



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Department of Planning & Community Development

409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801
(540) 432-7700 / FAX (540) 432-7777
www.harrisonburgva.gov/community-development

Building Inspections
Engineering
Planning & Zoning

December 26, 2018

TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

SUBJECT: Public hearing to consider a request from Harrisonburg Port Road Station, LLC for a special use permit per section 10-3-91 (2) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow warehousing and other storage facilities within the B-2 General Business District. The +/- 36,590 sq. ft. property is located at 701 Port Republic Road and is identified as tax map parcel 12-M-2.

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: December 12, 2018

Chair Way read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Dang said in March 2018, an engineered comprehensive site plan (ECSP) was approved for redevelopment of the subject site. Building plans were approved in April 2018 and a demolition permit issued in October 2018. The previously existing convenience store and gas pumps have been demolished and redevelopment of the property is underway with a new convenience store and gas pumps being built in new locations on the site.

The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Commercial. Commercial uses include retail, office, professional service functions, restaurants, and lodging uses. Commercial areas should offer connecting streets, biking and walking facilities, and public transit services. Interparcel access and connections are essential to maintaining traffic safety and flow along arterials. Parking should be located to the sides or rear of buildings.

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

- Site: Construction of a new gas station and convenience store, zoned B-2
- North: Parking lot owned by James Madison University, zoned B-2
- East: Across Port Republic Road, gas stations and convenience stores, zoned B-2
- South: Coffee shop, zoned B-2C
- West: Parking lot owned by James Madison University, zoned B-2

The applicant is requesting a special use permit (SUP) per Section 10-3-91 (2) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow warehousing and other storage facilities within the B-2, General Business District. If approved, the applicant intends to lease a 520 sq. ft. basement area within the newly constructed building for storage and warehousing to tenants that would not operate a use on site. Leasing any area for storage and warehousing to a tenant that would not operate on site is not permitted by right in the B-2 district but is allowable with an approved SUP.

During the ECSP review for the redevelopment of the convenience store and gas station, the site plan did not indicate a basement level within the building, and thus the site layout was designed with only the main floor square footage of the building in mind (4,743 square feet), which per the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) requires 24 off-street parking spaces.

During the building permit review of the project, the building plans indicated that there would be a basement level with a 200 sq. ft. office space. The building plans were approved, and a building permit issued for a 4,743 sq. ft. convenience store and a 200 sq. ft. office space. However, as indicated in the first paragraph of this section, the applicant intends to construct an approximately 520 sq. ft. basement area for storage. With this new plan, the applicant has been informed that the building plans must be updated and approved by the Building Inspections Division to increase the size of the basement space from 200 to 520 sq. ft. and to change the (building) use group from an office to storage space.

If the requested SUP for storage and warehousing is approved, Section 10-3-25 (18) of the ZO would apply and off-street parking spaces would not be required for the 520 sq. ft. basement storage area. Section 10-3-25 (18) requires warehouses or similar facilities to provide one parking space for each two persons working on the premises on a maximum shift, plus a parking space for every truck or other vehicle used in connection with the use. The applicant has stated that the tenant will be using the area for offsite records storage and storage of supplemental building materials and that there will be no staff working from the basement storage area nor any trucks stored on site associated with the storage space. The site would likely be visited by small delivery trucks for pick up and drop off about two to three times per month.

It should be understood that if the SUP for storage and warehousing is not approved and the approximately 5,263 sq. ft. building constructed, then the applicant must provide for 27 total parking spaces for this site. If another use that is not the storage and warehousing for an offsite tenant occupies the basement space, including the convenience store, the change is likely to require additional parking spaces. The applicant should further be aware that enlargement of the building could also require additional parking spaces. The property owner could address additional off-street parking requirements by redesigning the site to provide more off-street parking spaces or establishing a shared parking agreement with an adjacent property owner to meet the ZO's minimum off-street parking requirements.

To gain access to the basement level from the front of the building, one must walk around the northwest side of the building and down a set of stairs. The basement is not accessible from inside the main floor of the building.

Although the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Guide designates the site as Commercial, in consideration of the small size of the area that is proposed to be used for storage and warehousing, and in understanding how the storage area is to be used, which does not require additional off-street parking spaces for the site, staff believes the use will have no more adverse effect on the health, safety or comfort of persons living or working in the area and will be no more injurious, economically or otherwise, to property or improvements in the surrounding area than would any use generally permitted in the district.

Staff recommends approval of the special use permit with the following condition:

- Storage and warehousing operations for a tenant not operating on site shall only occur within the existing structure's basement and shall be limited to 520 square feet or less.

Chair Way asked if there were any questions for staff. Hearing none he opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to speak to the request.

Mr. Ed Blackwell, Blackwell Engineering, came forward, representing the owner, Mr. Holtzman. Mr. Blackwell stated that there is a tenant for the storage area in the property basement. The tenant is expected

to be on the property once a week or once every couple of weeks. The tenant will be storing files and other incidentals for their business.

The basement was not originally on the site plan. As the building was being constructed, it was noted that the grade allowed for a tall crawl space. It was decided to replace the crawl space with a functional basement.

Mr. Blackwell stated that, for storage use, there is no need for additional parking. He assured the Commission that if it was decided to change the basement to another use in the future, there is space to update the parking on the property. In addition, all City requirements and processes will be followed to adjust the site accordingly.

Chair Way noted that there is access from the JMU parking lot, which may be accessible for parking purposes.

Mr. Blackwell agreed. They have worked with JMU and will maintain communication with JMU's facilities management.

Chair Way asked if there were any further questions. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone wanting to speak regarding the special use permit. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Mr. Colman stated that the site visit showed the proposed special use to be a good use of the space, maximizing the available space for the mutual benefit of the parties involved.

Mrs. Fitzgerald moved to recommend approval of the special use permit with the condition as recommended by staff.

Mr. Finks seconded the motion.

Chair way said we have a motion and a second to recommend approval of the special use permit with the condition as applied here.

All voted in favor (4-0) of the motion.

Chair Way said this will move forward to City Council on January 8, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Banks

Alison Banks
Senior Planner