

Docket Item #6  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2005-0113

Planning Commission Meeting  
December 6, 2005

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a special use permit to install a new picnic shelter and informational sign.

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

**LOCATION:** 901 North Royal Street

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

---

**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.

**SITE GRAPHIC**  
**AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE**

## I. DISCUSSION

### REQUEST

The applicant, City of Alexandria–Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RP&CA), requests special use permit approval for a new picnic shelter and to provide a community information board at Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal Street.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record, occupying the entire two-acre city block bounded by First, N. Fairfax, Montgomery and N. Royal Streets. The site is developed with Montgomery Park, which includes play equipment, lighted tennis courts, a fenced dog exercise area, a metered parking lot, and a picnic shelter at the middle of the property.

The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential and commercial uses, with the Montgomery Center commercial building to the south, the Watergate of Alexandria condominiums to the west and Port Royal condominiums to the south and west. To the east is the Radisson Hotel and to the southeast an office building.

### PROPOSAL

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RP&CA) has been working with the Old Town North Community Partnership (OTNCP) to address the neighborhood’s concerns for improvements at Montgomery Park. OTNCP envisions Montgomery Park as a focal point for the community. This application is for a picnic shelter and the community information board. The proposed park improvements are intended to better serve the community and nearby office workers during daytime hours, and to better accommodate existing community events such as “A Taste of Old Town North” and “Bark in the Park”. OTNCP is involved with fund raising for the proposed improvements. The park is open daily from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

OTNCP has been working to develop an improvement plan for the park for over two years. The proposed improvements are the result of many meetings with its members and other citizen associations in Alexandria (see attached letter from the OTNCP).

#### *Picnic Shelter*

The picnic shelter is proposed to be located north of the tennis courts. It will be an open shelter, hexagonal in shape, made of steel, and with a gabled roof (see attached design). The size of the shelter will be 30.5 feet wide and 19.6 tall. OTNCP selected the design of the proposed shelter at a meeting. The proposed picnic shelter would provide additional gathering opportunities and shade during summer months. To meet ADA guidelines, an accessible path and curb ramp will be provided from the existing parking lot to the picnic shelter.

*Community Information Board*

An existing park identification sign is located at the corner of Montgomery and Royal Street. The proposed community information board would be located north of the existing parking lot and is a two sided metal structure supported by two posts. The approximate dimensions are 36" wide by 42" tall. One side will display a location map of Old Town North (Oronoco Street to Potomac River) indicating retail and dining areas, residential neighborhoods, and historic and cultural resources. The reverse side of the board will be protected, limited access with a key lock informational board posting news and flyers about community events and meetings concerning the Old Town North neighborhood. The board would not be available for postings by individuals with items for sale, solicitations, or political affiliations. The board will not be illuminated.

*Other improvements*

Other proposed park amenities include benches and trash receptacles. Fencing, other than that around the dog exercise area and playground, will be removed. Additional landscaping will be planned and phased in.

PARKING

The zoning ordinance does not specify a parking requirement for picnic shelters. In this case, there is an on-site metered parking lot with nine spaces. The parking adequately serves the park use.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the POS/Public open space and community recreation zone. Section 6-105(A) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a picnic shelter in the POS zone only with a special use permit. Section 6-105(D) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a cultural facility, such as the identification/public information sign, only with a special use permit.

The proposed use is consistent with the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for park use.

FUNDING FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

As part of the approval for the redevelopment of the National League of Postmasters building at 329 First Street, the applicant (The Holladay Corporation) was required to contribute \$10,000 to RPCA to be earmarked for improvements to Montgomery Park. The amount is required to be paid prior to release of the final site plan, which staff anticipates to occur within the next six months.

## II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff is supportive of the proposed picnic shelter, informational sign and other amenities. The community has been involved in the design and planning of the park improvements. The new amenities will better serve the community and nearby office workers, as well as better accommodate existing community events.

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 proposed park improvements shall be consistent with the plans presented in the application. (P&Z)
2. 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)
3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
4. 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)
5. Signs are to be posted in both English and Spanish stating that the park is closed from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. (Police)
6. Lighting for the tennis courts and parking lot is to be a minimum of 2.0 foot candles minimum maintained. The lighting is to be placed on timers set to go off when the park closes. (Police)
7. Trees are not to be planted under or near light poles. (Police)
8. Trees are to be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as they mature to allow for natural surveillance. (Police)

9. All proposed shrubbery is to have a maximum height of 36 inches when it matures.  
(Police)

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director;  
Valerie Peterson, 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:

- 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.
- R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity.
- R-3 An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2500 square feet.
- 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 stormwater quality control.

##### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Required accessibility for persons with disabilities must be provided to the structure.
- C-4 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-5 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

- C-6 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.

Health Department:

- F-1 No Comment

Police Department:

- R-1 Signs are to be posted in both English and Spanish stating that the park is closed from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.
- R-2 Lighting for the tennis courts and parking lot is to be a minimum of 2.0 foot candles minimum maintained. The lighting is to be placed on timers set to go off when the park closes.
- R-3 Trees are not to be planted under or near light poles.
- R-4 Trees are to be limbed up a minimum of 6 feet as they mature to allow for natural surveillance.
- R-5 All proposed shrubbery is to have a maximum height of 36 inches when it matures.
- F-1 The dog exercise and playground areas will be fenced with an open mesh type material such as chain link. The Police Department concurs with this.



SUP#2005-0113  
901 N. Royal Street

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