

Docket Item # 21-A
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #99-0012
REZONING #99-0012

Planning Commission Meeting
March 7, 2000

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for amendment to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan Chapter of the 1992 Master Plan to change the land use designation from RM to RH and request to change the zoning designation of the subject property from RB to RC, with proffer.

APPLICANT: Hopkins House
by Harry P. Hart, attorney

LOCATION: 1224 Princess Street
Hopkins House

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, MARCH 18, 2000: City Council approved the Planning Commission recommendation.

Vice Mayor Euille disclosed that he does serve as a Board Member of Hopkins House Inc., however, he will be participating in the discussion and vote on these items.

Councilman Speck assumed that Hopkins House, in the interest of saving on supply costs, has not reprinted its stationery and disclosed that he is still listed as a trustee on the Hopkins House stationery; however, he has not been a trustee for a couple of years.

Mayor Donley suggested that at a future Inner City Civic Association meeting that there be representatives from the Police Department and Transportation and Environmental Services to help provide a forum to discuss and to provide some solution to the parking issue. Hopkins House should be invited to participate in this forum.

Vice Mayor Euille stated that the whole parking issue needs to be revisited and reconsidered in terms of improving parking enhancements. He noted that in the Boys and Girls Club block that the reason the street is narrow and there is parking on just one side is because on one side of the street the sidewalk extends out into the street. He stated that you could cut off five or six feet of that sidewalk and widen that street. He noted that is costly, but it is something that can be considered and could provide parking on both sides of the street as a result.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, MARCH 7, 2000: On a motion by Mr. Wagner, seconded by Mr. Komoroske, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the master plan amendment and rezoning, with the submitted proffer. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0. Mr. Dunn recused himself.

Reason: Members of the Planning Commission expressed support for the work of Hopkins House and agreement with the staff analysis in favor of the proposed expansion. In addition, they inquired of the Acting City Attorney, Ignacio Pessoa, regarding whether the rezoning constituted illegal spot zoning, and he stated that it was not.

Speakers:

Harry Hart, attorney, representing the applicant, spoke.

Glen Hopkins, Executive Director, Hopkins House, spoke.

Carol Johnson, 1301 Princess Street, 20 year resident, spoke against the expansion.

Camille Kelly, Director of Hopkins House preschool, spoke in support of the program.

Keisha James, 1107 Princess Street, parent of preschool children, spoke in support.

Monique Williams, 1532 Princess Street, spoke in support.

Jim Hotop, 1301 Princess Street, spoke in opposition to the expansion.

Barbara Proctor, 426 North Fayette Street, spoke in support.

Ron Diehl, 1312 Princess Street, spoke against the expansion.

Alfred Kendrick, parent of preschool student, spoke in support.

Kenya Turner, parent of preschool student, spoke in support.

Terry Malloy Ross, parent of preschool student, spoke in support.

Aretha Carrington, Hopkins House teacher, spoke in support.

Terry Jullen, parent of preschool student, spoke in support.

Nathan Pastel, parent of preschool student, spoke in support.

Helen Miller, Inner City resident, spoke in support.

Anne Corodo, Hopkins House teacher, spoke in support.

Jackie Bolton, 416 North Payne Street, volunteer at Hopkins House, spoke in support.

Sherill Reinhart, 415 North Payne Street, spoke in support.

Renee DiMarco, 419 North Payne Street, spoke in support.

Sarah Becker, 1200 Princess Street, spoke against the expansion, noting that issues regarding the zoning definition of private school and the precedent being set for the Boys and Girls Club.

Peter Berudi, a volunteer at Hopkins House, spoke in support.

Karen Marshall, 402 North Payne Street, spoke in opposition to the expansion but spoke favorably about the existing Hopkins House program..

Mr. _____, spoke in support.

Sandy Stancil, 1214 Princess Street, spoke in opposition to the expansion and the rezoning.

Hillary Kruger, 1308 Oronoco Street, spoke against spot zoning.

Deborah Seboran, 1212 Princess Street, spoke in opposition.

