



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

May 6, 2024

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

**SUBJECT:**

*Consider a request from Hurstwenger Properties LLC for a special use permit to allow warehousing and other storage facilities at 1011, 1019, 1021, 1023, and 1031 West Market Street*

*Consider a request from Hurstwenger Properties LLC for a special use permit to allow building material sales and storage yards, contractors equipment sales and storage yards and other similar uses at 1011, 1019, 1021, 1023, and 1031 West Market Street*

*Consider a request from Hurstwenger Properties LLC for a special use permit to allow multiple-family dwellings and/or mixed use buildings at 1011, 1019, 1021, 1023, and 1031 West Market Street*

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: April 10, 2024**

Chair Finnegan read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Rupkey said in July 2022 the property owner purchased the property not knowing that the existing uses are in violation of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO). During a conversation with staff in February 2024 the applicant was requesting information on how to apply for a building permit to add an office use, staff learned of the existing uses on the site and determined that the following uses are in violation of the ZO because the applicant was unable to prove they were nonconforming: 1) single-family detached dwelling in the building addressed as 1011 West Market Street, 2) one residential dwelling within the larger building on the property, 3) a storage/warehousing use that is not accessory to any on premises uses, and 4) two contractor businesses (C&E Carpentry LLC and Valley Waterproofing)

In addition to the above violations, there has been an expansion of the parking area that is in violation of the ZO's parking lot landscaping requirements, which the applicant is working to address.

After discussing options with staff, the applicant is requesting to rezone portions of the property while also simultaneously requesting approval of three different special use permits (SUPs) to bring the property into compliance. The rezoning requests are presented in a separate staff report. This staff report will address the three special use permits.

The applicant is requesting three special use permits (SUPs) within the B-2, General Business District to allow:

1. Warehousing and other storage facilities per Section 10-3-91 (2).
2. Building material sales and storage yards, contractors equipment sales and storage yards and other similar uses per Section 10-3-91 (6).
3. Multiple-family dwellings and/or mixed use buildings per Section 10-3-91 (17).

The +/- 1.8-acre site is addressed as 1011, 1019, 1021, 1023, and 1031 West Market Street and is identified as tax map parcels 37-A-4 and 5. A +/- 900 square foot portion of the site is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential District and the remaining portion of the site is zoned B-2, General Business District. The applicant is concurrently requesting to rezone the +/- 900 square foot portion of the site from R-1 to B-2, and to rezone a +/- 7,305-square foot portion of the site from B-2 to R-8C, Small Lot Residential District Conditional. The rezoning requests are described in a separate staff report.

During review of the requests, staff discussed concerns regarding the close spacing between the existing three entrances. Spacing between entrances and intersections is important for access management and transportation safety; close spacing between unsignalized entrances forces drivers to watch for ingress and egress traffic at several locations simultaneously. To address staff's concerns the applicant has offered a self-imposed condition to all three of the SUP requests:

- Within six months of approval of the special use permit, the entrance shown in Exhibit A shall be closed. Parking blocks, posts and chains, or other materials approved by the City may be used to control access to the site.
- The first SUP request is to allow warehousing and other storage facilities within the B-2 district. The existing warehousing use is not in connection with any by-right uses on the property and thus is considered a separate use. The existing warehousing space is +/- 1,540 square feet and is used to store furniture that is bought at auction and then later resold. Although the applicant does not plan to provide self-storage on the site, staff has concerns that in the future a different owner may choose to create a self-storage facility. If the SUP is approved, staff recommends it only be permitted with the following conditions:
  1. Storage and warehousing operations shall only occur within the existing building and shall be limited to 2,000 square feet or less.
  2. Self-storage facilities are prohibited.
  3. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the use becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.

The second SUP request is to allow contractors in the B-2 district. There are two existing contractors that operate on the site. The existing tenants are C&E Carpentry LLC and Valley Waterproofing. In the applicant's letter they state that they are not planning to allow outside storage

or materials on the site and go on to state that if outside storage is needed in the future, then they will provide appropriate screening. If the SUP is approved, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. The special use permit shall be limited only to contractor businesses.
2. Uncovered or unenclosed storage and display of building materials and contractors' equipment shall be located in the rear of the property behind any principal buildings and shall be screened from view with a fence, decorative wall or other physical or structural enclosures that is opaque to obstruct the view of storage materials, with the finished face facing outside, and shall be at least six (6) feet in height.
3. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the use becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.

The site is located along a busy, east-west corridor and at a secondary gateway into the City as indicated on the Gateways and Corridor Enhancement Areas map within the Comprehensive Plan. The quality and character of these routes strongly influence the City's attractiveness and economic vitality and therefore, careful consideration should be given to land use, development and streetscape. Condition c is intended to keep outside storage of materials out of view of the general public.

The third and final SUP is to allow for a mixed use building in the B-2 district. As required by Section 10-3-93 (d) of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO), the applicant has submitted a development plan. Section 10-3-93 (d) states that "[f]or multiple-family dwellings and mixed use buildings, the development plan submitted with the special use permit shall govern development on the site and shall be used as a basis for subdivision and engineered comprehensive site plan approval." If the SUP is approved, then details of the development plan would be used to ensure the multi-family and/or mixed use project that was evaluated during the SUP review is what is developed. If significant deviations are desired by the property owner in the future, then the property owner must amend the development plan by going through the SUP process again. Features of the development plan submitted with the SUP that would be used as the basis for engineered comprehensive site plan and/or building permit approval include, but are not limited to:

1. The general location of buildings and structures.
2. The general number of stories within proposed buildings and structures.
3. The general location of parking areas.
4. The general location of pedestrian connections.

The applicant's development plan shows that there is an existing two-story apartment with vacant space on the first floor. The development plan shows that there will be only one dwelling unit in the building. The applicant noted they are not interested in adding additional dwelling units to the site—essentially, they want to maintain the existing dwelling unit.

#### *Land Use*

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Commercial and states:

Commercial uses include retail, office, professional service functions, restaurants, and lodging uses. Commercial areas should offer connecting streets, biking and walking facilities, and public transit services. Interparcel access and connections

are essential to maintaining traffic safety and flow along arterials. Parking should be located to the sides or rear of buildings.

Given their size and how the current warehousing and storage and contractor businesses operate, the property's location along West Market Street, and the surrounding land uses, staff believes that substantially similar operations would have no more adverse effect on the health, safety, or comfort of persons living or working in the surrounding area. Staff is comfortable recommending approval of the warehousing and storage and contractor business SUPs with the previously suggested conditions.

For the SUP request to allow mixed use buildings within the B-2 district, while the Comprehensive Plan designates the site as Commercial, staff recognizes that the community is in need of more housing and that while the applicant cannot prove that they meet the criteria to be considered nonconforming, it appears that a residential use has operated from this site for a number of years without much disruption to the onsite or surrounding land uses. The development plan submitted by the applicant limits the location and number of units that would be allowed on the site to no more than one dwelling unit.

#### *Transportation and Traffic*

The Determination of Need for a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) form ("TIA determination form") for the proposed SUP is attached. The TIA determination form indicated that the project would not generate 100 or more new peak hour trips, which is the threshold for staff to require a TIA. Therefore, a TIA was not required for the SUP request.

#### *Public Water and Sanitary Sewer*

Staff has no concerns with the requested special use permits regarding water and sewer matters.

#### *Housing Study*

The City's Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject site within Market Type B, which has "neighborhoods [that] are characterized by high income earning households, large volumes of housing sales and lower population growth." The Housing Study further notes that houses in these markets are quick to sell and that "[p]riorities and policies that are appropriate to Market Type B areas include the preservation of existing affordable housing while at the same time working to increase access to amenities."

#### *Recommendation*

Staff recommends approval of all three SUPs with conditions as noted for each request.

1. To allow warehousing and other storage facilities per Section 10-3-91 (2):
  - a. Within six months of approval of the special use permit, the entrance shown in Exhibit A shall be closed. Parking blocks, posts and chains, or other materials approved by the City may be used to control access to the site.
  - b. Storage and warehousing operations shall only occur within the existing building and shall be limited to 2,000 square feet or less.
  - c. Self-storage facilities are prohibited.

- d. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the use becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.
2. To allow building material sales and storage yards, contractors equipment sales and storage yards and other similar uses per Section 10-3-91 (6):
    - a. Within six months of approval of the special use permit, the entrance shown in Exhibit A shall be closed. Parking blocks, posts and chains, or other materials approved by the City may be used to control access to the site.
    - b. Uncovered or unenclosed storage and display of building materials and contractors' equipment shall be located in the rear of the property behind any principal buildings and shall be screened from view with a fence, decorative wall or other physical or structural enclosures that is opaque to obstruct the view of storage materials, with the finished face facing outside, and shall be at least six (6) feet in height.
    - c. If in the opinion of Planning Commission or City Council, the use becomes a nuisance, the special use permit can be recalled for further review, which could lead to the need for additional conditions, restrictions, or the revocation of the permit.
  3. To allow multiple-family dwellings and/or mixed use buildings per Section 10-3-91 (17):
    - a. Within six months of approval of the special use permit, the entrance shown in Exhibit A shall be closed. Parking blocks, posts and chains, or other materials approved by the City may be used to control access to the site.

