Docket Item #17
SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2006-0022

Planning Commission Meeting
June 6, 2006

ISSUE: Consideration of a request to extend the time period for a special use permit to operate a commercial school.

APPLICANT: Jim Gasson
Curves

LOCATION: 2609 & 2611 Mt. Vernon Avenue

ZONE: Mount Vernon Urban Overlay

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2006: On a motion by Ms. Fossum, seconded by Mr. Robinson, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0. Mr. Dunn was absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.
I. **DISCUSSION**

**REQUEST**
The applicant, Jim Gasson, requests to extend the time period for a special use permit approval for the operation of a fitness studio (commercial school) located at 2609 and 2611 Mount Vernon Avenue.

**SITE DESCRIPTION**
The subject property is two lots of record with 100 feet of frontage on Mount Vernon Avenue, 113 feet of depth and a total lot area of approximately 11,300 square feet. The site is developed with a single story commercial building of 3,392 square feet, and a parking lot of 15 spaces. The parking lot is accessed directly from Mount Vernon Avenue.

Surrounding uses include Mt. Vernon Elementary School across the street to the west, small business uses to the north and south, including Los Tios Restaurant immediately to the north, Capital Cash Advance immediately to the south, and residential uses to the east.

**BACKGROUND**
On November 13, 2004, City Council approved SUP#2004-0087 to operate a fitness studio (commercial school) at 2609 and 2611 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Section 11-506(C)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that the operation commence within 18 months or the applicant apply for an extension of the SUP. The applicant has filed this application prior to the expiration of the existing SUP.

Following the approval of SUP2004-0087, the property owner pursued another tenant for the subject property. On June 24, 2005, staff administratively approved SUP#2005-0040 for the operation of a restaurant at the subject property. The applicant for the restaurant did not pursue occupancy of the property, therefore the space was made available for the applicant of the proposed fitness studio. The applicant is requesting renewal of the previously approved SUP#2004-0087 only with minor changes to the weekend hours of operation.

**PROPOSAL**
The applicant proposes to operate a fitness and weight loss center known as “Curves”. The facility will offer a 30 minute supervised strength and aerobic workout on a circuit of hydraulic exercise machines (see attached plan). The Curves circuit allows 26 users at one time (each 30 minutes).
A Curves instructor is always on site checking members’ performance. The specific aspects of the applicant’s proposal are as follows:

**Employees:**  Two employees will be present at the site at any one time.

**Hours:**  The hours of operation are proposed to be 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

**Noise:**  There is little noise from the hydraulic machines.

**Trash:**  Trash will be minimal and include paper and lavatory items.

**PARKING**
Section 8-200(A)(11) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that a commercial school for up to 26 students must provide 13 parking spaces. In this case, the building has an off-street parking lot which currently has 20 spaces. The applicant complies with the parking requirement.

**MT. VERNON AVENUE BUSINESS AREA PLAN-PARKING STRATEGY**
During the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area planning process, a parking utilization study was conducted to understand the current and potential future parking conditions along the avenue and to assist in formulating the appropriate parking strategies. Generally speaking, the parking study indicated that the existing parking supply along Mount Vernon Avenue is sufficient for the existing demand for parking spaces. The Plan encourages more efficient use of several underutilized off-street parking lots on the Avenue, including the abutting parking lot where the applicant’s off-street parking is proposed.

**DEL RAY LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING**
On May 18, 2006, staff attended the Del Ray Land Use Committee meeting held at the Mt. Vernon Recreation Center. The committee supported the proposal with conditions, and added its support for the advertisement of mass transit and landscaping improvements.