Mark Webster, Inner City Civic Association, spoke in support of Hopkins House as it is now, but in opposition to any expansion.

Louise Johnson, 1315 Princess Street, spoke in support.

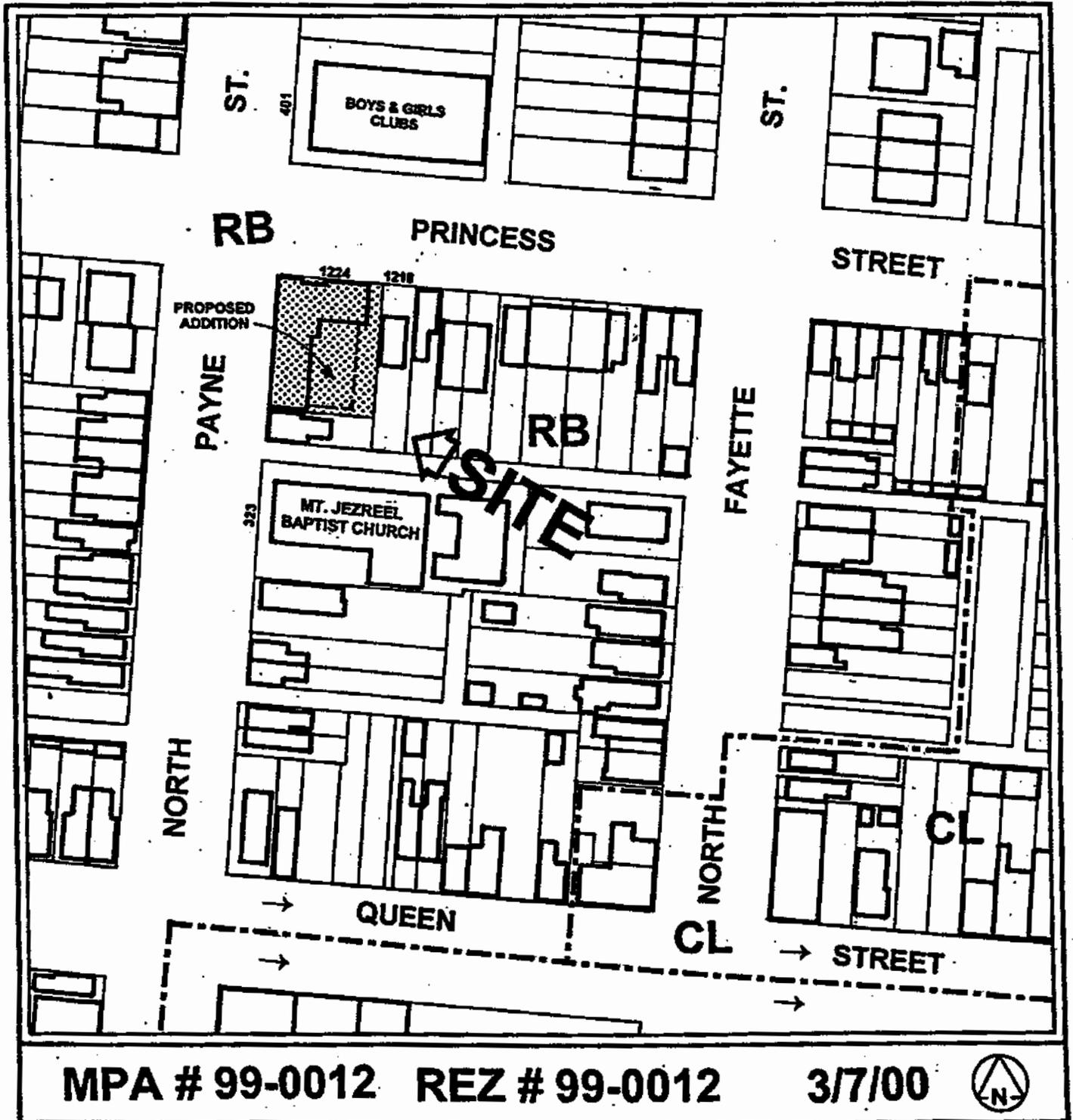
Judy Miller, Rosemont Civic Association, spoke in opposition to the rezoning.

