

Docket Item # 4
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2008-0010

Planning Commission Meeting
April 1, 2008

ISSUE: Consideration of an amendment to a special use permit for the expansion of a dog care facility and request for a parking reduction.

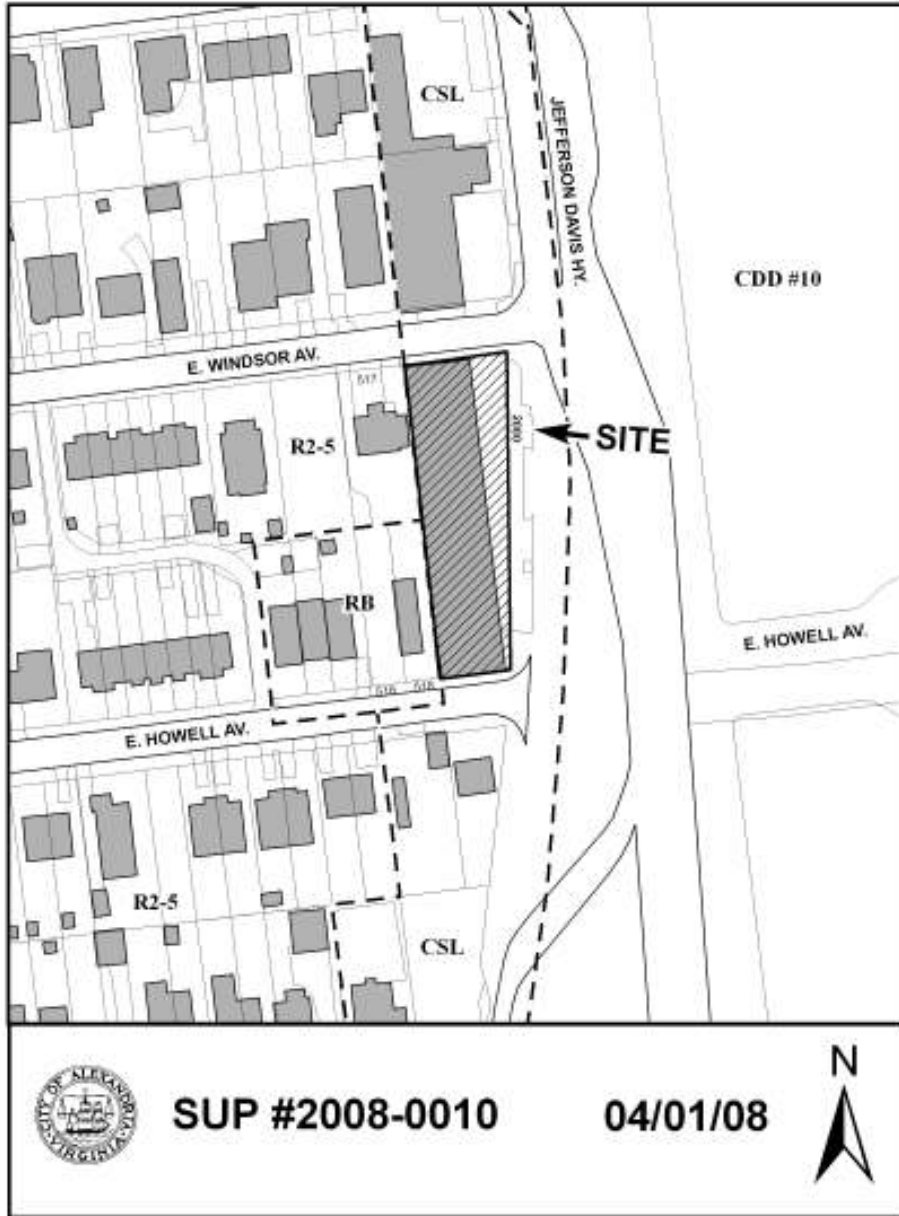
APPLICANT: Your Dog's Best Friend
by Paul Haire

STAFF: Richard W. Bray
Richard.bray@alexandriava.gov

LOCATION: 2000 Jefferson Davis Hwy

ZONE: CSL/Commercial Service Low

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.