Chair Finnegan said on the site tour yesterday my question was about the screening of the outside storage. Would that be screened from [Route] 33 like if you are looking from West Market Street up will be screened off?

Ms. Dang said can you ask your question again, I am sorry.

Mr. Fletcher said you are talking about because when you travel [Route] 33 you can basically see all around the property.

Chair Finnegan said when you say screened from view...

Ms. Dang said they would have to have a fence or something that would make it opaque where you could not see it from West Market Street.

Mr. Fletcher said it is enclosed.

Vice Chair Byrd said staff might not know, but do you know what the current square footage of the existing large building is?

Mr. Fletcher said the applicant may know. He [the applicant] is indicating that he does not know the exact square footage.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their requests.

Chris Wenger, applicant, came forward to speak to the requests. He said the only thing else that I would want to add, and it might be in some of your letters already, is just the fact of the property we have there, the way it is being used we are trying to maintain a nice property and keep materials enclosed and keep it pretty so to speak. We are backing up to the park and I know there is a wooded section there between us but we are trying to maintain a nice property. The tenants we have in the apartment, once again, very satisfied to be there, they do not mind the mix of the commercial folks there as well. Everybody seems to be getting along well.

Chair Finnegan said for that back structure are you planning on putting a fence or how are you going to block [it out]? Are you planning on putting a fence?

Mr. Wenger said that is actually a RV carport I call it. My in-laws actually park their RV underneath there and I actually have applied for a building permit for that structure and I just got that permitted the other day. That is not going to be enclosed nor will it house anything but a vehicle.

Chair Finnegan said that is not for equipment storage?

Mr. Wenger said no, just the RV is what its current use is.

Vice Chair Byrd said 2,000 square feet this will limit that property to that, is that enough to account for any potential need of more space?

Mr. Wenger said currently that is very satisfied. With Valley Waterproofing on the end and then C&E Carpentry, my business, next then the rest of the front section is that warehousing space. It is quite adequate for what that is being used for. Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Vice Chair Byrd said when we start discussing these, is it easier to refer to them as one, two and three? Or do you want us to be more specific about it?

Chair Finnegan said as long as we are identifying allow warehousing as one, allow building material sales and storage areas as two...as long as we are...

Vice Chair Byrd said as you just said it was my understanding of what one, two and three are. I was just curious to those who are present commissioners and such if a motion was brought up...

Ms. Dang said on the first cover page of the memo it might help to use that table the special use permit requests. You can say would like to make a motion to allow warehousing and other storage facilities with the conditions recommended by staff. If you use those three bullet points it might help to guide you.

Vice Chair Byrd said in light of that, concerning the warehousing driving by it all the time that is what I thought it was. The family dwelling was the only surprise to learn but I am not one to ever be against housing. The building storage materials as a long as the applicant understands that it will be held accountable for making sure that they have those areas enclosed. I would see no issue with any of the three. I would like to make a motion to allow warehousing and other storage facilities in B-2 with the conditions recommended.

Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Baugh	Aye
Vice Chair Byrd	Aye
Vice Mayor Dent	Aye
Commissioner Washington	Aye
Chair Finnegan	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request to allow warehousing and other storage facilities passed (5-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on May 14, 2024.

Vice Chair Byrd said I would like to allow building material sales and storage yards, contractors equipment sales and storage yards and other similar uses in B-2 with staff recommended conditions for a special use permit.

Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Baugh	Aye
Vice Chair Byrd	Aye
Vice Mayor Dent	Aye
Commissioner Washington	Aye
Chair Finnegan	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request to allow building material sales and storage yards passed (5-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on May 14, 2024.

Vice Chair Byrd said I would like to make a motion for a special use permit to allow multifamily dwellings and/or mixed use buildings in B-2 with staff recommended conditions.

Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Baugh	Aye
Vice Chair Byrd	Aye
Vice Mayor Dent	Aye
Commissioner Washington	Aye
Chair Finnegan	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit request to allow multifamily dwellings and/or mixed use buildings passed (5-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on May 14, 2024.