an area zoned residential requires a Special Exception permit. Given the height of the proposed tower and county policy to co-locate cell antennas on existing utility poles, the committee asked the applicant to investigate other locations in the area. We received a status update in November that a search for a more suitable site was underway. We expect the applicant to return in either January or February.

Verizon Wireless: Verizon submitted an application for a 2232 Review for the installation of a cell tower at Langley High School on Georgetown Pike. There were two existing cell towers on the property and Verizon proposed to add a third antenna on top of a stadium light pole located between the school building and the athletic field. The proposal called for the existing 75-foot pole to be replaced with a 93-foot pole and the use of low profile, flush-mounted antennas. Upon review of the application, county staff declared the installation to be a 'feature shown' that essentially meant the proposed installation was in accordance with county policy and regulations and therefore the 2232 hearing could be waived. The applicant met with Langley Oaks HOA representatives to discuss the case and presented photo-simulations of the proposed antenna. The HOA did not object. The MCA Board approved a resolution on December 3, 2008 supporting the Verizon cell tower application. <http://www.mcleancitizens.org/mca/pz.asp> .

Vinson Hall APR Nomination 08-II-1M: The Vinson Hall Retirement Community (VHRC) is located at the corner of Kirby Road and Old Dominion Drive adjacent to Franklin Park and the Chesterbrook Shopping Center. It currently has 169 independent living units, 21 assisted living units and 49 nursing beds. Vinson Hall's APR nomination proposes to amend the Comprehensive Plan to allow 350 independent living units and an FAR of 0.25 for the assisted living component. Additional text is also proposed to set conditions on the expansion such as environmental protections, neighborhood compatibility, open space and a building height limitation. There is currently no specific Comprehensive Plan text for this property. Since 1987,

VHRC has operated under a Special Exception that permits a maximum 276 independent living units and VHRC plans to expand the facility by 100 units over two phases of development. The MCA Board passed a resolution on January 7, 2009 opposing the APR nomination because the Special Exception already permits this expansion of 100 units. In addition, MCA was concerned about increased intensity an expansion to 350 independent living units would bring to this R-2 residential district. The resolution may be read at <http://www.mcleancitizens.org/mca/pz.asp> . The Dranesville APR Task Force will review this APR nomination at its January 21 meeting and forward its recommendation to the Planning Commission.

McLean Professional Park APR 08-II-2M: McLean Professional Park (MPP), located at 1477 Chain Bridge Road across from the McLean Racket and Health Club, is a townhouse office park zoned C-2 Limit Commercial. The property lies within Subarea 2 of the McLean Community Business Center (CBC). Retail is not permitted in the C-2 district and the Comprehensive Plan specifically recommends against adding retail in Subarea 2. The nominator proposes to strike the '*no new retail*' clause in the Comp Plan and add language to permit limited retail. The MCA Board passed a resolution on January 7, 2009 opposing this APR nomination for the following reasons:

- Subarea 2 serves as a low-intensity transition area between the Bryn Mawr community zoned R-4 and the McLean CBC zoned C-6.
- The property has limited ingress/egress.
- MPP should be held to its 1978 proffered condition proscribing retail use within its property.

The resolution may be read at <http://www.mcleancitizens.org/mca/pz.asp> . The Dranesville APR Task Force will also review this APR nomination at its January 21 meeting.