



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

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To: Ande Banks, City Manager
From: Adam Fletcher, Director, Department of Community Development and Harrisonburg Planning Commission
Date: October 8, 2024 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Rezoning – 439 & 445 Myrtle St (R-2 to R-8C)

Summary:

Project name	N/A
Address/Location	439 & 445 Myrtle Street
Tax Map Parcels	33-1-17 and 18
Total Land Area	+/- 14,424 square feet
Property Owner	Ritchie Vaughan
Owner's Representative	Colman Engineering
Present Zoning	R-2, Residential District
Proposed Zoning	R-8C, Small Lot Residential District Conditional
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission Recommendation	September 11, 2024 (Public Hearing) Approval (7-0)
City Council	October 8, 2024 (First Reading/Public Hearing) Anticipated October 22, 2024 (Second Reading)

Background:

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

Site: Single family detached dwellings, zoned R-2

North: Across Effinger Street, single family detached dwellings and duplex dwellings, zoned R-2

East: Across Myrtle Street, Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

South: Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

West: Single family detached dwelling, zoned R-2

Key Issues:

The applicant is requesting to rezone two parcels totaling +/- 14,424 square feet from R-2, Residential District to R-8C, Small Lot Residential District Conditional. There are currently two single-family detached dwellings, one on each parcel that front along Myrtle Street. In the applicant's letter they

explain that they want to rezone the property to R-8 to subdivide the two parcels into four parcels and build two new single single-family detached dwellings that would front along Effinger Street.

Proffers

The applicant has offered the following proffers (written verbatim):

1. Proposed lots 3 and 4 along Effinger Street will have a 25 ft front setback.
2. A variable width public sidewalk easement along the front of all proposed lots will be provided for the City to construct a sidewalk in the future. The easement will extend 7.5 ft from the existing back of curb into the property and will be dedicated at minor subdivision. In addition, a 4 ft temporary grading easement beyond the 7.5 ft sidewalk easement will be provided for the City to have sufficient space to install the proposed sidewalk.

The conceptual site layout is not proffered.

As noted in proffer #2, the applicant would dedicate public sidewalk and temporary construction easements to allow the City to construct sidewalk along the streets at some point in the future.

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. Townhomes are permitted with a special use permit. 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 and should work well within the nearby neighborhood.

The conceptual plan illustrates the two +/- 7,400 square foot in size subject parcels being potentially subdivided into four parcels ranging in size from 3,634 square feet to 3,882 square feet in lot area. When compared to the nearby neighborhood, and within only about a 300-foot radius of the subject parcels, there are eight parcels that are less than 5,000 square feet in area, the smallest of which is about 3,613 square feet.

Transportation and Traffic

A traffic impact analysis (TIA) was not required for the rezoning request.

If the site is subdivided in the future, the applicant will be required to provide off-street parking for the proposed new lots, as well as maintain an off-street parking space for the existing home at the corner of Effinger Street and Myrtle Street. Although the applicant has indicated driveway locations on the concept plan, these locations have not been finalized and may change.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

Staff has no concerns with the requested rezoning regarding water and sewer matters. The applicant is aware though that any future new lots will be required to connect to the City’s water and sewer systems, which may require extensions of existing facilities. For example, if they subdivide to create two, new lots, Lot 2 would likely require the extension of a public sewer main, which is conceptually shown on the submitted layout.

Housing Study

The City’s Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study (Housing Study) places the subject site within Market Type A. Among other things, this Market Type is characterized by high population growth. The study notes that Market Type A has “above median overall access to amenities such as public transit within walking distance, full-service grocery stores, and multiple parks and recreation facilities.” The study also notes that “policies that are appropriate to Market type A areas include an emphasis on increasing density through zoning changes, infill development and housing rehabilitation to maintain the quality of housing.”

Public Schools

The student generation attributed to the proposed two new residential units is estimated to be one student. Based on the School Board’s current adopted attendance boundaries, Spotswood Elementary School, Skyline Middle School, and Rocktown High School would serve the students residing in this development. Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS) staff noted that schools are over capacity in three of the six elementary schools. Note that the City has been planning for the purchase of land for a 7th elementary school for a number of years as such a project continues to be listed in the City’s Capital Improvement Program.

Recommendation

Staff believes the rezoning provides opportunity for infill development in a well establish neighborhood that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Guide and utilizes ideas promoted by the Housing Study. The conceptual layout is also in a form that is consistent with existing, smaller lot sizes within the nearby neighborhood. 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 – 439 & 445 Myrtle St (R-2 to R-8)

Public hearing to consider a request from Ritchie Vaughan to rezone two parcels totaling +/- 14,424-square foot property from R-2, Residential District to R-8, Small Lot Residential District. The parcels are addressed as 439 and 445 Myrtle Street and are identified as tax map parcels 33-1-17 and 18.

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 (7-0) of the rezoning request.