

Docket Item #3  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #SUP2005-0116

Planning Commission Meeting  
January 3, 2006

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a special use permit to expand an existing playground area..

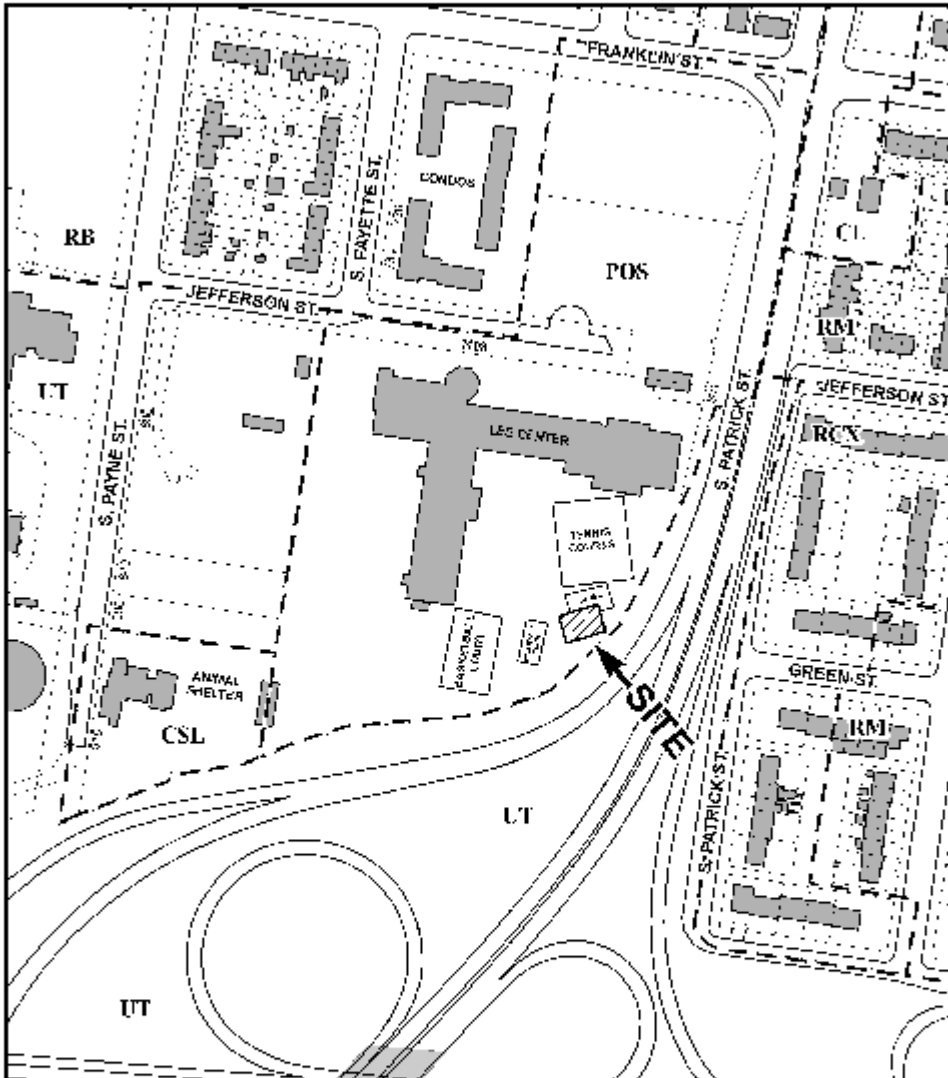
**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria- Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

**LOCATION:** 1108 Jefferson Street  
Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center

**ZONE:** POS/ Public open space and community recreation

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**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.



SUP #2005-0116

01/03/05



## I. DISCUSSION

### REQUEST

The applicant, City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, requests special use permit approval for a playground expansion located at 1108 Jefferson Street.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with approximately 485 feet of frontage on Jefferson Street and a total lot area of approximately 6.2 acres. The site is developed with a tennis court, basketball court, an outdoor pool, and the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center building. Access to the property is from Jefferson Street.



### SURROUNDING USES

The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential and commercial uses. Immediately to the north are two baseball/ softball fields and a multi-purpose field that is primarily used for soccer and football managed by the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. To the south and east are South Patrick Street, the Capital Beltway, and residential uses. West of the Nannie J. Lee Center is the Virginia Public Service Communications Facility as well as some residential properties.

### BACKGROUND

The proposed play equipment will be located in an area of the Lee Center that previously was occupied by play equipment. During past months, the previous play equipment has been removed due to safety concerns regarding equipment deterioration, therefore the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Department requests to put new equipment at the same location.

After consulting with the City of Alexandria's Transportation and Environmental Services Department, it was determined that the Virginia Department of Transportation will be placing sound barriers between the Lee Center Property and South Patrick Street/Capital Beltway.

### PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to expand the existing 500 square feet playground area and install new modular playground equipment. The proposed structure will be able to accommodate up to 40 children ages two to 12 years old. The equipment will be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ASTM Specifications, and CPSC Guidelines for Public Playground Equipment Safety. The proposed equipment will be located between the existing tennis courts and the existing basketball court.

Whole Foods Market has contributed \$50,000 to the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities for new playground equipment at the Nannie J. Lee Center. The Department believes the funding will enable the city to provide a renovated playground for neighborhood children, that otherwise is not currently possible.

Hours:	(Daily) 5:00 A.M.- 10:00 P.M.  The open hours of the proposed playground will be consistent with those specified in the city code 6-1-1, which are 5am- 10pm Daily.
Expected Number of Users:	The number of users is expected to be 130 youth during the summer and 55 during the after- school program.
Noise:	Minimal additional noise is expected. Children currently play in the area proposed for the new equipment. Recreation and Parks staff will monitor noise in the summer and during the after-school programs.
Trash/Litter:	Trash cans are available and will be monitored by Recreation and Parks staff. An increase in trash is expected, therefore an additional trash receptacle will be provided. Trash is and will be removed by staff on a daily basis during Recreation Center hours.

SOUND BARRIER AND LANDSCAPING

The Virginia Department of Transportation has provided funds in the amount of \$9,450 for landscape mitigation at the Lee Center. Several existing trees at the LeeCenter property were removed for the construction of the Route 1 sound barrier. The Department of Recreation will use these funds to purchase and plant 40 trees on the Lee Center property to replace the removed trees and to help screen the impact of the sound barrier on the existing facilities. There will be a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees. The locations and species of trees shall be determined by the Department of Recreation. Seven (7) of the 40 trees shall be planted in the vicinity of the proposed playground. These trees shall be planted after installation of the play equipment. The remaining trees shall be planted after completion of sound barrier construction.

PARKING

The Zoning Ordinance does not specify a parking requirement for playground use. A total of 224 spaces are provided on the property and were approved by site plan number 95-012. This parking will adequately serve the proposed playground expansion.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the POS (Public Open Space) zone. Section 6-105 B (1) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a children's play apparatus in the Public Open Space zone only with a special use permit.

The proposed use is consistent with the Southwest Quadrant Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for Public Open Space use.

**II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Staff does not object to the proposed playground expansion on the existing Nannie J. Lee Center property, located at 1108 Jefferson Street. The proposed new playground facility will more adequately accommodate residents of the nearby community. Staff recommends that trees be placed along the interior side of the fence to aid in blocking the view of the sound barrier. With the following conditions, 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. A plot plan showing all improvements and alterations to the site must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit with any land disturbing activity in excess of 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
2. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
3. The park should be closed at 10:00 P.M. (Police)
4. Well-placed entrance signs should be used to clearly mark the hours the park is open to the public. (Police)
5. The signs should be in both English and Spanish. (Police)
6. The applicant shall install signs stating, "NO TRESPASSING AFTER HOURS." (Police)
7. Park rules should be posted at access or gathering points in the park to designate acceptable uses and discourage unacceptable uses of the park. (Police)
8. Trees are not to be planted under or near light poles. (Police)

9. All trees are to be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as they mature to allow for natural surveillance. (Police)
10. 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, 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)

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

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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:

- R-1 A plot plan showing all improvements and alterations to the site must be approved by T&ES prior to issuance of a building permit with any land disturbing activity in excess of 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R-2 An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet. (T&ES)
- F-1 Construction resulting in land disturbing activity in excess of 2500 square feet shall require the applicant to comply with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for storm water quality control. (T&ES)

##### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 A construction permit is required for the proposed project.
- C-2 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.

##### Health Department:

- F-1 No Comment

##### Police Department:

- R-1 The park should be closed from 10:00 P.M.-5:00A.M
- R-2 Well-placed entrance signs should be used to clearly mark the hours the park is open to the public.
- R-3 The signs should be in both English and Spanish.
- R-4 Install signs stating, "NO TRESPASSING AFTER HOURS."

- R-5 Park rules should be posted at access or gathering points in the park to designate acceptable uses and discourage unacceptable uses of the park.
- R-6 Trees are not to be planted under or near light poles.
- R-7 All trees are to be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as they mature to allow for natural surveillance.
- F-1 There will be a “sound barrier” wall constructed in the near future by VDOT along the east side of the Center which runs along the Route 1 corridor. This wall not only reduces noise but it will also reduce the natural surveillance of the Center’s park from both foot and vehicular traffic. This presents a security concern in that some of the park will become secluded. Therefore, the following recommendation is made:
  - a) A review one year after completion of the wall to assess security concerns.
- F-2 The Police Department has no objections to the proposal to renovate the playground at Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.



SUP#2005-00116  
1108 Jefferson Street

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