

Docket Item #7
CITY CHARTER, SECTION 9.06; CASE #2006-0002

Planning Commission Meeting
May 4, 2006

ISSUE: Consideration of a proposal by the City of Alexandria to acquire the property at 210 Strand Street, pursuant to the provisions of Section 9.06 of the City Charter.

LOCATION: 210 Strand Street
Tax parcel 75.03-03-13

ZONE: W-1/Waterfront Mixed Use

DISCUSSION

The City has entered into an agreement to purchase the property at 210 Strand Street on the City's waterfront. Section 9.06 of the City's Charter requires that the Planning Commission approve any acquisition or sale of public land. The Planning Commission is charged with ensuring that any such acquisition, sale or change is consistent with the City's Master Plan.

This property is the third such parcel identified for acquisition by the City as part of its Open Space Plan. The two other parcels, located at 0 Prince Street and 200 Strand Street, were the subject of a Section 9.06 action by the Planning Commission in February 2006. In that case the Planning Commission voted to approve the acquisition, finding it consistent with the City's Master Plan.

Property Description

The property under consideration is located at 210 Strand Street. The property is occupied by a building formerly used for boat maintenance and repair. The building is currently used for storage.

Alexandria Master Plan

The City's Open Space Plan, adopted in 2003 as a chapter of the City's Master Plan, identifies the land along the Potomac River as a significant open space asset, and part of the City's "green crescent" connection of trails and open spaces. A goal of the Plan is the completion of the Potomac River waterfront corridor. The Plan specifically recommends, as a high priority, acquiring all or part of the Strand properties. In furtherance of the Plan, Council adopted a list of Priority Sites for acquisition in 2004, and the Strand properties were identified as an immediate priority acquisition. The City will be financing the acquisition cost of the parcel with funds derived from City Council's dedication of one percent of the City's real estate tax rate for open space acquisition.

Future Use of the Property

After the City purchases the property, it may continue to be used for storage in the short term, while the City determines an appropriate interim use and ultimately a future use through the waterfront planning process.

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210 STRAND STREET

Analysis

The proposed purchase of this key waterfront property represents a significant commitment by the City to the implementation of its Open Space Plan, and to Council's Strategic Plan, which envisions serious efforts to ensure a quality of life for all of its citizens. Since the upcoming waterfront planning process will determine the future use of this property and the remaining Strand properties to be purchased, how this property will be used and how much open space and related uses will be placed on this property is to be determined as part of that process. If non-open space and related uses are placed on properties purchased with open space funds, then the open space account would be reimbursed accordingly.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the acquisition of the subject property as consistent with the Master Plan, under section 9.06 of the Charter.

STAFF: Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning