

Docket Item #7  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2005-0137

Planning Commission Meeting  
March 9, 2006

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a special use permit to operate a non-profit facility and community center and a request for a parking reduction.

**APPLICANT:** Community Lodgings, Inc.  
by Bonnie Baxley

**LOCATION:** 3912 Elbert Avenue

**ZONE:** RA/Multi-family

---

**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, Community Lodgings, Inc., requests special use permit approval for the operation of a non-profit facility and community center located at 3912 Elbert Avenue and for a parking reduction.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 209 feet of frontage on Elbert Avenue, 185.1 feet of depth and a total lot area of 37,620 square feet. The site is developed with three, three-story brick apartment buildings. Access to the property is from Elbert Avenue. The surrounding area is occupied by residential uses. The subject spaces are two, 541 square feet one bedroom apartments, located on the first floor of the middle building and is currently used as a child care center.



### BACKGROUND

Community Lodgings, Inc. (CLI) is a 19-year old Alexandria non-profit 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, job, and life skills training to its clients. The housing, which is managed by CLI, consists of one to four bedroom apartments located at 3908, 3912, and 3916 Elbert Avenue. Community Lodgings, Inc. currently maintains administrative offices for their non-profit operations at 228 S. Pitt Street.

On April 16, 1994, City Council granted SUP# 2761-A for the operation of a childcare center. The director of the child care center has informed staff that the daycare facility will be relocating to another facility in June 2006.

### PROPOSAL

The proposed facility will house an office for Community Lodgings, Inc. and a community meeting room within apartments 207 and 208. CLI proposes to operate offices Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and offer training and workshops for clients no more than two nights per week, from 6pm-9:30pm. The training and workshops include computer, GED, ESL, and other job skills training and is offered through the Family Learning Center. The applicant proposes that no more than 15 people will attend each training or workshop night. The applicant has indicated to staff that during evenings of the workshops or classes, there will be an area within the subject units that will be used by children until workshops or classes have ended.

PARKING

According to Section 8-200 (A)(7) of the Zoning Ordinance, a community building requires one parking space for every 200 square feet. A community building with 1,082 square feet will be required to provide five off-street parking spaces. Three spaces are provided on the premises for the use. Therefore, a parking reduction of two spaces is requested. In support of the parking reduction, the applicant indicates that only three parking spaces are needed, since all the center's clients live in the adjacent neighborhood and are expected to be walking to the community center. Parking at the subject property consists of 14 parking spaces, which are shared with the residents of the apartment buildings, as well as on-street parking.

TENANT AND WORKERS SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Staff has contacted the Tenant and Workers Support Committee and they have no objections to the proposal of non-profit facility and community center as well as a parking reduction for Community Lodgings, Inc.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the RA zone. Section 3-603 (D) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a non-profit facility designed to serve the neighborhood in the RA zone only with a special use permit.

The proposed non-profit and community center use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for Multi-Family use.

**II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

CLI provides an important service to the immediate community including life skills training workshops and classes for adults within the community. The facility is proposed to be located within a building currently owned by CLI and will continue to benefit the community with their community center.

The proposed office will have very little activity during daytime hours, with only five employees and few visitors, which reduces the potential for impacts on the immediate residents. There will likely be less noise and activity at this non-profit office than what has been occurring at the existing child care center. The proposed class offerings will be no more than eight nights per month and will provide a service to the immediate community. Staff is not aware of issues with evening classes or workshops at the community center located in the CLI apartments at 607 Notabene Drive (SUP2004-0096).

While visiting the property on three occasions, staff did not observe a parking problem. Parking for the building is located immediately behind 3908 Elbert Avenue, which is predominately used by residents of the apartments. According to Section 8-200(A)(2)(a), parking for two, one bedroom

apartments requires three parking spaces. Therefore the applicant's request for a parking reduction of two spaces is consistent with parking requirements for the use of the units as residential. Staff also does not believe that parking will be a problem for the proposed use, since most clients live in the adjacent Arlandria neighborhood.

Staff has contacted the Arlandria Civic Association, Lennox Place at Sunnyside Association, and the Lennox Place Homeowner's Association along with the Tenant's and Workers Support Committee. The civic associations that have been notified have not indicated to staff any objections to the proposed use or parking reduction.

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 granted to the applicant only or to any corporation in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. The hours of operation of the community center shall be limited to 8:30am-9:00pm daily. (P&Z)
3. The applicant shall post the hours of operation at the entrance of the business. (P&Z)
4. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all SUP provisions. (P&Z)
5. Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
6. A parking reduction of two off-street parking spaces shall be granted. (P&Z)
7. 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. (Police)
8. 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.

---

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

- F-1 On 2/13/06, the Planning Department advised that the Daycare Center will be completely vacating the property where this SUP application is intended to operate. Should the applicant be the sole occupant of the entire space currently occupied by the daycare center, the following condition will no longer apply: F-2.
- F-2 Subdivision of this space into two separate tenants will adversely affect the existing daycare center as follows:
- No access to fire alarm panel for Daycare center
  - No access to storage and janitor closet for daycare
  - No access to ADA restroom
  - No direct exterior exit.
  - The interconnecting door (approved with the CO) will have to be closed / removed to reestablish the proper fire separation ratings for separate tenants.
  - New CO's will be required for conversion of one space for the SUP and continued use of the daycare in the remaining space. This will effect the approved occupancy load for the spaces.

The existing daycare center has stated they are remaining in half of the space, which is contrary to information provided in the SUP application.

- C-1 The current use is classified as E, Educational; the proposed use is B, Business. 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 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 This structure contains mixed use groups (R, Residential; B, Business; E, Educational) and is subject to the mixed use and occupancy requirements of USBC 302.3
- C-5 Required exits, parking, and facilities shall be accessible for persons with disabilities.
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Health Department:

- F-1 No Comment

Human Services:

- F-1 No Comment

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.
- F-1 The Police Department has no objections.



SUP#2005-0137  
3912 Elbert Ave

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