I. DISCUSSION

REQUEST

The applicant, Paul Haire, requests an amendment to a special use permit for the expansion of a dog care facility and a parking reduction.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is one lot of record with 236 feet of frontage on Jefferson Davis Highway, an average depth of 64 feet and a total lot area of 15,160 square feet. The site is developed with a warehouse building. The building currently houses Your Dog's Best Friend, Alexandria Marble, A-Z Printing and a photography studio. Access to the property is from Jefferson Davis Highway.



The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential, commercial and civic uses. Immediately to the north is a retail florist. To the south is a single family home. To the east is Landbay J of the Potomac Yard Development. To the west are residential houses.

BACKGROUND

On February 21, 2004, City Council granted Special Use Permit #2003-0113 for the operation of a canine care center.

On March 12, 2008, staff visited the subject property to determine if the business was in compliance with the conditions of its special use permit. Staff found no violations of the special use permit.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to expand the existing canine care center into the adjacent tenant spaces in the subject property. The expansion will take place over a two year period as the spaces become vacant. The center provides overnight accommodation, day care, retail sales of pet supplies, grooming, training, pet transportation to and from the facility, pet medical care for non-veterinary personnel, and off-site canine care.

Capacity: 150 dogs per day, the number of dogs boarded overnight will vary depending on the day of the week and holiday season

Hours: Dog day care: Monday – Friday, 6:30 am – 7:00 pm

Boarding: Saturday – Sunday, 8:00 am – 7:00 pm
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Noise: The building has thick walls that contain the sound preventing the dogs from causing impacts in the neighborhood

Trash/Litter: Trash is collected weekly, staff patrols the site for litter

Safety: Dogs will be kept inside behind at least two doors to ensure that none escape.

Dog Walking: According to the applicant, employees walking dogs outdoors will strictly adhere to all regulations regarding curbing, cleaning up, and maintaining the allowable ratio of dogs to handlers. Dogs will be walked to the Simpson dog park, the animal hospital if necessary, and through the neighborhood. The dog exercise area at the WO&D at Randolph is also in the near vicinity and could be used by the dogs.

PARKING

Overnight kenneling is identified as an industrial use in the ordinance. Industrial uses, other than long term storage, have a parking requirement of 1.1 spaces for every 600 square feet. Parking for the subject use would be most similar to an industrial use, therefore 21 spaces would be required under the zoning ordinance.

The applicant can provide 16 parking spaces on the premises, five parking spaces short of the requirement. Therefore, the applicant requests a parking reduction of five spaces. The applicant justifies the parking reduction by stating that patron visits will be staggered during peak times, with patrons on site for less than five to ten minutes. Peak hours for patron visits are anticipated to be in the morning between 6:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. when patrons are dropping off their dogs for care, and in the afternoons between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. when patrons are picking up their dogs.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the CSL/Commercial Service Low zone. The current uses in the building are non-complying industrial uses. Section 12-302(A) allows the expansion of an existing non-complying use only with a special use permit.

The proposed use is generally consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for community serving low impact uses.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff supports the expansion of the canine care center. The center has operated for four years without documented complaints. Residents have expressed support for the business and a need for the service it provides. A site visit by staff found no disturbances from the current operations. The thick walls and ventilation system prevent sounds and smells from impacting the surrounding area.

During peak hours the applicant proposes to generate 100 to 150 trips. The applicant notes that the average time that patrons spend when dropping dogs off or picking them up is less than 10 minutes. This rapid turnover in parking helps to relieve potential parking impacts. Furthermore, any use occupying this building will have a greater parking requirement, and create the potential for parking congestion. Compared to a retail or personal service use that would have a higher number of employees and a longer duration of patron visits, the subject use creates less of a parking impact. The applicant also proposes to offer an off-site pick up and drop-off service which will reduce the number of patron vehicles visiting the site during peak hours. In addition, the applicant has identified strategies that will reduce the likelihood of a parking problem at this location, including that employees will use public transportation or bicycles, that patrons dropping off will not be on the premises long and staff will go to the parking lot to retrieve dogs if necessary, and that clients will be offered the option to have dogs picked up from their homes. While the expansion in the number of dogs to be cared for is significant, the center is also increasing the parking available to customers. Under the previous SUP the applicant was allowed up to 60 dogs with only five parking spaces. The current request would allow up to 150 dogs while providing 16 parking spaces.

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. 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) (SUP2003-0113)
2. The hours during which the facility is open to the public shall be limited to between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. daily. Overnight canine kenneling facilities are permitted. (PC) (SUP2003-0113)
3. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** ~~Five~~ Sixteen designated parking spaces shall be provided on site, and shall be marked with signs or paint. Parking spaces may be compact in size, ~~and may be tandem if the interior spaces are used by employees.~~ (P&Z)

4. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall provide an ~~parking schematic engineered parking plan based on the Potomac Yard/ Route 1 Frontage Plan~~ for the area in front of the building with space locations, size and ~~backup drive aisle~~ satisfactory to the Directors of T&ES and P&Z. (P&Z) (T&ES)
5. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall stripe the on-site parking lot pursuant to the approved parking schematic and ~~designate those spaces allocated to the canine facility with~~ post appropriate enforcement language with respect to towing and citing of vehicles for unlawful use. (P&Z)
6. The applicant is to contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703-838-4520 regarding a security survey and robbery awareness program for all employees. (P&Z) (SUP2003-0113)
7. **CONDITION DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~The property owner shall invest a minimum of \$2,000 to complete a landscaping improvement project on the southern 20 feet of the property by June 30, 2004. Such a project shall be designed to beautify the site using a design concept based on the WaterWise Garden at the Simpson Park. The implemented plan shall be reviewed during the one year review for this SUP. The property owner shall provide Planning and Zoning with a copy of the landscaping plan by May of 2004. (PC)~~
8. Lighting on the property shall be to the satisfaction of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in consultation with the Chief of Police. (P&Z) (SUP2003-0113)
9. The applicant shall conduct staff training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all special use permit provisions and requirements. (P&Z) (SUP2003-0113)
10. The applicant shall encourage its staff and members to use mass transit or to car pool when traveling to and from the facility, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and the advertising of car pooling opportunities. (P&Z) (SUP2003-0113)
11. The applicant shall screen the dumpster to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z) (SUP2003-0113)
12. The applicant shall implement a parking management plan to prevent vehicular stacking and congestion in the parking lot and surrounding neighborhood to include, but not limited to, the following strategies:
 - A) Encouraging staff to use public transportation or bicycles (as discussed in condition #10);
 - B) Posting a 15 minute maximum time limit for customer parking, and

providing information to customers regarding enforcement language with respect to towing and unlawful use;

- C) Offering a service to pick up and drop off dogs at their place of origin. (P&Z)(T&ES) (SUP2003-0113)
13. The applicant shall comply with the guidelines for dog handlers in dog exercise areas found in the Master Plan for Dog Exercise Areas and Fenced Dog Parks. (Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities) (SUP2003-0113)
14. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** A parking reduction of five spaces is granted to the applicant. (P&Z)
15. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall provide plantings for the landscaping strip adjacent to Route 1 to the satisfaction of the directors of P&Z and RP&CA. (P&Z)
16. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall be responsible for all parking lot signage and striping. (P&Z)
17. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** Freestanding signs are prohibited. (P&Z)
18. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall control odors from operations at the site and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. (T&ES)
19. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit one year after the use is operational 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, (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation, 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: Richard Josephson, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Richard W. Bray, 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:

- F-1 T&ES has no objections to the proposed parking reduction.
- R-1 The applicant shall control odors from operations at the site and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. (T&ES)
- 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 No Comment

Health Department:

- F-1 No Comment

Parks and Recreation:

- F-1 No Comment

Police Department:

- F-1 The Police Department has no objections to the parking reduction for the dog daycare and boarding facility.

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