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Department of Planning & Zoning**

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STAFF REPORT 2005-2006 AREA PLANS REVIEW

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S): Mt. Vernon

APR ITEM(S): 05-IV-15MV

NOMINATOR(S): Nahid Amiri

ACREAGE: 0.2 Acres

TAX MAP I.D. NUMBERS: 93-1((16))15

GENERAL LOCATION: East of Richmond Hwy., South of Schooley Dr.

PLANNING AREA(S): IV

District(s): Mount Vernon

Sector: Groveton (MV5)

Special Area(s): N/A

ADOPTED PLAN MAP: 2-3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac)

ADOPTED PLAN TEXT: Residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac.

For complete Plan text see:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/plantoc.htm#area4

PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT: Office use at an intensity up to .35 Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Nomination as Submitted
- Approve Staff Alternative
- Retain Adopted Plan

CONTEXT

General Location:

The subject property is located on the south side of Schooley Drive, approximately 170 feet east of Richmond Highway.

Planned and Existing Land Use and Zoning

Subject Property: The subject property (Tax Map 93-1 ((16) 15) is 0.2 acres and is planned for residential use at a density of 2-3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and is zoned R-3. A single-family home currently exists on the site.

Adjacent Area:

North: The subject property is bounded on the north by Schooley Drive. The property across the street is within the Beacon/Groveton Community Business Center, and is planned for retail and other uses. The property is zoned C-8 and is developed with a car wash facility.

West: The property to the west is within the Beacon/Groveton Community Business Center, and is planned for retail and other uses. The property is zoned C-8 and is developed with a small residential structure that houses a hair salon business. Adjacent to that are commercial buildings along Richmond Highway.

South and East: Properties south and east of the subject property are planned for residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac and are zoned R-3. The property abutting the property to the south is vacant. The property adjacent to the east is developed with a single family home.

PLANNING HISTORY

No Comprehensive Plan changes were proposed for this area since 1997.

ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, Area IV, 2003 Edition, Mount Vernon Planning District as amended through 4-25-2005; MV5 – Groveton Community Planning Sector, Recommendations, Land Use, Outside of Richmond Highway Corridor, Recommendation #2, page 136:

“2. Development is planned to conform with the recommendations cited in the Hybla Valley Farms, Gum Springs, Bucknell Heights, Calvert Park and Memorial Heights Community Improvement Plans and the Gum Springs Conservation and Redevelopment Plans as adopted by the Board of Supervisors. [Not shown.]”

The property is located within the Memorial Heights Community Improvement Area. Established by the Board in 1985, the Community Improvement Plan recommended that the neighborhood be protected from commercial encroachment from Richmond Highway. The area to the west is zoned C-8 and has a commercial business in a former residential building, which serves as a transition to the Memorial Heights neighborhood of residential uses to the east. Within the Memorial Heights neighborhood, the parcels along Schooley Drive are planned for residential use at a density of 2-3 du/ac.

Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, Policy Plan, 2003 Edition, Land Use as amended through 11-15-2004; Objective 8, pages 5-6:

“Objective 8: Fairfax County should encourage a land use pattern that protects, enhances and/or maintains stability in established residential neighborhoods.

Policy a. Protect and enhance existing neighborhoods by ensuring that infill development is of compatible use, and density/intensity, and that adverse impacts on public facility and transportation systems, the environment and the surrounding community will not occur.

Policy b. Discourage commercial development within residential communities unless the commercial uses are of a local serving nature and the intensity and scale is compatible with surrounding residential uses.”

The adopted Comprehensive Plan Map shows this area planned for residential use at 2-3 du/ac.

NOMINATED PLAN AMENDMENT

The nomination requests that the planned use be changed from low density residential use at 2-3 du/ac to office use up to .30 FAR on a 0.2 acre parcel. This would increase the development potential from one house to a commercial structure of approximately 2,600 square feet.

ANALYSIS

Commercial Encroachment: Planning objectives for the Mount Vernon Planning District recommend limiting commercial encroachment into stable residential neighborhoods and establishing well-defined edges between commercial and residential uses. The Plan states that development should conform to the recommendations in the Memorial Heights Community Improvement Plan. One of the goals of the Improvement Plan is “To preserve the existing residential character and density of Memorial Heights.” Allowing commercial uses to extend further into the neighborhood from Richmond Highway would be contrary to this goal. The Policy Plan clearly states that existing neighborhoods should be protected and enhanced “by ensuring that infill development is of compatible use, and density/intensity, and that adverse impacts on public facility and transportation systems, the environment and the surrounding community will not occur.” At an intensity of .35 FAR, the subject property could have a structure of approximately 2,600 square feet. This size would be out of character with the surrounding residential structures in the neighborhood which are generally between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet.

Transportation: Although the proposed Plan change on the subject property would result in a negligible increase in trip generation over the current Plan, the characteristics of these trips and the parking needed to support the office use would be quite different than under the current Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff believes that commercial uses should not be expanded into the stable Memorial Heights neighborhood. It would be detrimental to set a precedent for commercial encroachment without any

apparent community benefits. The existing Plan for the area effectively creates a well-defined edge between commercial and residential uses. Therefore, Staff recommends retaining the current Plan.