

Docket Item #3  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2006-0050

Planning Commission Meeting  
September 7, 2006

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a parking reduction.

**APPLICANT:** Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church  
by Joanna C. Frizzell, attorney

**LOCATION:** 614 South Washington Street

**ZONE:** CL/Commercial Low

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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.

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

**I. DISCUSSION**

REQUEST

The applicant, Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church, requests special use permit approval for a parking reduction at their Parish Hall located at 614 South Washington Street.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 20 feet of frontage on South Washington Street, 123.5 feet of depth and a total lot area of 2,470 square feet. The site is developed with the Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church Parish Hall. Access to the property is from South Washington Street.



The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential and commercial uses. Immediately to the north is the future site of two homes. To the south, east, and west are commercial uses.

The site is located within the Old and Historic District. The Robert’s Memorial United Methodist Church is located to the north at 606-A South Washington Street.

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a reduction in the number of required parking spaces for the Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church Parish Hall. The current Parish Hall building is being renovated, therefore triggering the current parking standards which the applicant can not provide on-site because of the size of the site and the lack of vehicle access to the site. The building will house an office for the Pastor of the church as well as a meeting space for community meetings, including but not limited to community classes, Sunday School, bible study and church meetings. The church has an agreement with Suburban Drive-In Cleaners at 630 South Washington Street to allow Parish Hall attendees to park during the hours that the dry cleaner is closed. This agreement will provide 10 parking spaces during the evening and Sunday hours when the Parish Hall is used the most.

The church is in the process of a demolition to the existing rear portion of the Parish Hall. The applicant is proposing first and second floor renovations as well as an addition to the existing building. The renovation and addition will include classrooms, office and meeting spaces, and improved ADA accessibility to the church.

Parish Hall Hours:	Monday- Friday	9am- 10pm
	Saturday- Sunday	10am- 6pm

Number of Parish Hall attendees: 48

BACKGROUND

On December 7, 2004, the Alexandria Planning Commission granted SUB#2004-0010 and DSP#2004-0012 for a development site plan, subdivision and modifications, for the development of two semi-detached residential units along with two detached garage structures on the property adjacent to the Parish Hall. The site was previously occupied by a surface parking lot that was used by the church for the past 20 years. Currently, the church is not required to provide parking because the church is grandfathered by zoning, however Parishioners use on-street parking during services.

PARKING

According to Section 8-200(F)(1)(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any building that is significantly altered after January 27, 1987 shall comply with the parking requirements of the Ordinance. Significantly altered means:

“the reconstruction, remodeling or rehabilitation of, or other physical changes to, a structure or building, or a portion thereof, over any two-year period, whether or not involving any supporting members of the structure or building and whether altering interior or exterior components of the structure or building, which involves expenditures amounting to 33 1/3 percent or more of the market value of the structure or building, or portion thereof, at the time of the application for an alteration permit.”

According to the applicant, the projected cost for the improvements exceeds 33 1/3 of the market value of the buildings comprising the Roberts Memorial United Methodist Parish Hall. According to Section 8-200 (A) (10) of the Zoning Ordinance, a classroom requires one space for every 10 classroom seats. A Parish Hall with 48 seats will be required to provide five off-street parking spaces. There is no parking on the property and the applicant requests a parking reduction of five spaces.

The applicant has arranged to provide the required five parking spaces at the Suburban Drive- In Cleaners located at 630 S. Washington Street through a formal agreement. The hours of operation at the Suburban Drive- In Cleaners are Monday- Friday 6:30am- 7:00pm, 8:00am- 6:00pm Saturday, and Closed on Sunday. The applicant has also submitted a map to staff that details available parking during peak hours within a two-block radius of the parish hall.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the CL/Commercial Low zone. Section 8-100 (A) (4) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a parking reduction only with a special use permit.

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

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

The applicant has submitted plans for the above referenced building alterations to the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review (BAR). A BAR hearing regarding the renovations and addition has been scheduled for September 6, 2006.

**II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Staff does not object to the proposed parking reduction. The Parish Hall has been an integral part of the Alexandria community since it was built prior to 1877. It is used for church services as well as for community activities. The applicant has indicated to staff that the required five off-street parking spaces are currently being provided through an informal agreement with Suburban Drive-In Cleaners located at 630 South Washington Street. According to the agreement, the Parish Hall is allowed to use the parking spaces at 630 South Washington Street during the hours that the dry cleaners are not in operation, which is also the anticipated peak hours that the Parish Hall.

Plans for the design of the proposed improvements have been submitted to staff and will be considered by the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review on September 6, 2006. Staff has added a condition requiring that the alterations be in conformance with the description of work to be performed, as indicated on page four of this report and the drawings made a part of this report and subject to approval by the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review.

Currently, Parishioners of the Roberts United Methodist Church use on-street parking during church services. The agreement that the parish hall has with Suburban Drive- In Cleaners, will require those Parishioners of the Parish Hall to park at the Suburban Drive-In Cleaners, reducing the amount of on-street parking spaces used by the church. The parish hall, similar to many of the urban churches in Old Town and the City has limited or no off-street parking, but rather relies on formal or informal agreements with adjoining uses. Staff is not aware of any issues regarding the use of on-street parking in the area.

Staff does not object to the request for a reduction in the number of parking spaces required for the Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church Parish Hall. Staff finds that the times that the church will be utilizing the parking will not conflict with parking requirement for the dry cleaning business and therefore 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 applicant shall encourage its congregants and staff to use mass transit when traveling to and from the church, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold. (P&Z)
3. The applicant shall discuss all SUP provisions and requirements with Parishioners of the Parish Hall. (P&Z)
4. The proposed alterations to the Parish Hall shall be consistent with the revised drawings made a part of this report and subject to approval by the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review. (P&Z)
5. If there are any changes in the Church's parking arrangement, the applicant shall formulate an alternative plan and notify the City and Old Town Civic Association. (P&Z)
6. Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
7. Applicant shall provide written documentation and/or evidence of the agreement between the church and Suburban Drive-In Cleaners. (T&ES)

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 as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, (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:

- 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.
- R-1 Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line.
- R-2 Applicant shall provide written documentation and/or evidence of the agreement between the church and Suburban Drive In Cleaners.

##### Code Enforcement:

- F-1 No comment.

##### Health Department:

- F-1 No comment.

##### Police Department:

- F-1 The Police Department has no objections to the parking reduction.



SUP #2006-0050  
614 South Columbus Street

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