



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Ande Banks, City Manager
From: Adam Fletcher, Director, Department of Community Development and Harrisonburg Planning Commission
Date: June 13, 2023 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Rezoning – 564 East Gay Street (R-2 to R-8)

Summary:

Project name	564 East Gay Street Rezoning
Address/Location	564 East Gay Street
Tax Map Parcels	33-K-9
Total Land Area	+/- 5,663 square feet
Property Owner	Bird Dog Properties LLC
Owner's Representative	Jim Herr
Present Zoning	R-2, Residential District
Proposed Zoning	R-8, Small Lot Residential District
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission Recommendation	May 10, 2023 (Public Hearing) Approval (5-0)
City Council	June 13, 2023 (First Reading/Public Hearing) Anticipated June 27, 2023 (Second Reading)

Background:

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

Site: Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

North: Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

East: Across Hill Street, multi-family dwelling, zoned R-2

South: Across East Gay Street, single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

West: Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

Key Issues:

The applicant is requesting to rezone a +/- 5,547-square foot parcel from R-2, Residential District to R-8, Small Lot Residential District. In the applicant's letter they explain that they want to rezone the property

to R-8 to subdivide the lot into two parcels and build a single-family detached dwelling on the future, undeveloped parcel.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan designates this parcel as Neighborhood Residential and states that:

“These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood.”

The R-8 district is intended for medium- to high-density residential development including, single-family detached and duplex dwellings, and, in special circumstances, by special use permit townhouse units. Staff believes the flexibility offered by the R-8 district’s minimum area and dimensional requirements can at times work well within areas designated as Neighborhood Residential.

Transportation and Traffic

Referencing the driveway on Hill Street, during the review staff noted that the driveway entrance for the corner parcel should be located on the half of the parcel frontage that is more distant from the intersection. Staff hoped this detail would have been proffered, and while the applicant has shown on the conceptual site layout a driveway entrance along Hill Street on the half of the property furthest from the East Gay Street and Hill Street intersection, the applicant did not proffer the entrance location. (Note: Public Works staff continue to evaluate and draft new access management standards to better regulate entrance locations.)

Staff also discussed future sidewalk along the Hill Street and East Gay Street property frontages. Due to the location of the Newtown Cemetery, staff believes it would be difficult to construct new sidewalks along this block of Hill Street. Along East Gay Street, there is sufficient public right-of-way currently available behind the street curb for future construction of sidewalk by the City or others.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested rezoning regarding water and sewer matters. Water service size will be reviewed during building design.

Housing Study

Staff believes that the requested rezoning to R-8 supports efforts to increase the availability of housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households.

Public Schools

The student generation attributed to the proposed single family dwelling is estimated to be two students. Based on the School Board’s current adopted attendance boundaries, Spotswood Elementary, Skyline Middle School, and Harrisonburg High School would serve the students residing in this development.

Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS) staff noted in their review comments that schools are over capacity in many of the schools.

Recommendation

Staff believes, that given the configuration and size of the existing parcel, and the R-8 district’s minimum area and dimensional requirements, this request does not have any major adverse effects on the surrounding properties and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Guide. Staff recommends approval of the rezoning as submitted by the applicant.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve the rezoning request; or
- (b) Deny the rezoning request.

Community Engagement:

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

Rezoning – 564 East Gay Street (R-2 to R-8)

Public hearing to consider a request from Bird Dog Properties LLC to rezone a +/- 5,547-square foot parcel from R-2, Residential District to R-8, Small Lot Residential District. The Zoning Ordinance states that the R-2, Residential District is intended for medium-density, single-family and duplex residential development. The R-8, Small Lot Residential District is intended for medium- to high-density residential development that includes single-family detached, duplex, and in special circumstances townhouse development. The residential density ranges for R-8 are single-family, 2,800 sq. ft. minimum; duplex, 1,800 sq. ft. minimum/unit; townhouses, 1,800 sq. ft. minimum/unit; and other uses, 6,000 sq. ft. minimum. The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Neighborhood Residential. These areas are typically older residential neighborhoods, which contain a mixture of densities and a mixture of housing types, but should have more single-family detached homes than other types of housing. This type of land use highlights those neighborhoods in which existing conditions dictate the need for careful consideration of the types and densities of future residential development. Infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood. The parcel is addressed as 564 East Gay Street and is identified as tax map parcel 33-K-9.

In addition, adjoining property owners were notified of the public hearing; the property was posted with signage advertising the request; and a notice was provided on the City’s website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings>.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the rezoning request

Attachments:

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

Review:

Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning (5-0). Commissioner Washington was absent and there is one vacancy on the Planning Commission.