



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Planning Commission
From: Department of Community Development
Date: March 13, 2024 (Regular Meeting)
Re: 15.2-2232 Review – Proposed Fire Station at 450 Mount Clinton Pike

Summary:

Project name	Fire Station #5
Address/Location	450 Mount Clinton Pike
Tax Map Parcels	46-C-4A
Total Land Area	+/- 15.23-acre
Property Owner	Anthem Inc.
Owner's Representative	City of Harrisonburg
Zoning	M-1, General Industrial District
Comprehensive Plan Designation	Industrial
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission	March 13, 2024 (Public Hearing)
Presentation of Planning Commission findings to City Council	Anticipated April 9, 2024

Background:

The City of Harrisonburg is under contract to purchase 450 Mount Clinton Pike, which is an undeveloped +/- 15.23-acre property, with plans to construct a new fire station to improve service and reduce response times within the community.

City Code Section 10-1-6 stipulates that “if a public facility subject to Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia is not already shown on the comprehensive plan, the planning commission shall determine whether the location, character and extent of such public facility is in substantial accord with the comprehensive plan as provided by Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia and the terms and conditions set forth therein, and may be amended from time to time.”

The Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2232 states, among other things, that when a locality has adopted a comprehensive plan, “it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan.” Public buildings or public structures, among others, are listed by the Code as features that unless are already shown on the plan “shall not be constructed, established, or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been

submitted and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof.” A copy of Section 15.2-2232 is attached.

In 2022, City Council voted to invest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds into the creation of Fire Station #5, and in November 2023, City Council approved the purchase of 450 Mount Clinton Pike for Fire Station #5. The City is expected close on the property soon. Information about this project is available on the City website at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/hfd-station-5>.

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

Site: Undeveloped property; zoned M-1

North: Recreational use and single-family detached dwellings; zoned M-1

East: Industrial uses; zoned M-1

South: Across Mount Clinton Pike, undeveloped property; zoned M-1

West: Industrial uses; zoned M-1

Key Issues:

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.

The property is zoned M-1, General Industrial District and conforms with the Comprehensive Plan’s Industrial designation. The M-1 district allows “public uses” by right and a City fire station is classified as a public use and thus is allowed by right.

The City has been planning to provide a fifth fire station for quite some time and it has been included in the Capital Improvement Program for a number of years. Within the Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 13 – Community Infrastructure, Services, Safety and Health, the need for a fifth fire station to be located within the Park View area of the City to assist in reducing response times (see page 13-15). Specifically, the new fire station works towards achieving Comprehensive Plan Objective 15.2, which is:

To provide a well prepared first response force that is capable of response and mitigation as an all hazards organization.

Recommendation

Staff finds the proposed fire station’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.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Communicate findings that the proposed fire station is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan; or
- (b) Communicate findings that the proposed fire station is not in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Engagement:

The request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for Planning Commission’s public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

15.2-2232 Review – Proposed Fire Station #5 at 450 Mount Clinton Pike

Public hearing to consider, per City Code Section 10-1-6, whether the proposed Fire Station #5 public facility site is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan as provided by the Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2232. The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as General Industrial. The +/- 15.23-acre property is M-1, General Industrial District, is addressed as 450 Mount Clinton Pike, and is identified as tax map parcel 46-C-4A.

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) to communicate findings that the proposed fire station is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments:

- 1. Site maps
- 2. Site Plan for Fire Station #5
- 3. Code of Virginia 15.2-2232. Legal Status of Plan

Review:

N/A