

DATE: October 12, 2018

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Kinsey O'Shea, AICP, Town Planner KS

RE: RZN18-0008/ORD 1872- Request to rezone 4.215 acres from R-5 Transitional Residential zoning district to PR Planned Residential zoning district at 1222 Patrick Henry Drive (Tax Map No. 196-A 5) by Justin Boyle of Green Valley Builders, Inc. (applicant) for Gary W. Case of Acme Holdings LLC (property owner).

At the September 18, 2018 Planning Commission work session, there were a number of items that were discussed:

- Additional trip generation analysis to evaluate change to entrance design
- Onsite vehicle parking/parking ratio
- Bicycle parking
- Trail connection
- Rear buffer yard
- Sanitary sewer adequacy

Entrance Design

The applicant has completed additional traffic analysis to evaluate the impacts to the transportation network of changing the access to two full-access entrances on Patrick Henry Drive, rather than the two previously-proposed right-in/right-out entrances. The additional traffic analysis shows that no additional traffic improvements, such as turn lanes, are warranted at either entrance. Patrick Henry Drive is currently a 4-lane roadway that can accommodate left-turning movements into the development in the left travel lane, while still allowing a through-lane in the right lane. Furthermore, the analysis shows that no signal timing modifications are warranted at the existing intersections. Comments from Town Engineer Joshua Middleton are attached to this memo.

Due to the proximity of this development to the rescue station, representatives from the rescue squad have provided comments regarding this proposal. In summary, comments from Tom Lovejoy and John O'Shea express concern with the potential for vehicles to back up eastbound to turn left into the development, in front of the rescue squad. Ambulances responding to calls exit the front of the bay directly onto Patrick Henry Drive. Queuing of vehicles in either the eastbound lane of traffic turning into the development, or in the westbound lanes of traffic on Patrick Henry Drive stacked at the signal at Progress Street and Patrick Henry Drive could negatively affect response times. There is currently an Opticom sensor across from the rescue squad to activate the signal at Patrick Henry Drive and Progress Street to clear the intersection of vehicles queued at the light, which aids response times in the westbound direction towards Progress Street or Toms Creek Road. However, there is no advance warning for eastbound vehicles queued to turn left into the proposed development, or for westbound vehicles coming from the North Main Street area, that an ambulance is turning left onto Patrick Henry Drive toward North Main Street.

Onsite Vehicle Parking/Parking Ratio

There was a concern by neighbors of this development, and the Planning Commission that the proposed 0.75 space/bedroom parking ratio would not be adequate given the target market and distance to campus. The applicant has eliminated several parking lot tree islands and reconfigured the rear parking lot to add an additional 15 parking spaces and increase the ratio to 0.80 spaces per bedroom. This configuration does keep all parking behind the front building line, while increasing the number of parking spaces.

Bicycle Parking

There was discussion regarding the proposed bicycle parking ratio only meeting the minimum zoning ordinance requirement. The Corridor Committee recommended additional covered, secure bike parking. The provision of additional covered, secure bicycle parking could further encourage residents to take alternate means of transportation rather than personal vehicle trips. The applicant has increased the bicycle parking ratio to 0.30, but has not specified a total number of covered bike parking spaces or any other details regarding type, including secure storage.

Trail Connection

The applicant has proposed a 5' wide trail connection from the rear parking lot to the Shenandoah Trail. Trail pavement width is required to be 10' wide per the standard in the subdivision ordinance to allow for two-way travel, but there have been cases where a lesser width has been approved. It is the applicant's burden to prove why the standard trail width cannot be accommodated. The trail is situated over the current proposed location for the sanitary sewer extension to minimize land disturbance. The proposed trail location requires users from the development to cross several travel lanes in the parking lot to access the trail, and does not provide any consideration for through-users from the Patrick Henry Drive trail. Both the Corridor Committee and staff recommended a connection be made from the trail along Patrick Henry Drive along the side property line to the Shenandoah Trail. The considerations for this recommendation are as follows:

- This recommendation provides an off-street connection from the Patrick Henry Drive trail to the Shenandoah Trail. No such connection exists today. There is 5' sidewalk provided along Progress Street, but there is no bike lane along the frontage of the rescue squad property to provide a bicycle connection.
- Provision of this connection allows all users from the adjoining neighborhoods to access the Shenandoah Trail and the Patrick Henry Drive Trail via an off-street connection.

Additionally, the revised master plan shows that no additional changes are proposed to the 8' trail along the back of the curb on Patrick Henry Drive, other than accommodating the entrances and the bus pull-off. The opportunity to provide upgrades to existing infrastructure, or construction of new infrastructure often comes with new development or redevelopment, and should be done to meet the Town standards, which, in this case is a 10' wide trail pavement width. Consideration should be given to creating a more robust streetscape for the bicycle and pedestrian corridor along Patrick Henry Drive similar to the treatment proposed by Terrace View.

Rear Buffer Yard

Staff recommended that the buffer yard be modified to show the fence interior to the property, and the plantings to the outside. The applicant has revised the plan to show the buffer yard in this configuration to further buffer the single-family neighborhood behind the proposed development across the Shenandoah Trail.

Sanitary Sewer

The Town has identified that the proposed development will necessitate capacity upgrades to the downstream sanitary sewer system. The Town has provided the applicant with sewer capacity information to evaluate the necessary upgrades to the downstream system. The applicant is working with the Town to determine the best route and the nature of the required upgrades to the sewer system. The applicant has indicated in the application that if the upgrades required are specifically attributable to the proposed development, then the applicant will remedy the issue as agreed to by Town of Blacksburg engineering staff. ***This commitment should be made in the form of a proffer.***

ATTACHMENTS

1. Transportation/traffic comments dated 10-11-18 from Town engineer Joshua Middleton
2. Cover letter from Steve Semones dated 10-03-18
3. Revised Application 10-03-18 including application text, proffer statement, master plan, and architectural drawings