



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

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To: Eric Campbell, City Manager  
From: Adam Fletcher, Director – Department of Community Development and Harrisonburg Planning Commission  
Date: May 11, 2021 (Regular Meeting)  
Re: Alley Closing between 245 and 285 East Washington Street

### **Summary:**

Consider a request from Camp Darby LLC to close +/- 1,680 sq. ft. of undeveloped public alley located between parcels addressed as 245 and 285 East Washington Street and identified as tax map parcel 33-B-8 and 33-B-11. The +/- 10-ft. wide alley runs perpendicular to East Washington Street.

Staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommend approval of the alley closing request including easements to be reserved for the public sanitary sewer, if necessary.

### **Background:**

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

**Site:** +/- 1,680 sq. ft. of undeveloped public alley, zoned M-1

**North:** Across East Washington Street, industrial operations, zoned M-1

**East:** Vacant parcel, zoned M-1

**South:** Continued portion of the alley and single-family dwellings, zoned R-2

**West:** Industrial operations, zoned M-1

### **Key Issues:**

The applicant, Camp Darby LLC, is requesting to close a +/- 10-foot-wide undeveloped public alley that runs perpendicular to East Washington Street between parcels addressed as 245 and 285 East Washington Street. The alley is +/- 168-feet in length. Although the property owners of 245 and 285 East Washington Street are listed as two different entities, Jocasila LLIC and Camp Darby LLC, respectively, both are owned by David Rao. Mr. Rao describes in his letter that he is “[a]pplying to purchase adjoining alley to provide parking for 285 E. Washington St.”

At the entrance to the alley at East Washington Street, the alley can be traversed over grass by a vehicle all the way through to East Johnson Street, where the alley becomes paved between two parking areas located on 274 and 276 East Johnson Street. There is also an alley that crosses the subject alley, running parallel to East Washington Street and East Johnson Street that has vegetative growth that prohibits travel through portions of that alley.

Within the subject alley between 245 and 285 East Washington Street is a public sanitary sewer line. As part of staff's review of the subject request, the Department of Public Utilities indicated that they would investigate the public sanitary sewer line to determine whom it serves and if the sanitary sewer is determined to be active, then a public sanitary sewer easement must be reserved. Investigation was still underway when this request was presented to Planning Commission. Since that time, the Department of Public Utilities has determined that the pipe is unused and would be disconnected from the public sanitary sewer system. Therefore, there is no need to reserve a public sanitary sewer easement. No other utilities have been identified within the subject alley.

The applicant is aware that if City Council votes to approve closing the alley (first reading at City Council), the applicant is responsible for having a survey and plat prepared in order for the City Attorney to draft the ordinance to finalize the closure (second reading). The plat should show the portions of the closed alley being added to adjoining parcel(s) and the public sanitary sewer easement, if necessary. Once the applicant has submitted the funds to buy the public alley and the ordinance is drafted, the second reading can occur to finalize the closure.

In September 2018, City Council approved a similar request to close a portion of public alley between 211 and 245 East Washington Street.

Staff recommended approval of the alley closing request with the condition that the City reserve a public sanitary sewer easement if determined necessary by the Department of Public Utilities.

**Environmental Impact:**

N/A

**Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

**Prior Actions:**

N/A

**Alternatives:**

- (a) Approval of the alley closing request; or
- (b) Denial of the alley closing request.

**Community Engagement:**

As required, the request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for City Council's public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

Public Hearing to Consider a request from Camp Darby LLC to close +/- 1,680 sq. ft. of undeveloped public alley located between parcels addressed as 245 and 285 East Washington Street and identified as tax map parcel 33-B-8 and 33-B-11. The +/- 10-ft. wide alley runs perpendicular to East Washington Street.

The property was posted with signage advertising the request.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the alley closing request including easements to be reserved for the public sanitary sewer, if necessary.

**Attachments:**

1. Extract from Planning Commission
2. Site maps
3. Application, applicant letter, and supporting documents

**Review:**

Planning Commission recommended (6-0) alternative (a) approval of the alley closing request with the condition that the City reserve a public sanitary sewer easement if determined necessary. (Commissioner Hull absent)