

Thanh Dang

From: Pamela S. Ulmer
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 9:52 AM
To: Thanh Dang
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From: HarrisonburgVA.gov via HarrisonburgVA.gov <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 7:13 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>
Subject: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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Submitted on: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 - 7:12pm

Name: Jeff Gehrs

Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Meeting: Wed, 12/13/2023

Agenda Item Number: ID 23-439

Comment:

Re: Response to the Notice of Public Hearing for Special Use and Zoning Request - 865 Port Republic Road

Dear Members of the Community Development Office,

This letter aims to express concerns and seek clarification regarding the proposed rezoning and special use requests for 865 Port Republic Road. While acknowledging the efforts made by the City and the applicants in providing information, I seek additional documentation and details to address specific points of concern.

Presently, the proposal outlines a total of 343 parking spaces for 96 units with 274 bedrooms. Of these, 63 are allocated for commercial use, and an additional 10 are designated for neighboring townhouses. As it stands, there are 270 parking spots for 274 bedrooms, equating to approximately 0.96 parking spaces per bedroom. The proposed reduction in total parking spots to 329, while maintaining 63 for commercial use and allocating 10 to neighboring townhomes, raises concerns. With the addition of 185 bedrooms, this would result in a total of 459 bedrooms with only 0.55 parking spaces per bedroom.

The proposal suggests that the current parking lot is underutilized due to a large foreign student population. I am interested in understanding the basis for this claim and whether there is supporting documentation. Additionally, the assumption that future students may not require cars raises questions, especially given Zillow's assessment of the location as highly car-dependent with limited transit and bike options.

Regarding the construction phase, I am curious about the impact on parking availability. Will the existing apartment building be closed during construction, or is alternative parking being considered for tenants off-site? This is crucial to prevent adverse effects on parking availability, particularly for the Devonshire Townhouses on Devon Lane.

An apparent discrepancy exists between the stated building height not exceeding 75 feet and the mention of an elevation measurement equivalent to at least 114 feet tall in the rear of the new building, effectively 11 stories. This

raises concerns about compliance with the zoning ordinance, which permits a maximum height of 75 feet for buildings in B-2. I seek clarification on this apparent discrepancy and whether it aligns with existing zoning regulations, especially considering the absence of a special use request for a height exemption.

Furthermore, the use of the term "Addition" to describe the new building, coupled with the inclusion of an enclosed crosswalk, prompts questions about the need for additional scrutiny. I would appreciate further information on the reasoning behind these choices and whether they comply with regulations or if there is an oversight.

Recognizing the importance of community development and progress, transparency, and adherence to regulations are essential for the well-being of the community. I kindly request that these concerns be addressed and that the necessary information be made available to the public before any decisions are finalized.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I anticipate your response and a thorough discussion during the upcoming public hearing.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Gehrs

Contact: Yes

Contact Info: jgehrs@yahoo.com