

Docket Item #16
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2004-0096

Planning Commission Meeting
December 7, 2004

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit to expand an existing community center use and for a parking reduction.

APPLICANT: Community Lodgings
by Gregory Brown, Executive Director

LOCATION: 607 Notabene Drive

ZONE: RA/Residential

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

SITE GRAPHIC
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE

I. DISCUSSION

REQUEST

The applicant, Community Lodgings, Inc. by Gregory Brown, Executive Director, requests special use permit approval for (1) a one-story rear addition to its existing community center building (known as the Family Learning Center) at 607 Notabene Drive, (2) a parking reduction for the new addition, and (3) side and rear setback modifications to build the proposed one-story addition.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 156 feet of frontage on Notabene Drive and a total lot area of 10,446 square feet. The site is developed with a masonry, two-story apartment building with ten apartments, and is surrounded by other multi family residential buildings. Access to the property is from Notabene Drive.

BACKGROUND

Community Lodgings, Inc. (CLI) is a fifteen year old Alexandria nonprofit organization whose mission is to assist low income and homeless families with affordable housing and with programs that enable them to become independent and self-sufficient. The organization offers housing and job and life skills training to its clients. The housing consists of one to four bedroom apartments located in CLI owned buildings along Notabene Drive and Elbert Avenue. The training includes computer, GED, ESL and other job skills training and is offered through the Family Learning Center.

In 1991, the subject property was purchased by CLI. At that time the building consisted of 12 residential apartments. In 1991, a full parking reduction was granted for the subject building (Special Use Permit #2528) as an incentive to allow CLI to renovate the apartment building for low and moderate income housing.

On March 5, 2001, pursuant to Special Use Permit #2001-0136, two ground level apartments were converted for use as the existing community center within the subject building. Upon completion of the work, a total of 10 residential units continued to be offered for low and moderate income families.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CLI is now seeking special use permit approval to expand the community center by constructing a one-story addition at the rear of the building and to receive a reduction in the parking required for the new addition. The proposed rear addition measures 30.00 feet by 25.00 feet by 9.00 feet in height and totals 750 square feet. As shown on the submitted building elevations, the roof slope of the new addition will match the roof slope of the main building. A small portion of roof will be flat to allow light into existing apartments. The applicant also indicates that (1) the windows in the addition will match the style of windows in the apartment building, (2) the addition will be constructed of brick and (3) the addition will be painted to match the main building. Upon

completion of the proposed rear addition, the property will continue to comply with allowable floor area and open space. Placement of the new addition, however, requires a modification to the side and rear yard setbacks.

In approving a special use permit to reduce required off-street parking, City Council may modify the minimum yards, if the Council determines that such yard modification is necessary or desirable to develop the property and the yard modification will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or general welfare.

The RA zone requires that each multi family dwelling provide a minimum side and rear yard setback of 16 feet. As indicated on the attached plat (Exhibit 3A), the new addition will be located 5.00 feet from the north corner of the existing building wall and will face the north side property line and extend across a little more than one-third the length of the existing building's rear wall. The proposed addition will be located 9.00 feet from the north side property line (30.00 feet from the nearest building) and 6.00 feet from the east rear property line. A side and rear yard modification of 7.00 feet and 13.00 feet are requested from the zoning regulations. As indicated on the attached plat the property is an irregular pie shaped lot with the north and east property lines angled to the front property line.

On November 1, 2004, staff visited the subject property to determine if the center was in compliance with the conditions of its special use permit. Staff found no violations of the special use permit. A second site visit was made on November 19, 2004, to evaluate the placement of the proposed addition and its proximity to the nearest building. As proposed, the addition has been located as to not minimize the loss of light and air to the adjoining building and will not be visible from Notabene Drive.

The proposed addition will enable CLI to expand its current after school program for youths (adult computer classes and employment assistance). Up to 40 people (children and adults) at any given time will take advantage of the expanded programs. Special Use Permit #2001-0136 currently allows only 20 students at the center at any one time. Approximately three instructors will be on-site at any given time. The center operates from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday. The center currently provides an after school program open at 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The after school program is offered during the time the parents are in the center in training.

It is not anticipated that there would be any additional noise impact associated with the new addition, since the training center's students will be supervised at all times.

No loading and unloading activities are currently offered nor anticipated for the proposed community center expansion.

PARKING

Pursuant to Section 8-200 of the zoning ordinance, the community center is required to provide one parking space for each 200 square feet of floor area. The proposed one-story addition totals 766 square feet, and is required to provide four parking spaces.

The only parking at the subject site consists of public on-street parking spaces. A 17 space parking space reduction for the subject site's apartment building was granted in 1991 under Special Use Permit #2528. This approval was granted as an incentive to the applicant, CLI, to renovate the apartment building for low and moderate income housing. On March 5, 2002, the applicant received a five parking space reduction under Special Use Permit #2001-0136 for the community center located at 607 Notabene Drive. The applicant is now asking for approval of a reduction of four parking spaces for the new community center addition. Since 1991, and if the current parking space reduction is approved, a total of 26 required parking spaces will be waived for the subject property. According to the applicant, no parking is needed for the new addition, since all the centers' students and adults live in the neighborhood and are expected to walk to the center.

TRASH SERVICES

In the past, the Code Enforcement Bureau had cited CLI, for trash accumulation at 612 Notabene Drive when the applicant first opened the community center. Since the opening of the current facility at 607 Notabene Drive in 2001, Code Enforcement has not received complaints or cited the applicant for violations of trash accumulation. The City does not pick up trash in this neighborhood. The property owner contracts with a private company to collect trash. The applicant has addressed the prior trash problems by giving tenants a flyer that describes standards for maintaining the grounds and trash areas. This flyer, written in English and Spanish, also indicates that the applicant will issue fines ranging from 10 to 50 dollars for violations of these standards.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the RA (Multifamily Residential) zone. Section 3-600 of the zoning ordinance allows noncommercial, not-for-profit facilities, including community centers, designed to serve the neighborhood in the RA zone only with a special use permit. Section 8-100 of the zoning ordinance allows a reduction of the parking requirement only with a special use permit.

The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the proposed community center addition, parking reduction and setback modifications subject to the attached recommended conditions.

CLI provides an important service to the community. The proposed addition will essentially expand CLI's current programs offered to the neighborhood that were previously approved under Special

Use Permit #2001-0136. CLI's program expansion will provide important needed additional assistance to the surrounding community. In fact, the community center will continue to operate during its current approved hours and days of the week and limited hours on Saturdays. The only change is the expanded program will accommodate an additional 20 students and two additional new staff. Staff does not believe the increase in students nor the proximity of the proposed addition to the nearest building will create an unwelcome impact as to noise, intensity of use or visual obstruction.

The applicant has taken extensive measures to recess the addition away from the nearest building and maintain a low profile. The addition will be constructed of brick and painted to match the existing building. The addition's roof will also match the roof profile of the existing building. The proposed addition does not appear to have any significant adverse impacts even though it is located closer to the adjoining rear property line than does the existing building. In fact, the proposed addition will not be seen from Notabene Drive.

The parking reduction requested includes four more spaces than was previously approved for the community center at its current location. The participants, all CLI clients, walk to the center from their nearby homes and the three staff people will use available street parking. Staff has no objection to the requested four parking space reduction, since the center draws its clientele from the immediate neighborhood who walk to the center.

The design of the addition will be compatible with the existing building. The addition will be one story with a gable roof, windows to match those in the existing building, and will be painted to match the existing building. The size and location of the addition will not adversely impact the other buildings in the area. The large open area between the existing buildings will be maintained even with the addition.

Based on the above points, staff recommends approval of the special use permit.

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 limited to the applicant only. (P&Z) (SUP#2001-0136)
2. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The community center shall occupy only Apartments #1 and #2 and rear addition at 607 Notabene Drive. (P&Z)

3. The community center shall limit its hours of operation from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays. (P&Z) (SUP#2001-0136)
4. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** No more than ~~twenty~~ forty students may occupy the community center at any one time. (P&Z)
5. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** A parking reduction is granted for ~~the five~~ nine parking spaces otherwise required for the community center by the zoning ordinance. (P&Z)
6. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The following setback modifications are granted as part of the request: a side yard setback of 9.00 feet from the north side property line and a rear yard setback of 6.00 feet from the east rear yard property line. (P&Z)
7. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** That the rear addition be constructed of brick and painted to be compatible with the existing building and the addition have a gable roof to match the roof slope of the existing building. (P&Z)
8. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** That landscaping be installed and maintained around the addition to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
9. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department prior to opening to obtain a security survey for the learning center and robbery awareness program for all employees. This is to be completed prior to the center expansion opening. (Police) (SUP #2001-0136)
10. **CONDITION DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~The applicant shall contribute \$250 to the City for the City's installation of one street tree in front of 607 Notabene Drive to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning and the City Arborist.~~ (P&Z) (SUP#2001-0136)
11. **CONDITON DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~The applicant shall inform the tenants of 607 and 612 Notabene Drive of the availability of trash services and shall investigate the need for more trash containers at these two sites to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning. The applicant shall also report back on these two issues and its overall progress controlling trash and litter problems at 607 and 612 Notabene Drive to the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning~~

~~at the required one year review. This report shall include any materials used to notify tenants of trash services. (P&Z) (SUP#2001-0136)~~

12. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit after ~~it has been~~ the expanded portion of the center has been in operation 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 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, 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) (SUP#2001-0136)

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director;
Peter Leiberg, Zoning Manager.

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.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Construction permits are required for this project. 5 sets of 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-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 This structure contains mixed use groups [R2, Residential; E, Educational] and is subject to the mixed use and occupancy requirements of USBC 302.3. This will require separating this space from the rest of the building with 2 hour fire resistance rated construction.
- C4 Required exits, parking, and accessibility within the building for persons with disabilities must comply with USBC Chapter 11. Handicapped accessible bathrooms shall also be provided.
- C-5 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides, with no openings permitted within the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. (USBC 704.5)
- C-6 The new addition shall not reduce the egress capacity or conflict with the egress requirements of the USBC for the existing space.
- C-7 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

- C-8 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.

Health Department:

- F-1 The Department of Human Services has no comments for this SUP. The proposed use is consistent with the current use and enhances residents' quality of life.

Police Department:

- R-1 The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey for the learning center. This is to be completed prior to the center expansion opening.
- R-2 The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a robbery awareness program for all employees.

Human Services:

- F-1 No Comments

SUP#2004-0096
607 Notabene Drive

**REPORT ATTACHMENT
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE**