

Minutes

City Planning Commission Meeting

City Council Chambers, 2400 Washington Ave
Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 2:00 PM

City of
NEWPORT NEWS
Virginia



MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharyn Fox, Chairperson; LaMonte Williams, Vice-Chairperson; Timothy Grabowski; Phillip Jones; Willard G. Maxwell, Jr.; Philip Shook; Katie Stodghill; and Michael Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT: Randie T. Dyess, Jr.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sheila W. McAllister, Planning Director; Flora D. Chioros, Assistant Director – Current Planning; Katie Chamberlain, Planning Coordinator; Saul Gleiser, Senior Planner; Carolyn Poissant, Senior Planner; Kenar Johnson, Planner I; Sharon Baum, Landscape Planner; Lynn Spratley, Senior Deputy City Attorney; Nyoka Hall, Zoning Administrator; and Melanie Stroud, Zoning Coordinator

A. Call to Order

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

B. Planning Commission Creed and Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Shook read the Planning Commission’s purpose as stated in Section 15.2-2210 of the Code of Virginia. He made a motion to adopt the agenda before the Planning Commission. Ms. Stodghill seconded the motion. The City Planning Commission voted to adopt the agenda by acclamation.

C. Invocation

The invocation was rendered by Mr. Williams.

D. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Grabowski led the Planning Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

E. Minutes

The minutes of the February 16, 2022 public meeting were approved.

F. Public Hearing

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

- (a) **CU-2022-0001, RIPTIDE II, LLC** Requests a conditional use permit to allow for the construction and operation of a car wash facility, on a combined 1.07 acre parcel,

located at 11602 & 11604 Jefferson Avenue, zoned C2 General Commercial. The *One City, One Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* recommends community commercial uses for the properties. The Parcel Nos. are 213.00.06.24 & 213.00.06.25.

Saul Gleiser, Senior Planner, presented the staff report (copy attached to record minutes).

Mr. Williams asked why there are two different site plans in the appendices. Mr. Gleiser stated one is the proposed site plan and the other is the existing condition of the site.

Ms. Stodghill asked if this is a drive-through car wash. Mr. Gleiser stated yes, you will stay in your car.

Ms. Stodghill asked if there will be attendants on-site. Mr. Gleiser stated yes.

Ms. Stodghill asked if the vacuums would be available to customers after-hours. Mr. Gleiser stated no, the facility will be closed.

Mr. Taylor asked what type of signage will be on the property. Mr. Gleiser stated there will be a monument-style sign.

Mr. Williams asked if Traffic Engineering studied the proposed site. Mr. Gleiser stated yes, we always request comments from each city department and they did not have any concerns.

Mr. Taylor asked if there are any additional plans to enhance Robinson Drive. Mr. Gleiser stated they will have a landscape strip. Ms. Stodghill asked if the landscape strip will be 10 feet. Mr. Gleiser stated yes.

Mr. Taylor stated he is concerned about the amount of traffic that will be coming in and going out of Robinson Drive. He asked if that has been addressed. Mr. Gleiser stated yes, Traffic Engineering does not have any concerns.

Ms. Stodghill asked if there will be a sound system on the property. Mr. Gleiser stated no.

Ms. Stodghill asked what the dumpster enclosure will look like. Mr. Gleiser stated the enclosure will be the same material that is used on the building. He stated we will look at final drawings before approval to ensure that it is in keeping with the architecture of the building.

Ms. Stodghill asked if trees can be planted in the landscape strip. Mr. Gleiser stated yes.

Ms. Fox opened the public hearing.

Mr. Mark Russell, Applicant, 749 Fenner Road, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, stated he was available for questions.

Mr. Williams asked if the operation will be a full-service car wash. Mr. Russell stated it will be self-serve, which is called an "express car wash." He stated we normally have five people working: guiding you in, operating the pay station, and keeping the vacuum areas clean.

Ms. Stodghill asked if there would be people outside waiting on their cars. Mr. Russell stated no, there is no lobby. He stated we are only open during daylight hours.

Mr. Williams asked if there is a protocol for people vacuuming their cars and playing their car stereos loudly. Mr. Russell stated we will ask them to turn it down, and if they do not, we ask them to leave.

Mr. Taylor asked if all of the equipment is turned off after working hours. Mr. Russell stated yes.

Mr. Russell stated we have an extensive security camera system on-site and will leave the lights on from a security standpoint.

Ms. Casey Jones, David's Towing, Inc., 16 Robinson Drive, stated her family owns the two adjacent properties to the proposed car wash. She stated she is a proponent for this application because she has seen the transient amount of businesses that have been on the property and the amount of problems they have had with the property being vacant. Ms. Jones stated there has been a lot of loitering at the existing car wash, including camping, crime and dumping. She stated she is in agreement with the beautification of the property and the proposed use. Ms. Jones stated she has four main concerns. She stated the first concern is if the proposed plan is to demolish the existing building at the former car wash. Ms. Jones stated her business keeps their commercial equipment and police impounds in a secured lot behind the former car wash and they need to be kept in the same condition as they were brought in. She asked if there could be a barrier between the properties if there is any demolition on the existing site. Ms. Jones asked for assurance that the applicant keep his property clean. She stated she is concerned about security of the site because it appears that people will be able to enter the property after-hours, and because of the building's orientation on the site, it could provide coverage from Jefferson Avenue for unsavory activities. Ms. Jones asked if it would be possible to put a gate at the entrance so vehicles cannot enter the property if the premises is closed. She stated it is reassuring that the site will have security cameras, but they do not prevent crime. Ms. Jones stated she is very concerned about traffic. She stated she does not agree with the only entrance and exit on Robinson Drive. Ms. Jones stated the turn lane to make a left onto Robinson Drive allows two to three cars to wait in that turn lane. She stated during rush hour, there are cars that stick out in the southbound lanes of Jefferson Avenue. Ms. Jones stated her property is at the end of the neighborhood and commercial vehicles go in and out of her property. She stated we are on a police response where we have to respond in a timely manner, and she is concerned about traffic backup on Robinson Drive getting out onto Jefferson Avenue. She stated she would like to see the traffic impact report.

