

Fiscal Year 2018

# City of Alexandria, Virginia Planning Commission Annual Report

## Special points of interest:

- Regulatory Cases
- Highlighted Projects
- Membership

The Planning Commission is appointed by City Council and performs its duties under Sections 15.2-2223 and 2225 and Chapter 9 of the City Charter. It is charged with adopting, reviewing and amending the City's Master Plan, making final decisions on Subdivision and Site Plan regulatory cases, and making recommendations to City Council on other regulatory cases such as Zoning Text Amendments, Special Use Permits, Development Special Use Permits, Encroachments and Vacation proposals.

## Regulatory Cases

	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
Special Use Permits (SUP)	43	43	37
Encroachments, Subdivisions and Vacations	15	7	21
Development Projects (DSP/DSUP)	25	18	17
Master Plan Amendments and Re-zonings	11	2	13
Text Amendments	8	6	12
CDD Conceptual Design Plans	5	1	5
City Charter Section 9.06	2	3	1
Transportation Management Plans	8	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>113</b>

## Inside this issue:

Long Range Planning	2
Zoning Text Amend-	4
Non-Development	5
Development Cases	7
Attendance	10
Membership	11
Other	12

## Summary of Activities

One hundred thirteen regulatory cases were considered by the Planning Commission in FY 2018, with the Planning Commission meeting 11 times. It also held a Joint Work Session with the Environmental Policy Commission this past fiscal year. The number of cases for FY 2016 and FY 2017 is included for comparison. All regulatory cases as noted were either recommended to City Council for approval or approved by the Planning Commission. Subdivisions and Site Plans are cases which are approved by the Planning Commission and do not require approval by the City Council.

In addition to the Special Use Permits (SUPs) that required review by the Planning Commission in FY 2018, staff approved an additional 50 Special Use Permits (SUPs), administratively. In FY 2017, 40 SUPs were approved administratively. Many of the administrative SUPs were requests for both a change of ownership and for minor amendments to an existing SUP.





Figure 1 – Approved Blocks Map (Per 2003 Plan)

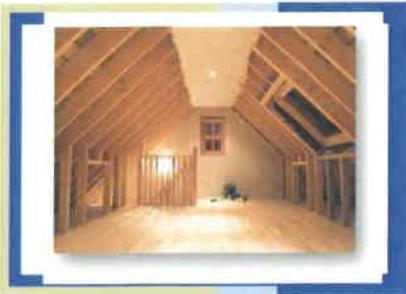
In 2003, the Planning Commission recommended for approval and the City Council approved the SAP to establish a long-term vision for the 230-acre neighborhood surrounding the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail station. The plan area is divided into blocks with office, retail, hotel, and entertainment uses; the SAP contemplates the tallest buildings being located near the Metrorail station.

The plan area, with a total of approximately 11.5 million sq. ft. of planned development (20 million sq. ft., including Carlyle), is an important long-term economic development area for the City. Approximately 2.6 million sq. ft. of new development has been constructed in the plan area since its adoption by City Council in 2003. In September 2017, the Planning Commission recommended for approval, and the City Council approved, amendments for blocks 6A and 20 as part of a Phase I Update to the Eisenhower East SAP. The amendments are designed to among other changes make adjustments in the land use mix in the plan area to reflect current market conditions. In January 2018, the Planning Commission recommended for approval and the City Council approved a second amendment to the SAP as part of the Phase I Update for Blocks 4 and 5. The amendments to Blocks 6A and 20 converted office space to residential and retail and the amendments for Blocks 4 and 5 converted land use from just office to office or residential.

As part of the Phase 1 Update process for Blocks 4, 5, 6A, and 20, staff performed a land use analysis to evaluate the land use, planning and urban design implications of current development proposals for the subject blocks, while also taking into consideration the City's recent Fiscal Impact Analysis and Office Conversion and Competitiveness Study. The outcomes of all three studies supported the proposed amendments.

# ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS

In FY 2018, the Planning Commission recommended approval, and the City Council approved, a number of Zoning Text Amendments designed to update and clarify provisions within the City's Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Floor Area Ratio, Sheds and Accessory Structures, Porches, and Massage Establishments and Medical Offices:



- Text Amendment 2017-0001— Amends the Zoning Ordinance to address ambiguity pertaining to Floor Area Ratio, particularly as it relates to allowable exemptions.
- Text Amendment 2018-0003 - Amends the Zoning Ordinance provisions related to sheds and other small accessory buildings to update the existing regulations to better align with functional sizes and heights for these types of structures on residentially zoned properties.
- Text Amendment 2018-0004 - Amends the Zoning Ordinance to allow porches meeting certain criteria to be permitted in required front yards without BZA approval; it further expands and clarifies porch floor area exclusions, and amends the porch special exception standards.

Two other Text Amendments were approved in FY 2018:

- Text Amendment 2018 0001: Neighborhood Retail (NR) zoned properties are only located along Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria. This Text Amendment modifies the provisions of Sections 4-1403, 4-1403.1, and 4-1404 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow additional by right uses, administrative Special Use Permit uses, and Special Use Permit uses.
- Text Amendment 2018-0005: This Text Amendment replaced the term “medical office” with a new term “medical health professional” which includes massage therapists, making massage therapists permitted in most zones.

## NON-DEVELOPMENT CASES

The following are examples of some of the Non-Development cases approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in FY 2018:



- 6 Prince Street (Misha's): Special Use Permit — Approval was recommended and granted in April 2018 for Misha's Coffee House to open a 28-indoor seat restaurant at this waterfront location to sell coffee, beverages, and baked goods. This is the second facility in Alexandria with the current one (photo) on S. Patrick Street. There will not be roasting or baking at the new site.



- 105 Uhler Terrace: Special Use Permit — Approval was recommended and granted in April 2018 to construct a two-story single-family dwelling with 2,136 square feet of net floor area (3,761 gross square feet) on an undeveloped, substandard lot at this location. The approval also included 2.60 feet of height due to the subject property's challenging topography.



- 1001A Queen Street (Rooming House) — Approval was recommended and granted for a 5-year Special Use Permit review and a change in ownership for this 8 room rooming house that has operated for approximately 40 years in the City of Alexandria.

## NON-DEVELOPMENT CASES



- 116-120 S. Payne Street (Congregate Living ) : Special Use Permit - Approval was recommended and granted in June 2018 to Friends of the Guest House to operate a congregate living facility for 21 non-violent female parolees in 10 bedrooms. Friends of the Guest House is a nonprofit organization with broad support that provides services to women reentering communities after periods of incarceration. This would be the second facility in Alexandria.



- 417 King Street (Taco Bell Catina): Special Use Permit – Approval was recommended and granted in March 2018 for a 52-seat indoor restaurant in the 2,195 square feet tenant space. Twenty outdoor seats are included for location in front of the restaurant on private property. The menu would offer a Cantina concept including tapas-style, shareable appetizers and the traditional Taco Bell menu. On-premises alcohol would be available.



- 728 N. Henry Street: Mason Social Special Use Permit and related actions – Approval was granted in September 2017 to create an outdoor dining area with 36 seats in the public right-of-way for the Mason Social Restaurant which is grandfathered for 94 indoor seats.

## DEVELOPMENT CASES

### **BLOCK 20 2200 MILL ROAD**

Eisenhower East SAP Block 20: 2200 Mill Road — In December 2017, the Planning Commission recommended approval and City Council approved a Development Special Use Permit, and related requests, for a number of site improvements to Block 20 of the Eisenhower East SAP. One of the related December requests for Block 20 included an amendment to the Coordinated Development District to allow a change in use from office to residential and hotel and a change in the allowable height to accommodate the 300 foot high residential building. The approvals covers two buildings, namely, a residential 26-story high-rise apartment building with a proposed height of 300 feet and 420 units; for this building, the developer has agreed to either set aside 15 of the units as affordable or provide an in-lieu monetary contribution of \$3 million, which is the estimated value of the 15 units to the Housing Trust Fund. The second building will be a future 9-story hotel measuring approximately 93 feet tall, with a projected 180 guest rooms and two levels of below-grade parking. These buildings are consistent with the Phase I Eisenhower East SAP Update as approved in September 2017 and as described earlier in this Report.



### **BLOCK 6A 200 Stovall Street**

Eisenhower East SAP Block 6A: 200 Stovall Street — In September 2017, the Planning Commission recommended for approval and the City Council approved Special Use Permits and Modifications to several previously approved actions pertaining to Block 6A. The approval enables the repurposing of existing vacant office space into a mixed-use retail and residential building. It also enables a Coordinated Development District Concept Plan amendment and a Special Use Permit for an increased penthouse height, an encroachment for residential balconies, and an amendment to a Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit to update the commercial, retail, and residential use rates. Council's approval included three affordable units at 80% of Area Median Income and two affordable units at 60% of Area Median Income (set-aside rental units) within the development; the unit mix are to be proportional to the overall building mix. All standard housing conditions for set-aside rental units apply and will remain at the stated levels for forty years. The proposal for Block 6A is consistent with the Phase I Eisenhower East SAP Update as approved in September 2017 and as described earlier in this Report.



## DEVELOPMENT CASES

### **BLOCKS 4 AND 5 - 2410 AND 2460 MILL ROAD**

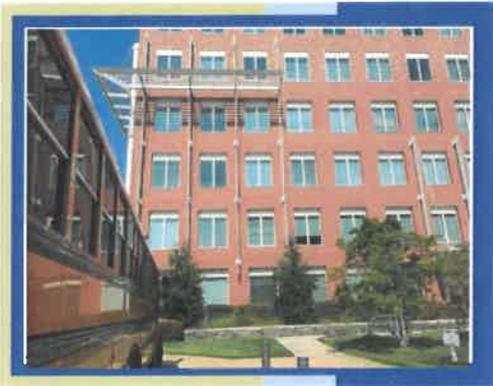
Eisenhower East SAP Blocks 4 and 5: 2410 and 2460 Mill Road — In January 2018, the Planning Commission recommended for approval and the City Council approved a Development Special Use Permit and related requests for a project on Blocks 4 and 5 to consist of several residential buildings atop a podium building with retail and parking encompassing the project footprint. The five-level podium contains retail uses including an approximately 85,000 square foot anchor grocery tenant, 129,000 square feet of other retail uses and 1,590 parking spaces. The applicant has publicly announced that Wegman's will be the grocery tenant. The proposal for Blocks 4 and 5 is consistent with the Phase I Eisenhower East SAP Update which was adopted in January 2018 to reflect the Master Plan amendments for Blocks 4 and 5.



### **THE STRAND, 203, 205, AND 211 STRAND STREET**

The Strand: 203, 205 and 211 Strand Street - In February, 2018, the Planning Commission recommended approval and the City Council approved a Development Special Use Permit and two Special Use Permits to demolish an existing retail building and build 18 new residential units and ground floor retail at 203, 205, and 211 Strand Street. Two hundred thirty four thousand dollars will be donated to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund as a voluntary affordable housing contribution. The applicant engaged with the community through meetings, from which the feedback was positive. Part of the approval was an allowance for the building to be over 30 feet tall in the Potomac River Vicinity Height District.. This is another positive step forward in the implementation of the Waterfront Plan.

## DEVELOPMENT CASES



1701 & 1705 N. Beauregard Street (Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School): In September 2017, the Planning Commission and City Council heard and approved the amendment of a Development Special Use Permit to convert several floors of two office buildings into a new and much needed public school. The campus will be mixed use, with some floors still being used as office space for private organizations. The Commission and staff worked closely with the community and developers to alter the plan to enhance safety considerations for children walking to school and for pedestrians in general. The school has been named the Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, after a local civil rights icon, education pioneer and trailblazer. Day was appointed to the Alexandria City School Board – just ten years after the Brown versus Board of Education decision. The school will be a new science, engineering, technology and math (STEM) focused school on the West End and will open this fall.

## Membership and Attendance

### CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETINGS ATTENDANCE REPORT

JULY 1, 2017 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018

COMMISSION: Planning Commission  
CHAIRS: Chair Mary Lyman and Vice Chair Nathan Macek

\*The Planning Commission is in recess during the month of August.

Name	Jul	Sept 5	Sept 7	Oct 3	Nov 9	Dec 5	Jan 4	Feb 6	Mar 6	April 3	May 1	Jun 5
Mary Lyman	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nathan Macek	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maria Wasowski	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mindy Lyle	-	E	E	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
David Brown	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stephen Koenig	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Melissa McMahon	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E

INDICATE: (X) PRESENT; (E) EXCUSED, (U) UNEXUSED

LIST OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND 75% OF MEETINGS: None

  
Chair's Signature

Continued page 7

In March, the Commission held elections for officers of Chair and Vice Chair. Mary Lyman was reelected as Chair and Nathan Macek was reelected as Vice Chair for one year. All members attended at least 75% of the scheduled meetings.

In August 2017, the Planning Commission held a Retreat to discuss topics of particular interest for the coming FY 2018 Docket Season. Further, to accommodate the number and complexity of the projects considered this fiscal year, the Planning Commission held two meetings in September 2017 and five Work Sessions to receive updates from staff and to hold discussions on various planning projects. It also held a Joint Work Session with the Environmental Policy Commission in March 2018 to review work related to the Environmental Action Plan Update. Finally, the Planning Commission switched from paper docket material to iPads in FY 2018 to save costs and time related to docket production and review. A training session was held in September 2017 to orient members to the iPads.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Planning Commission Member</b>
Transportation Commission	David Brown and Melissa McMahon
Waterfront Commission	Nathan Macek
Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group	Stephen Koenig
ARHA Redevelopment Work Group	Mary Lyman
Resolution 830 Work Group	Mary Lyman
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group	David Brown
Eisenhower West Steering Committee	Mindy Lyle (Chair)

*Continued page 8*

## Other Planning Commission Information

The Commission's choice of leadership is covered in its By-laws and involves the election of officers on an annual basis in March; elections this year are described in the summary of activities. As called for in the By-laws, it is the vote of the Commission that determines the turnover in leadership. Term limits also affect leadership turnover.

*Questions?* Please contact Planning and Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the Planning Commission at [PlanComm@alexandriava.gov](mailto:PlanComm@alexandriava.gov).