Jack Sullivan, 43 Ivanhoe Place, spoke in opposition, and specifically with regard to spot

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zoning, the violation of the SUP, and the zoning definition of private school.

The subject and surrounding land uses are shown on the sketch below.



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3/7/00



(Not to Scale)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed master plan amendment and rezoning, subject to the following proffer submitted by the applicant:

...[S]hould the RC zoning be granted in this case, the property will be used for its present use — as a preschool and administrative offices of Hopkins House. Under this proffer, any redevelopment or change in use will be done under the RB zone regulations, either permissive uses or under SUP through City Council, except as to FAR for use of the existing building as expanded under the current application.

DISCUSSION

Hopkins House Association, Inc, by Harry Hart, attorney, is before the Planning Commission and City Council seeking several zoning approvals in order to expand its existing operation. First, it seeks to increase the number of children allowed under its current SUP to reflect the number that have been schooled there for the last several years. It also proposes to physically expand its preschool program in two ways: 1) building an addition which will essentially cover the remainder of its existing site at 1224 Princess Street with a one story building, and 2) using the adjacent building at 1218 Princess Street, which Hopkins House owns, for some of its preschool functions. The applicant's plans require four land use approvals by Planning Commission and City Council:

1. Special use permit to increase number of children in preschool. SUP 99-0148 requests that the number of children allowed under the SUP be increased in the number from 25 to 49, consistent with its state license and its practice over several years. See separate staff report.
2. Special use permit to physically expand the preschool operation. Any expansion or intensification of an existing special use permit use requires new special use permit approval. Therefore, SUP 99-0092 requests permission to physically expand the preschool operation by (a) building a one story addition on the existing lot at 1224 Princess Street and (b) using the lot at 1218 Princess Street for its outdoor playground and additional nonclassroom preschool functions. In addition, the building addition requires certain site plan modifications to the yard requirements for building adjacent to residential uses, and that request is part of this application. See separate staff report (SUP 99-0092), which contains a detailed description of the Hopkins House program and the expansion plan.
3. Master plan amendment and rezoning of lot 1224 Princess Street from RB to RC, with proffer. This staff report addresses Hopkins House's request to change the master plan designation from RM to RH and the zoning map from RB to RC, with a proffer. Both the master plan amendment and the rezoning are limited to the existing Hopkins House location at 1224 Princess Street. The adjacent lot at 1218 Princess Street is not involved in this request. The rezoning is necessary in order to build the classroom addition because the amount of floor area proposed is greater than the amount permitted under the current RB zoning. The master plan amendment is necessary to make the zoning consistent with the master plan. The applicant has submitted a proffer limiting the use of the property under RC to RB uses, including its current uses and any that are approved by special use permit, and limiting development to that proposed in the current application.

The issue for the Planning Commission and Council in the rezoning and master plan amendment cases is whether a building larger than allowed by the current zoning should be facilitated by a

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rezoning and master plan amendment at this location.

Surrounding Uses

The subject property, 1224 Princess Street, is surrounded generally by residential uses consisting of single family attached and detached homes. The lots immediately adjacent to Hopkins House are each residential, including 1218 Princess Street which, although now vacant, has been used as a single family residence in the past. Immediately to the north of Hopkins House is the Alexandria Boys and Girls Club at the northeast corner of Princess Street and North Payne Street.

The Mount Jezreel Baptist Church is located at 317 North Payne Street, two properties south of Hopkins House. These three institutional uses form the center of a four block residential neighborhood bounded by Queen Street on the south, North Fayette Street on the east, Oronoco Street on the north, and West Street on the west. The closest commercial uses are a block south of Hopkins House, on the south side of Queen Street at North Payne Street. There is also a small commercial site on the northwest corner of Queen and North Fayette Streets.

Master Plan and Zoning History

The subject lot, as well as the land in the surrounding four block area, have been zoned RB since 1951, with one exception. For some limited period of time, after 1963 and until 1986, the corner lot, on which Hopkins House is now located, was zoned commercial. Although staff has been unable to find any record of the change from RB which is shown on the 1963 zoning map, that lot plus the remainder of the lots on the east side of North Payne Street, between Queen Street and Princess Street, were zoned C-3 until they were rezoned to RB in 1986 by Ordinance #3168.

The Braddock Road Small Area Plan adopted in 1992 designates the subject property as well as the surrounding area for RM (Residential Medium) land use and proposes continuation of the RB zoning. That designation is consistent with the 1982 Braddock Road Station Area Plan. The RM designation in the master plan documents reflects the dense townhouse development pattern typified in this area of the City and allowed under the RB zone. Although not used at all in this small area plan, the RH (Residential High) land use designation is used elsewhere in the City to denote densities consistent with the higher density RC/High density apartment zone. A point of clarification: the application requests a master plan change from RM to "RM-H," but that designation is not one used -- anywhere in the City -- by the City's master plan. Staff is therefore treating the request as one for the closest applicable term used, the RH designation.

FAR Issue

The existing Hopkins House building at 1224 Princess Street was constructed in 1973 pursuant to an approved site plan, at a time when the property was zoned C-3. The lot is 5124 square feet in area; the two story "L" shaped building contains some 5035 net square feet of floor area. The existing floor area ratio (FAR) is therefore .98. That amount of building was permitted under the C-3 zone, when the building was originally built; however, when the zoning was changed in 1986 to RB,

the building became out of compliance with the RB limit of .75 FAR. In 1992, the building officially became a “noncomplying structure” and, under section 12-102 of the zoning ordinance, is not permitted to expand, unless a rezoning is approved.

The proposed one story addition to the Hopkins House building at 1224 Princess Street contains 1169 square feet of floor area. When added to the existing building, it results in a total of 6204 square feet of floor area on the lot for a total of 1.21 FAR. That FAR far exceeds what is permitted under RB; but is within what is allowed under the RC zone’s 1.25 FAR. Therefore, without a rezoning, the proposed building addition at 1224 Princess Street cannot proceed.

1218 Princess Street

The proposed addition to the existing Hopkins House building will cover almost all of the land area on its lot. It will create additional floor area for classroom use and allow for additional classrooms in the existing building. As a consequence, however, part of the proposal is to use the residential lot next door at 1218 Princess Street for some program functions that are being displaced. The use of the residence is discussed in more detail in the staff report for SUP 99-0092, but generally, the applicant seeks permission to use the rear yard for its outdoor playground and the house itself for some of the non-classroom preschool functions. The applicant has made it clear to staff that, if its proposal to use 1218 Princess Street is not approved, it still wishes to proceed with the building addition and its rezoning application.

Proffer

The applicant has submitted a proffer in this case which limits the effect of the requested RC zoning. Specifically, the applicant is willing to be bound to (1) the existing use, which is a preschool and the administrative offices of Hopkins House; (2) if the use changes in the future, to RB uses only; and (3) in terms of building size, to the existing building plus the addition requested with this application.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed expansion, with the rezoning and master plan amendments necessary to achieve it, question the appropriateness of allowing a preschool to expand when it is located in the center of a residential area. Staff believes that analysis of the rezoning/master plan issue involves two questions: 1) Is the amount of building mass proposed compatible with the existing development in the neighborhood; and 2) Should the City change its land use and zoning maps to a zone foreign to the neighborhood to allow the building addition. Staff recommends in favor of the request because it believes it will have little impact on the neighborhood and because the proffer

limits the effect of the RC rezoning. The use and building will continue to offer valuable community services to the residential neighborhood around it.

From a land use perspective, the cluster of community oriented buildings at this corner, the Boys and Girls Club, the Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church to the south and Hopkins House, provide an institutional center for the surrounding four to six block residential enclave. Staff is not aware of any significant problems the neighborhood experiences with the existing Hopkins House establishment, although neighbors have recently voiced concerns to staff regarding parking issues and whether the preschool truly serves the adjacent neighborhood. The applications submitted by Hopkins House state, however, that the physical expansion will not result in any increase in the size of the program at Hopkins House, either in terms of children or staffing. Thus, parking issues should not be exacerbated. The purpose of the building expansion is to increase the size of the area used for classrooms, allowing three ground floor classrooms, each designed for a different age group. Thus, the expansion will enable the Hopkins House preschool to function consistent with current philosophy about the need for smaller classrooms and individualized classroom functions. Staff sees the expansion as the natural evolution of the City's having allowed a nonresidential use at this location originally.

The proposed building expansion is small, only 1200 square feet in size. Although the new building will cover much of the open area behind the existing L shaped building, it will have very little effect on the neighborhood. From the exterior of the North Payne Street and Princess Street frontages, the building addition will be imperceptible. The only properties which staff believes will be affected are the two houses that abut the existing Hopkins House now. The house to the east is owned by Hopkins House. Although Hopkins House seeks to expand its operation to use that property, the impact on the next adjacent house along Princess Street will really not be different from the effect the existing program now has on the house at 1218 Princess Street, assuming it was used for residential purposes, as it has been in the past.

For the one townhouse to the immediate south of the Hopkins House property, what is now open rear yard will be filled in with a building wall and exterior stairway. However, there are few openings in the house along its north wall, and it already experiences the impact of being located adjacent to a nonresidential use. Therefore, staff does not believe the incremental impact will be significant. In summary, staff finds that the building addition is so small that it will not be experienced beyond the immediate property and that the use of the adjacent site for preschool functions will only move, not increase, existing boundaries.

Although staff would ordinarily not be supportive of a change in master plan and zoning to a designation foreign to the neighborhood, staff finds the proffer to ameliorate its concern. The

RC zone allows apartments and some commercial use and those zoning uses would be wholly inappropriate at this location in the heart of a stable residential area. In this case, however, the applicant has submitted a proffer limiting itself only to RB permitted or special uses, plus the existing noncomplying use of the 1224 site for community center uses (administrative offices for wider Hopkins House program), and only to the building addition reflected in this application. The zoning to which the site will be changed is thus one consistent with the current use, and consistent with the land use notion of a community facility at the heart of the residential neighborhood.

Finally, staff needs to point out that the Boys and Girls Club across the street from Hopkins House is in a situation similar to Hopkins House, and could, if rezoned, also be physically expanded. The Hopkins House building addition will increase its building density at 1224 Princess Street to 1.21, which is in excess of the .75 FAR allowed in RB, but within the RC zone maximum of 1.25 FAR. The Boys and Girls Club across the street has an approximate FAR of 1.00, similar to the FAR for the existing Hopkins House building. The original Boys and Girls Club building was constructed in 1936, at a time when the land was zoned Industrial and there were no FAR limits. Like Hopkins House, the Boys and Girls Club building is a noncomplying structure, larger than permitted for buildings in the zone, and requiring a rezoning in order to expand. If the building addition is allowed for Hopkins House, then there may well be a similar request for a rezoning from the Boys and Girls Club, in order to build an addition there.

Staff recommends approval of the master plan and rezoning proposed because it believes that the small size of the building addition for which the rezoning is necessary will not impact the surrounding neighborhood. In order to build the addition, approval of this application as well the building addition part of the requested SUP for physical expansion (SUP #99-0092) are necessary. On the other hand, if that part of the requested SUP (#99-0092) allowing the building expansion is not approved, then there is no need for the rezoning and master plan amendment.

STAFF: Sheldon Lynn, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning; Barbara Ross, Deputy Director.

RESOLUTION NO. MPA-99-0012

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, an application for amendment to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan was filed with the Department of Planning and Zoning on July 22, 1999 for changes in the land use designations to the parcels at 1224 Princess Street from RM to RH; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Zoning has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on March 7, 2000 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendment is necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan section of the City; and
2. The proposed amendment is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment shows the Planning Commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan; and
4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Planning Commission may properly take notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

Change the designation of the parcel at 1224 Princess Street from RM to RH.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED the 7th day of March, 2000.

W. B. Hurd, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Sheldon Lynn, Secretary