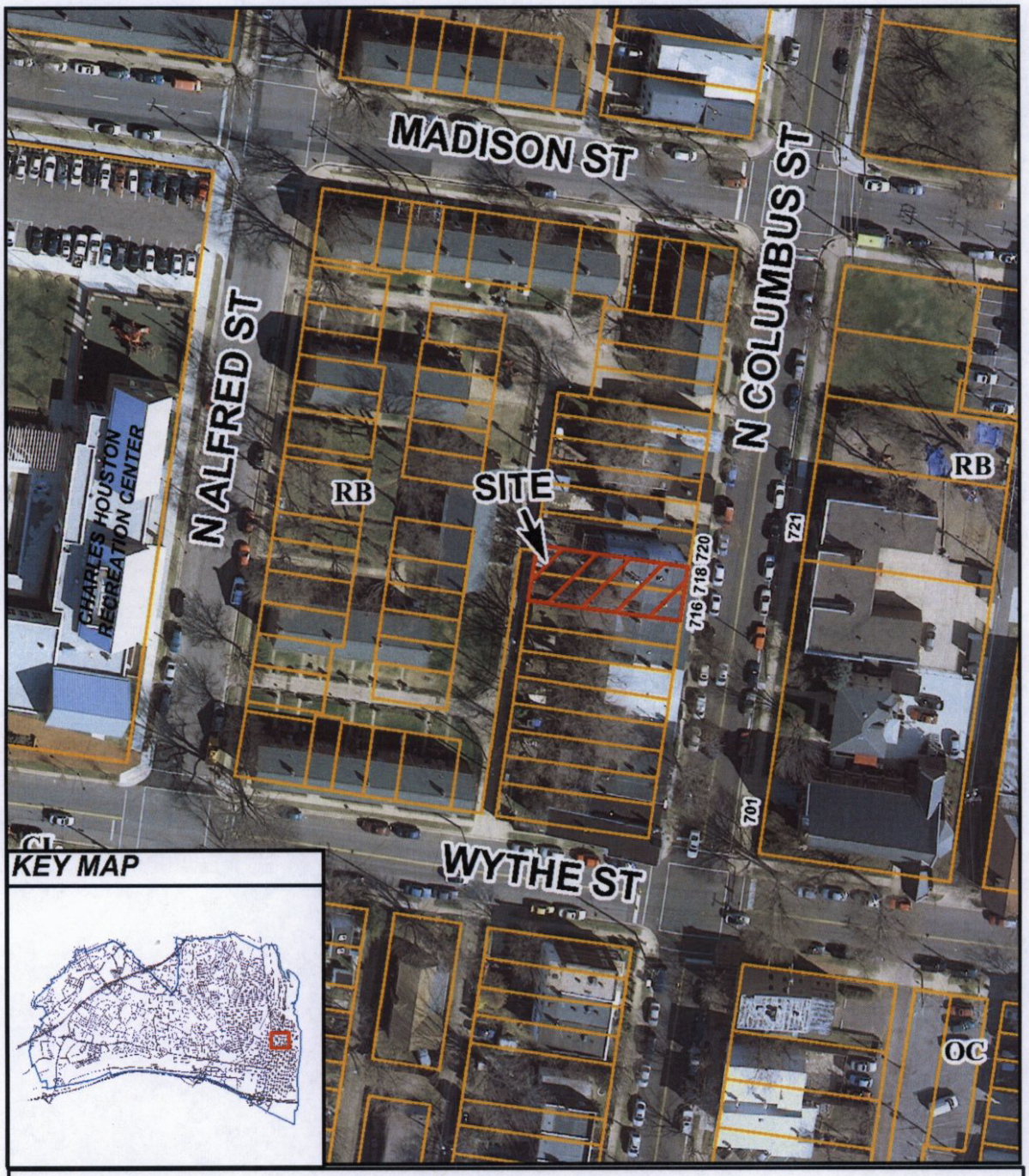
DOCKET ITEM #5
City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2011-0004
716 & 718 North Columbus Street

Application	General Data	
Request: Consideration of the sale of city property for consistency with the Master Plan, pursuant to section 9.06 of the City Charter.	**Planning Commission Hearing:**	January 5, 2012
	City Council Hearing	N/A
Address: 716-718 North Columbus Street	**Zone:**	RB/residential
Applicant: Department of General Services	**Small Area Plan:**	Braddock Road Metro

Staff Reviewers: Barbara Ross, Planning and Zoning barbara.ross.@alexandriava.gov
Staff Recommendation: Approval



CITY CHARTER
SECTION 9.06 # 2011-0004

1/5/2012

N

I. DISCUSSION

The City is proposing to sell the property at 716-718 North Columbus Street in conjunction with its program to dispose of surplus property. Section 9.06 of the City's Charter requires that the Planning Commission approve any acquisition or sale of public land. The Planning Commission is charged with ensuring that any such acquisition, sale or change is consistent with the City's Master Plan.

II. BACKGROUND

716-718 North Columbus Street (combined) is two townhouses combined into one residential facility. It is zoned residential RB and located within the Parker-Gray Historic District. The exterior is wood siding and there is a small back yard with a wood deck and ramp. The first floor has two bedrooms, one full and one partial bath, living room with fireplace, dining room, and kitchen. The second floor has seven bedrooms and two full baths.

The most recent use of the property was by the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) as a Mentor Foster Home. The property is currently vacant and is maintained by the Department of General Services. Prior to its use as a Mentor Foster Home, this location served elderly residents as an Alexandria Residential Care Home (ARCH). The townhouses were renovated and combined into one unit for ARCH after the City acquired 716 North Columbus Street in 1983 under the Blighting Influences Program and 718 North Columbus Street in 1985. When DCHS closed the facility, a neighborhood meeting was held to discuss future use of the property. Although the community accepted the Mentor Foster Home, the overall consensus, according to records, was that private residential use and homeownership was the most acceptable option, preferably at market rate.

At its March 22, 2011 legislative meeting City Council declared 716-718 North Columbus Street as surplus property and authorized the City Manager to seek offers of bids, or auction the property, as described in the City Real Estate Disposition Policy. Staff recommended, as allowed for in the Policy, to sell the properties through a real estate agent.

Working with a real estate agent, the City has received three offers to purchase the property all within a range of $652,000 to $662,000. The offers reflect competitive pricing. They also are below the appraised value of $830,000, however, but within the range anticipated by the City's real estate agent given the property conditions and the rehabilitation costs.

<u>Alexandria Master Plan:</u>
The property at 716-718 North Columbus Street is shown in the Braddock Road Metro Small Area Plan with a land use designation of RM/Residential Medium. The Plan shows the proposed zoning as RB/residential multi-family; the subject property and the blocks around it are zoned consistently as part of the RB zoning district. Assuming the property is sold, as planned, the new owners will be required to comply with the RB zone. Given the building construction and arrangement, the most likely use will be a continuation of the historical residential use. The Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan and the Braddock East Small Area Plan, adopted in 2008 as amendments to the Braddock Road Metro Small Area Plan, focus on the area near the Braddock

metro station and on the blocks that include public housing, respectively. Neither changes the designated land use and zoning for the 700 block of North Columbus Street.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this request, finding that the proposal is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia, for the sale of city owned land. The sale is consistent with the Master Plan, including the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan and the Braddock Road Metro Plan.

STAFF: Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning