



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Ande Banks, Interim City Manager
From: Adam Fletcher, Director – Department of Community Development and Harrisonburg Planning Commission
Date: March 8, 2022 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – To Amend Off-Street Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Requirements for “Community Buildings” and “Community Centers”

Summary:

Public hearing to consider amending off-street vehicle and bicycle parking requirements in Article G of the Zoning Ordinance for community building and community center uses.

Staff and Planning Commission recommended approval of the zoning ordinance amendments.

Background:

The definition of *community building* in the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) is as follows:

Building, community: A building for social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities for a neighborhood or community, provided any such use is not operated primarily for commercial gain.

The *community building* use has included community buildings associated with housing developments (townhomes, apartments, duplexes, or single-family detached home developments), where the use of such space is primarily used by residents of a housing development. The *community building* use also applies to places like the Dallard-Newman House owned by the Northeast Neighborhood Association at 192 Kelley Street and the Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project at 425 Hill Street.

With regard to *community center*, there is no definition in the Zoning Ordinance that defines this use. When the *community center* use appears in the Zoning Ordinance it is described as a subset of governmental uses and would be used to apply to places like the City’s Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center and the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center, both owned and operated by the City of Harrisonburg.

Attached is a summary table of *community building* and *community center* uses as they appear in zoning district regulations as uses permitted by right and by special use permit.

Key Issues:

Staff proposes to amend off-street vehicle and bicycle parking requirements within Article G of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) for *community building* and *community center* uses. Specifically, within Section 10-3-25, staff proposes the following changes:

- (14) Community centers ~~not associated with a housing development~~, libraries, museums and similar facilities not dependent on public assembly or seating: One (1) parking space for each two hundred and fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area. ~~Community centers associated with housing developments, where the use of such space is primarily for the use of residents of the housing development, have no minimum off-street parking requirements.~~

- (29) Community buildings: If associated with housing developments, where the use of such space is primarily used for the residents of the housing development, or if the building is no greater than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area, then no minimum off-street parking requirements. If the building is not associated with a housing development and is greater than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area, then one (1) parking space for each two hundred fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area.

Historically, staff has applied the *community center* parking requirements of one parking space for each 250 square feet of gross floor area to *community building* uses. In June 2019, staff proposed and City Council approved amendments to Section 10-3-25 (14) with the intent to allow *community centers (and community buildings) associated with housing developments* to have no minimum off-street parking requirements. The intent was and still is to allow *community buildings associated with housing developments* (townhomes, apartments, duplexes, or single-family detached home developments) to not have to provide off-street parking spaces because when housing developments are constructed, the parking requirements for dwelling units, Section 10-3-25 (7) of the ZO, must be met for each individual dwelling unit on site; and therefore, would meet the parking needs for the community. The residents are the same individuals who will primarily use the *community building* and having to provide additional parking for an area to be utilized by the residents, whom already have parking, creates excessive parking, reduces available green space for residents, increases stormwater runoff, and increases the cost of the development.

The amendments proposed herein are intended to differentiate *community buildings* and *community centers* and to amend how the off-street parking requirements for *community buildings* is determined and implemented. Staff proposes to allow *community buildings* that are associated with a housing development or are no greater than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area to have no minimum off-street parking requirements, and if the building is not associated with a housing development and is greater than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area, to provide one parking space for each 250 square feet of gross floor area.

For illustration purposes, the *community building* at 192 Kelley Street (zoned R-2) currently has +/- 1,408 square feet of gross floor area and there are plans for a building addition that would make the building a total of +/- 2,250 square feet of gross floor area. The *community building* at 425 Hill Street (zoned R-2) has +/- 576 square feet of gross floor area. If the proposed amendments are approved, then these two *community buildings* would not have any minimum off-street parking requirements.

Staff also proposes the following amendments to Section 10-3-25.1, Off-street bicycle parking spaces as shown:

| Use | Parking Requirement |
|--|--|
| Community centers, community buildings , private clubs, museums, libraries, recreational and leisure-time activities, and similar uses | 1 space/10,000 square feet of gross floor area or 4 spaces minimum, whichever is greater |

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve the Ordinance amendments; or
- (b) Deny the Ordinance amendments.

Community Engagement:

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

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – To Amend the Definition of “Community Building” and Add a New Definition of “Community Center” to Section 10-3-24 and Amend Off-Street Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Requirements in Article G

Public hearing to consider amending Section 10-3-24 of the Zoning Ordinance by modifying the definition of “community building” and adding a definition for “community center.” Amendments would also be made to off-street vehicle and bicycle parking requirements in Article G for community building and community center uses.

In addition, a notice was provided on the City’s website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings>.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends (a) approval of the Ordinance amendments.

Attachments:

- 1. Planning Commission Extract

2. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments
3. Summary Table of Community Building and Community Center Uses

Review:

Planning Commission recommended (7-0) alternative (a) approval of the Ordinance amendments.