**LANDSCAPING/ FACADE IMPROVEMENTS**
The applicant has submitted a conceptual drawing that was prepared by staff as part of the initial special use permit application that includes shrubbery to screen the parking area, and a new door that is located in the front facade of the building, facing Mt. Vernon Avenue. As shown in the attached conceptual plan, the new door is proposed to be located in the existing glass block wall.
ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION
The subject property is located in the Mount Vernon Urban Overlay zone. Section 6-603(B) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a commercial school (fitness studio) in the Mount Vernon Urban Overlay zone only with a special use permit. The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for commercial use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff continues to support the proposed fitness studio. It is a use that will contribute to the existing mix of uses in the area, and bring more patrons to the existing businesses in the immediate area. There is adequate parking for the studio located on site, and the hours are limited. There are no deliveries to the site, and little trash is generated, which limits the amount of noise that would be generated from trucks visiting the site. While the facility is a franchise business, it is one that compliments other health and fitness uses in the neighborhood, and provides a valuable service to the residents of the neighborhood. In addition, the applicant agrees to conditions to improve the property by screening the parking lot with landscaping and improving the facade including the installation of a front door. Because there is more than the required number of parking spaces for the use, staff recommends allowing up to 30 students at the facility at any one time to provide more flexibility. With these conditions, staff supports the proposed fitness studio.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The special use permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z) (SUP2004-0087)

2. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The closing hour shall be no later than 10:00 p.m. daily (SUP2004-0087) The hours of operations shall be limited to 7:00a.m. - 9:00p.m. daily. (P&Z)

3. A maximum of 30 students shall be permitted at any one time. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

4. The applicant shall require its employees who drive to work to use off-street parking. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)
5. Trash and garbage shall be placed in sealed containers which do not allow odors to escape and shall be stored inside or in a closed container which does not allow invasion by animals. No trash or debris shall be allowed to accumulate on site outside of those containers.  (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

6. If a dumpster is used for trash disposal, the applicant shall provide screening for the dumpster, and maintain the screening in good condition, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. Trash pick up shall not occur before 7:00 a.m. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

7. The applicant shall implement facade improvements to the building, which shall include providing an entrance at the street front of the building, in compliance with the Design Guidelines of the Mt. Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan, in consultation with the Del Ray Civic Association, and to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. The applicant shall submit a plan to staff for approval prior to implementing the improvements. The improvements shall be implemented prior to opening. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z) (PC)

8. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall remove the chain-link fence and storage shed on the parking lot, and restripe the parking spaces in the entire lot. The parking lot, including all areas bordering property lines, shall be kept clear of weeds and litter. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

9. The applicant shall screen the parking lot at 2611 Mt. Vernon Avenue by installing landscaping along the western border of the property on both sides of the drive entrance, which may include the removal of paving, to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning and Zoning and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The applicant shall provide a landscape plan to staff for its approval prior to installation. Installation shall occur prior to opening. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)


11. Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line. (SUP2004-0087)(T&ES)

12. The applicant is contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the business and robbery awareness program for all employees. (SUP2004-0087)(Police)
13. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all SUP provisions and requirements. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

14. The applicant shall encourage its employees to use mass transit or to carpool when traveling to and from work, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and advertising of carpooling opportunities. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

15. The applicant shall install a bike rack to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (SUP2004-0087) (P&Z)

16. Any lighting in the parking lot shall be shielded to prevent glare on adjacent residential properties. (SUP2004-0087)(P&Z)

17. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit after it has been operational for one year, and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z). (SUP2004-0087)

18. The applicant shall incorporate vehicle wheel stops into the paved sidewalk along the building at 2609 Mt. Vernon Avenue, adjacent to the parking lot. (SUP2004-0087)(PC)

19. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** Advertising and promotional material for the use shall include information about parking and public transit options. (P&Z)
20. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** At such time that a shared parking program has been adopted by the City Council, the applicant shall participate in the program. (P&Z)

**STAFF:** Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning; Richard Josephson, Deputy Director; James Hunt, Urban Planner.

**Staff Note:** In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.
IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement  R - recommendation  S - suggestion  F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria’s Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.

R-1 Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line.

Code Enforcement:

F-1 The application addresses for this case are 2609 and 2611 Mount Vernon Avenue. For clarification, it shall be noted that 2609 Mount Vernon involves the structure for the proposed use. 2611 Mount Vernon is the parking lot located adjacent to the structure in question.

C-1 The current use is classified as B-Business; the proposed use is A-3, Assembly. Change of use, in whole or in part, will require a certificate of use and occupancy (USBC 119.4) and compliance with USBC 119.2, including but not limited to: limitations of exit travel distance, emergency and exit lighting, a manual fire alarm system, and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

C-2 Prior to the application for new Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall submit a building permit for a change of use. Drawings prepared by a licensed architect or professional engineer shall accompany the permit application. These plans shall show provide existing conditions, construction type data, and a plot plan. In addition, these plans shall show proposed conditions and provide data by the design professional which details how the proposed use will comply with the current edition of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code for the new use in the area of structural strength, means of egress, passive and active fire protection, heating and ventilating systems, handicapped accessibility and plumbing facilities.

C-3 When a change of use requires a greater degree of structural strength, fire protection, exit facilities or sanitary provisions, a construction permit is required (USBC 111.1).
C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

C-6 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

C-7 A fire prevention code permit is required for the proposed operation. An egress plan showing fixture location, aisles and exit doors shall be submitted for review with the permit application.

Health Department:

C-1 An Alexandria Health Department Permit is required for all regulated facilities (this includes health clubs).

C-2 Permits are non-transferable.

C-3 Five sets of plans must be submitted to and approved by this department prior to construction. Plans must comply with the Alexandria City Code, Title 11 Chapter 11, Swimming Pools, Administrative Regulation 20-6, Swimming Pools.

Police Department:

R-1 The applicant is to contact the Community Relations Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the business.

R-2 The applicant is to contact the Community Relations Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a robbery readiness program for all employees.
APPLICATION for SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2004-0087

[must use black ink or type]

PROPERTY LOCATION: 2609 2611 MT. VERNON AVE

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 24-04-04-03 24-04-04-02 ZONE: CL

APPLICANT Name: Jim Gasson

Address: 7635 Holmes Run Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042

PROPERTY OWNER Name: Minerva (Nina) Gutierrez

Address: 1609 N. Kirkwood Rd., Arlington, VA 22201

PROPOSED USE: Women's Fitness Classes (Commercial School)

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED S.U.P.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 11-300 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Planning Commission or City Council in the course of public hearings on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Jim Gasson
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

7635 Holmes Run Dr.
Mailing/Street Address

(703) 233-3254
Telephone #

Falls Church, VA 22042
City and State

3/20/06
Date

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Received: Date & Fee Paid: $  

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION:

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL:
All applicants must complete this form. Supplemental forms are required for child care facilities, restaurants, automobile oriented uses and freestanding signs requiring special use permit approval.

1. The applicant is (check one) [ ] of the Owner [ ] Contract Purchaser
   [ ] Lessee or [ ] Other: ___________________________ of the subject property.

   State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

   ___________________________
   Women's Health, LLC
   Owners: Jim Gasson
   ___________________________
   Nicki Brintzenhofe

   If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

   [ ] Yes. Provide proof of current City business license
   [ ] No. The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

2. Submit a floor plan and a plot plan with parking layout of the proposed use. One copy of the plan is required for plans that are 8½" x 14" or smaller. Twenty-four copies are required for larger plans or if the plans cannot be easily reproduced. The planning director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver. This requirement does not apply if a Site Plan Package is required.
NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use, including such items as the nature of the activity, the number and type of patrons, the number of employees, the hours, how parking is to be provided for employees and patrons, and whether the use will generate any noise. (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

- NO CHANGES TO DESCRIPTION OF CURVES BUSINESS MODEL.

- ARCHITECTURAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT HAS BEGUN AND PLANS SHOULD BE READY TO SUBMIT TO THE CITY BY MAY 1, 2006.

- OUR TARGET DATE FOR OPENING IS AUGUST 1, 2006.

- PLANS WILL INCLUDE THE RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS PROPOSED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION (SECTION III) IN THE APPROVED S.U.P.
USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for:  (check one)
   [ ] a new use requiring a special use permit,
   [ ] a development special use permit,
   [ ] an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
   [ ] expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
   [ ] other. Please describe:

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:
   A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect? Specify time
      period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
      NO CHANGE

   B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect? Specify time period
      (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
      NO CHANGE

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:
   Day:                                      Hours:
   NO CHANGE                                (NOT IMMEDIATE)
   EXCEPT                                   8AM - 4PM
   SATURDAY                                 8AM - 4PM
   SUNDAY

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use:
   A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.
      NO CHANGE
B. How will the noise from patrons be controlled?

NO CHANGE


8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

NO CHANGE


9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use:

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

NO CHANGE


B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

NO CHANGE


C. How often will trash be collected?

NO CHANGE


D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

NO CHANGE


15
10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?
   [ ] Yes.  [ ] No.
   If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?
   [ ] Yes.  [ ] No.
   If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of residents, employees and patrons?

   NO CHANGE

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   ALCOHOL SALES

13. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?
   [ ] Yes.  [ ] No.
   If yes, describe alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales. Existing uses must describe their existing alcohol sales and/or service and identify any proposed changes in that aspect of the operation.

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   16
14. Please provide information regarding the availability of off-street parking:
   
   A. How many parking spaces are required for the proposed use pursuant to section 8-200 (A) of the zoning ordinance?
      
      \[ \text{1 space/every 2 students (12 req'd spaces)} \]  
   
   B. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:
      
      \[ \text{20 Standard spaces} \]
      \[ \text{Compact spaces} \]
      \[ \text{1 Handicapped accessible spaces.} \]
      \[ \text{Other.} \]
   
   C. Where is required parking located? [\checkmark] on-site [ ] off-site (check one)
      
      If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located:
      
      Pursuant to section 8-200 (C) of the zoning ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.
   
   D. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the zoning ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

   A. How many loading spaces are required for the use, per section 8-200 (B) of the zoning ordinance? \(0\)

   B. How many loading spaces are available for the use? \(\text{One}\)

   C. Where are off-street loading facilities located? \(\text{N/A}\)
D. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?

NO CHANGE

E. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

N/A

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

NO CHANGE

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? [✓] Yes  [ ] No

Do you propose to construct an addition to the building?  [ ] Yes  [✓] No

How large will the addition be? N/A square feet.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

3,392 sq. ft. (existing) + _______ sq. ft. (addition if any) = 3,392 sq. ft. (total)

NO CHANGE

19. The proposed use is located in: (check one)

[✓] a stand alone building  [ ] a house located in a residential zone  [ ] a warehouse

[ ] a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: ________________________________

[ ] an office building. Please provide name of the building: ______________________________

[ ] other, please describe: ________________________________
To: Honorable Members of City Council
   Eileen Fogarty, Director, Office of Planning and Zoning
From: Larry Altenburg, President
       Amy Slack, Land Use committee Co-chair
       Sarah Haut, Land Use committee Co-chair
Date: June 16, 2006
Subject: SUP#2006-00, docket item #11
Curves at 2609 - 2611 Mt. Vernon Avenue.
Consideration of a request to extend the time period of a special use permit to
operate a fitness facility.
Zoned: CL/Commercial Low   Applicant: Jim Gasson

At our regular meeting of June 12, 2006, the membership voted to support the applications with
conditions recommended by staff and the Planning Commission to include participation in a
shared parking program and a condition recommended the Executive Board that the applicant
shall provide a new regulation trash receptacle.

We believe Condition #7 of the permit allow the Association a voice in determining the final
renovation design of the Mt. Vernon Avenue building facade. A recent meeting with the
applicant, staff, and the DRCA Land Use committee co-chair was a fruitful exchange of ideas
and objectives. We look forward to continuing the discussion as the applicants' plan evolves.

We request your support for this position and welcome your questions and comments. Please
feel free to contact President Larry Altenburg at 703-548-3534 and Co-chairs Amy Slack at
703-549-3412 or Sarah Haut at 703-838-9060.
APPLICATION for SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2004-0087

[must use black ink or type]

PROPERTY LOCATION: 2609 1/2 2611 MT. VERNON AVE

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 2Y-04-04-083#2Y-04-04-02 ZONE: CL

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Address: 7635 Holmes Run Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042

PROPERTY OWNER Name: Minerva (Nina) Gutierrez

Address: 1609 N. Kirkwood Rd., Arlington, VA 22201

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Jim Gasson
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

571-233-3254 703-560-8827
Telephone # Fax #

7635 Holmes Run Dr. 3/20/06
Mailing/Street Address Date

Falls Church, VA 22042
City and State Zip Code

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Received: Date & Fee Paid: $ 

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: Recommended approval 6-0 6/6/06

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: 6/17/06 - CC approved the PC recommendation 6-0