Mr. Taylor stated the city has already looked at the traffic impact, but he is concerned as well. He stated he feels the stacking lane turning left from Jefferson Avenue into Robinson Drive is short. Ms. McAllister stated this is a C2 commercial site and what is proposed is a

C2 commercial development with one entrance. She stated Robinson Drive goes into a neighborhood, but it is not the only entrance and exit out of this neighborhood. Ms. McAllister stated you are looking at a use that is only open during the day and does not operate 24 hours, which could happen on this particular corner. She stated this is not a residential corner, it is a commercial corner. Mr. Taylor stated we cannot be ignorant of traffic issues that occur. Ms. McAllister stated that has been evaluated. She stated the entrances on Jefferson Avenue do not reduce the traffic impact to Jefferson Avenue. Ms. McAllister stated if you have the entrances on Jefferson Avenue, you are still going to have people stopping trying to get in and out of that site. She stated this reduces some of that stop and start traffic on Jefferson Avenue.

Ms. Stodghill asked what is the setback on the building from Jefferson Avenue. Ms. Chioros stated it is 30 feet. Ms. Stodghill asked if the new building lines up with the face of the adjacent apartments. Ms. Chioros stated the apartments are on Robinson Drive one parcel back from the corner. She stated the structure on the corner of Robinson Drive and Jefferson Avenue opposite this property is a used auto dealer. Ms. Chioros stated that building appears to be set back 30 feet from the property line.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Russell if he would like to address Ms. Jones's concerns. Mr. Russell stated a silt fence will be installed completely around the demolition and construction of the site. He stated we pride ourselves on our car washes and they are extremely clean. Mr. Russell stated we have people on-site who continuously pick up trash. He stated we will have security cameras and lighting. Mr. Russell stated cars will not drive through the site at night. He stated the volume of traffic we are going to have is similar to the volume when both of the former businesses were operating. Mr. Russell stated he is the owner and developer, and is also the engineer on the project. He stated when he looked at the plan the first time, he thought it would be much better to get the traffic off of Jefferson Avenue. Mr. Russell stated the traffic will likely be right-turn-in and right-turn-out because it will be difficult to try to go south on Jefferson Avenue from Robinson Drive. Mr. Shook stated he assumes most of the customer volume will be on the weekends and not during the week, and during the weekends you will not have rush hour traffic on Jefferson Avenue. Mr. Russell stated that is correct.

Ms. Stodghill asked if Mr. Russell looked at other placements for the building on the site. Mr. Russell stated the building is situated on the site partly because the city does not want to see the vacuum booths on Jefferson Avenue. He stated we are placing the building to block the vacuum booths and there will be a wall where people on Jefferson Avenue will not be able to look into car wash tunnel. Mr. Russell stated there is no perfect site plan, but the way Newport News wants us to develop this is in accordance with their site plan regulations.

Mr. Taylor asked if the applicant would consider installing a gate when closing their lot. Mr. Russell stated it is a consideration. He stated we have an exit gate because we do not want people turning in and trying to get to the vacuums without going through the car wash. Mr. Russell stated if trespassing after hours becomes an issue, they will install a gate.

Ms. Fox closed the public hearing.

Mr. Williams made a motion to recommend approval of conditional use permit CU-2022-0001 to City Council with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shook.

Mr. Grabowski stated he thinks the proposed building is quite beautiful and he is happy the former car wash is being replaced. He stated he can empathize with the traffic concerns but will defer to Traffic Engineering who reviewed the traffic impact and has no concerns.

Dr. Maxwell stated he would rather have a business on a site instead of it being vacant and he understands everyone's concerns about security.

Vote on Roll Call:

For: Maxwell, Jones, Shook, Williams, Taylor, Stodghill, Grabowski, Fox

Against: None

Abstention: None

The City Planning Commission voted unanimously (8:0) to recommend approval of conditional use permit CU-2022-0001 to City Council with conditions.

G. Executive Secretary Report

Ms. McAllister stated on February 22, 2022, City Council approved the conditional use permit to operate a heavy equipment storage facility at 66 Richneck Road.

Ms. McAllister stated on March 16, 2022, the Planning Commission will hear a special exception request for the operation of a kennel in a residential district to allow six domesticated animals at 716 Whisperwood Drive.

Ms. McAllister stated we are going through redistricting right now for the electoral districts because we had an increase in our population from the Census. She stated it is a short time frame, but we are still trying to get the word out and get people to see the proposed maps and give their input to City Council. Ms. McAllister stated we have three community meetings coming up: North District on March 7, 2022 at Denbigh Community Center from 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.; Central District on March 9, 2022 at City Center, Fountain Plaza II in the James Room from 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.; and South District on March 10, 2022 at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center from 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

H. Committee Reports

Mr. Grabowski stated the Community Development Block Grant committee met twice on Zoom. He stated people requesting funds made their presentations and the committee is waiting to see how much money they are going to have to disburse. Mr. Grabowski stated there were four or five new applicants and they are all charitable organizations, mostly directed at youth, which he finds exciting.

Mr. Taylor stated the Regulations committee has an upcoming meeting on March 16, 2022.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:51 P.M.



Recording Secretary



Executive Secretary