



## CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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May 29, 2025

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

**SUBJECT: *A request from Winchester Equipment Co for a special use permit to reduce required parking areas at 160 Carpenter Lane***

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING  
COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: May 14, 2025**

Chair Baugh read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Soffel said the property is addressed as 160 Carpenter Lane and is located at the end of Carpenter Lane adjacent to Interstate 81. Winchester Equipment Company, doing business as Valley Equipment Company, sells, rents, and services compact construction and agricultural equipment. On January 28, 2025, City Council approved a rezoning of this property from B-2, General Business District, to M-1, General Industrial District. The applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per section 10-3-97(8) to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 51 spaces to 28 spaces.

Section 10-3-97(8) of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) allows for a property owner to request a SUP for a reduction of the required parking areas provided an equivalent amount of open space remains available for future parking if deemed necessary by City Council. A deed delineating this open space must be recorded before the issuance of a new Certificate of Occupancy.

The applicant has provided a layout indicating that 28 parking spaces are to be delineated, including accessible parking. The submitted layout shows the open space would be equal to the required number of off-street parking spaces that would be required if the SUP were denied or if City Council were to require them in the future. If parking spaces are constructed in the reserved open space, landscaping islands and street trees will be required per Section 10-3-30.1(16) of the ZO.

The existing parking lot is nonconforming to the parking lot landscaping requirements in Section 10-3-30.1 of the ZO. The ZO requires that trees be planted when a nonconforming parking lot is

expanded. The applicant's layout shows a planned expansion of the parking lot travelways in the rear of the property, which would give rise to the requirement to install trees along the public street. However, if the applicant later chooses to not expand the travelway, then trees would not be required. It should be noted that the layout provided does not reflect the total number of trees that would be required. The applicant will be expected to work with staff to verify the number of trees to be planted.

Since the approval of the SUP allowing reduced parking would otherwise relieve the applicant from meeting parking lot landscaping requirements, staff recommends that the installation of trees along the public street right-of-way be a condition of the SUP. Therefore, staff proposes the following condition:

Trees shall be planted and maintained within the landscape borders adjacent to the public street right-of-way in accordance with Section 10-3-30.1(4) of the Zoning Ordinance.

#### *Land Use*

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as Industrial and states:

These areas are composed of land and structures used for light and general manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, high-technology, research and development, and related activities. They include the major existing and future employment areas of the City.

#### *Recommendation*

Staff recommends approval of the special use permit request with the suggested condition. Chair Baugh asked if there any questions for staff.

Councilmember Dent said I see there is a mature walnut to remain a street tree. I like that, keeping existing trees where possible. There are dots out in the diagram, are those existing trees or what?

Ms. Soffel said some of them are. The dots that exist there represent some evergreen bushes that were previously existing on that location. Maybe about half or more of those remain, some of them do not. There have been other trees or bushes. I am not sure if they are ornamentals or if they will grow big, but there are some small trees planted intermixed among where those dots are. They do not necessarily represent everything that is there.

Councilmember Dent said what is that red outline part?

Ms. Soffel said that is the expanded parking lot. They are proposing to expand that area so that they can reach the bays in the back.

Councilmember Dent said that would be accessed through the parking lot and around?

Ms. Soffel said the driveway is there towards the left side of the image and the parking area is shown in the dotted spaces.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their request.

Jonathan Garber, applicant's representative with Lineage Architects, came forward to speak to the request. He said I have really nothing to what Ms. Soffel and staff have given to you except for two small things. First, in the spirit of complete transparency my narrative indicates that there will not be a need for any utility work. I found out today that is not the case. We are going to have to upsize the meter so there will be some linear utility work associated with this project that has no impact whatsoever on the parking request per se. The second item and ma'am [referring to Councilmember Dent] you had noticed the existing walnut; we will absolutely defend that. From an owner's perspective something like this is primarily a financial consideration. They do not want to spend the money if they do not have to and I respect that. From the get-go we have been making them aware of the proximity to Blacks Run, the concerns associated with that waterway, and the fact that reducing the amount of soil we are going to disturb and hardscape that we would introduce is going to go toward what they are able to do in this case to provide further protection for Blacks Run. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

Councilmember said for example I see that this new turn in for the bays is gravel instead of asphalt paved so it is pervious in that sense, right?

Mr. Garber said we do anticipate gravel. There will be concrete pads right at the very entrance to the door to keep from tearing things to pieces.

Councilmember Dent said I am a little confused where the entrance to the driveway is. Is that on the property?

Mr. Garber said it is to the west, to the left side of the diagram you can see the existing walnut and three new street trees down along the bottom along the cul-de-sac and then there is a gap between with one new street tree at the top. We are not making any changes to the existing access to Carpenter Lane. It is more than sufficient. The idea here is to touch as little as possible.

Chair Baugh asked if there were any questions for the applicant's representative. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing and invited anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request.

Vice Chair Finnegan said when did this come up for rezoning it was less than a year ago right?

Ms. Dang said I think you all had it in December.

Councilmember Dent said is this the one that is moving from Charles Street to here?

Staff responded yes.

Chair Baugh closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Vice Chair Finnegan said Mr. Chair I am never going to miss an opportunity to support less parking and I also appreciate staff's recommended condition. We do need more trees and less parking.

Councilmember Dent said I agree. I will make a motion to recommend approval of the special use permit with the suggested condition.

Vice Chair Finnegan seconded the motion.

Chair Baugh called for a roll call vote.

Vice Chair Finnegan	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Alsindi	Aye
Commissioner Washington	Aye
Commissioner Porter	Aye
Chair Baugh	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the special use permit with the suggested conditions passed (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on June 10, 2025.