



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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February 3, 2017

TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

SUBJECT: Public hearing to consider a request from Ken Bell of Bell Investments, LLC, with representative Shawn Gatesman, the Friendly Fermenter, LLC, for a special use permit per Section 10-3-85 (1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow manufacturing, processing and assembly operations when not employing more than fifteen (15) persons on the premises in a single shift and provided that all storage and activities are conducted within a building within the B-1, Central Business District. The 3,255 +/- square foot property is located at 20 South Mason Street and is identified as tax map parcel 26-A-4.

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: January 11, 2017

Vice Chair Fitzgerald read the request and asked staff to review.

Rachel Drescher, Planning/Zoning Technician, said the Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Mixed Use Development. This designation includes both existing and proposed new mixed use areas. These areas are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in planned neighborhoods where different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. These areas are prime candidates for “live work” and traditional neighborhood developments. Live-work developments combine residential and office/service uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area, which could be combined in the same building or on the same street.

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

Site: Building currently under construction; basement proposed for the Friendly Fermenter, 1st and 2nd floor to be a restaurant, 3rd floor to be apartments, zoned B-1

North: Across East Market Street, parking lot, zoned B-1

East: Vacant building, zoned B-1

South: Restaurant and retail, zoned B-1

West: Across South Mason Street, bank, zoned B-1

The applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-85 (1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a manufacturing brewery within the B-1, Central Business District. The applicant desires to establish a specialty home brewing supply shop, an area for onsite “brew your own beer” classes, a small commercial brewery, and a taproom/bar area. The shop would be located in the basement of the newly constructed building on the southeast corner of South Mason Street and East Market Street. The building is planned to be a mixed use building, where in addition to the applicant’s business in the basement, a restaurant would be located on the 1st and 2nd floors, and apartments on the 3rd floor.

The City With The Planned Future

The SUP is being request specifically for the brewery portion of the applicant's business, as brewing beer for commercial production is considered a manufacturing operation. The brewery portion of the business will produce around 150-220 barrels of beer (4,600 to 7,700 gallons) per year and beer will be sold onsite for both on and off-site consumption. A floor plan submitted by the applicant shows the 1,600+/- square foot brewery will consist of retail space, brewery equipment, bar, and seating areas. At this time, there are no plans for outdoor seating. To date, this location will be the smallest brewery in terms of space within the City of Harrisonburg, therefore, it will have the lowest allowed occupancy. For example:

- Pale Fire Brewing Company, located at 217 South Liberty Street, is 8,800+/- square feet,
- Brothers Craft Brewing, located at 800 North Main Street, is 8,319+/- square feet,
- Three Notch'd Brewing Company 241 East Market Street, is 2,100+/- square feet, and
- Wolfe Street Brewing, located at 120 West Wolfe Street, is 1,710 +/- square feet

The "brew your own beer" classes is planned to be limited in size to three stations, with one to two customers per station, and will be supervised by an employee. Due to the small scale of the brewery, there will be two to four employees on the premises in a single shift. The applicant anticipates one person will be working in production and one to three employees will operate the taproom/retail portion.

Delivery trucks will park and unload in the parking lot on South Mason Street between Las Chamas and Shenandoah Joe, and supplies will be delivered through the rear exit door of the building located along South Mason Street.

Overall, staff believes the brewery use should have no adverse effect on the health, safety, or comfort of those working and living in the area and it is fitting with other uses generally found in the B-1 zoning district. Staff recommends to approve this request.

Vice Chair Fitzgerald asked if there were any questions for staff.

Mr. Colman asked about parking for that.

Ms. Drescher said B-1 does not have any parking requirements.

Mr. Colman said even for the delivery truck.

Ms. Drescher said correct; that is still B-1.

Mr. Finnegan asked whether there will be a sign for this use.

Ms. Drescher said yes, because it is in the basement and has its own door, staff felt that they can have something, and there was talk of an awning to put signage over top of it.

Vice Chair Fitzgerald said Ruby's has kind of set the way for someone to have a place with two separate entrances and with the sign.

Mrs. Banks said there is also the possibility that all the uses in the building can go together and do a comprehensive sign plan. These are frequently done; it is not something this body reviews but it is done and forwarded on to City Council.

Mrs. Whitten said like a shopping center would have multiple signs.

Mrs. Banks said yes. Therefore, they could advertise on the Mason Street side.

Mrs. Whitten asked about parking issues for 15 employees.

Ms. Drescher said only two to four employees would be per shift.

Mr. Finnegan said the square footage is slightly less than Wolfe Street Brewery.

Ms. Drescher said yes.

Vice Chair Fitzgerald asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, she opened the public hearing and asked if anybody would like to speak in favor or against this request.

Shawn Gatesman, Operating Manager/Owner of the Friendly Fermenter, said Ms. Drescher did a wonderful job presenting. If anyone else has any additional questions, I am more than happy to answer them, otherwise thank you for having me.

Mr. Finnegan asked if this will be a home brewery store as well as a brewery.

Mr. Gatesman said yes, there is going to be retail; it is definitely meant to be a dual purpose facility. Yes, it is a brewery, my intent is for it to be much more than just a brewery.

Mr. Finks asked if he was going to be doing growlers or will trucks come to do bottling.

Mr. Gatesman said I have no intentions for traditional distribution. I will do growler fills and variations of that. If anybody has seen a crowler, which is essentially a can, I may look into that in the future. Onsite consumption and taking it away in growlers, things like that, that is the intent, particularly in that location I would not be able to go beyond that. I will max out a little over five barrels a week, which is perfectly within my business plan, so that is fine.

Vice Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was anything else. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing and asked Planning Commission for a motion on the request for the purpose of discussion.

Mr. Colman moved to approve the special use permit for 20 South Mason Street (Brewery Manufacturing/Processing Operation) as presented by staff.

Mr. Finnegan seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Fitzgerald asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor (6-0) to recommend approval of the special use permit for 20 South Mason Street (Brewery Manufacturing/Processing Operation).

Vice Chair Fitzgerald said this will go forward to City Council on February 14, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Banks

Alison Banks
Senior Planner