



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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July 5, 2023

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

SUBJECT: *Consider whether the proposed Homeless Services Center public facility site at 1111 N. Main St. is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan*

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON: June 14, 2023**

Chair Finnegan read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Dang said The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Mixed Use and states:

“The Mixed Use category includes both existing and proposed areas for mixed use. Mixed Use areas shown on the Land Use Guide map are intended to combine residential and non-residential uses in neighborhoods, where the different uses are finely mixed instead of separated. Mixed Use can take the form of a single building, a single parcel, a city block, or entire neighborhoods. Quality architectural design features and strategic placement of green spaces for large scale developments will ensure development compatibility of a mixed use neighborhood with the surrounding area. These areas are prime candidates for “live-work” and traditional neighborhood developments (TND). Live-work developments combine residential and commercial uses allowing people to both live and work in the same area. The scale and massing of buildings is an important consideration when developing in Mixed Use areas. Commercial uses would be expected to have an intensity equivalent to a Floor Area Ratio of at least 0.4, although the City does not measure commercial intensity in that way.

Downtown is an existing area that exhibits and is planned to continue to contain a mix of land uses. The downtown Mixed Use area often has no maximum residential density, however, development should take into consideration the services and resources that are available (such as off-street parking) and plan accordingly. Residential density in Mixed Use areas outside of downtown should be around 24 dwelling units per acre, and all types of residential units are permitted: single-family detached, single-family attached (duplexes and townhomes), and multi-family buildings. Large scale developments, which include multi-family buildings are encouraged to include single-family detached and/or attached dwellings.”

All the sites adjacent to this property along North Main Street are zoned B-2, General Business District or M-1, General Industrial District. The B-2 district allows a mixture of commercial and service activities, including transient accommodations, which include homeless shelters. To the north, adjacent properties are zoned M-1, General Industrial District.

Given the site's location along North Main Street providing a homeless shelter in this area creates the opportunity for transportation related Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) principles to be implemented with using connected sidewalks and public transportation.

Finally, staff believes that providing a homeless shelter is another tool to work toward achieving Objective 6.3 within the Comprehensive Plan, which states:

“To support programs that prevent and address homelessness in the City.”

Recommendation

Staff finds the proposed homeless services center's general location, character, and extent thereof is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan and recommends the Commission communicate the same findings to City Council.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for staff. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing. He asked if there was anyone in the room or on the phone wishing to speak to the request.

Vice Mayor Dent stated last night at City Council there was a delay of about 5 minutes. So, a couple of people who wanted to speak missed it. One was in the parking lot, and one was on the phone.

Chair Finnegan said 5 minutes is quite a delay. It used to be 30 seconds.

Mr. Fletcher said that he was unaware of the delay.

Vice Mayor Dent asked how would we know?

Chair Finnegan asked if there was a way to check on that?

Chair Finnegan then asked is this on TV or streaming on the internet?

Mr. Fletcher answered both.

Chair Finnegan said I was not aware of that.

Vice Mayor Dent said we were not either until we heard from people who had missed it.

Ms. Dang said you can give it another 20 seconds. I timed it for a minute.

Mr. Fletcher said earlier we were informed that the delay was originally about a minute, which is why we give a pause at this time. I left probably before the meeting was over and before that was discussed.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for this request. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Commissioner Baugh said having been involved in the decision to [unintelligible], I think it is a good idea. One of the things that did come up yesterday that came up is specially the proximity of existing services. That and the whole thing here about its...

Tyler Blanks, a zoning specialist with community development and phone operator interrupted the meeting and asked the Commission is it possible to turn their microphones up? He referred to a call he received and noted the person who called said the sound was not audible.

Chair Finnegan said we can try and talk into the microphone.

Commissioner Baugh said I was commenting on the location proximity to existing services. One of these days when I have a lot of time, I am going to see if I can find somebody that can tell me the legislative history on this. I think the rationale of this is simply that otherwise your public uses would essentially be of right uses and they would basically give the opportunity to the public to weigh in on it. I do not really know...I suspect this probably is not...I am probably overthinking it, but I could see for example the value of sometimes maybe putting things in land that came cheap that otherwise may not seem like a great location and give the opportunity to the public to weigh in on that. But in any case, it certainly seems to me to fit in with our planning and with that I will move approval in favor of the recommendation or however we want to term it that this is in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Armstrong seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Byrd said just for clarification, that means we are saying that the homeless service center is in substantial accord to the Comprehensive Plan?

Chair Finnegan answered yes that is the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Armstrong	Aye
Commissioner Washington	Aye
Commissioner Baugh	Aye
Vice Chair Byrd	Aye
Vice Mayor Dent	Aye
Chair Finnegan	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the request passed (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on July 11th, 2023.