

Planning Commission Meeting  
November 1, 2012  
Verbatim Excerpt

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER PLANS PER PROFFER  
#9 OF RZ 2007-LE-007

During Commission Matters

Chairman Murphy: Mr. Migliaccio.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the last Planning Commission meeting, I mentioned that I was going to bring up an administrative item regarding the Springfield Town Center. I believe everyone received these items in their packet a few weeks ago and we have the applicant somewhere – and here he comes now – a representative from the applicant and County staff if there are any questions from the Planning Commission.

Chairman Murphy: All right. Are there any questions?

Commissioner Lawrence: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Murphy: Mr. Lawrence.

Commissioner Lawrence: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have one question and a suggestion. This is for staff or the applicant, whoever comes first. I notice in the text that we're told that one of the things about this set of drawings – and I much appreciated having them - that gave them a good look at what they're in for is that a lot of what you see here isn't there. That is, the tenants are going to decide what it looks like. But there is – they're going to work to a set of design standards. And I would just like to have a little bit of reassurance that those standards are similar or have some sort of criteria that are like the ones we have in Tysons or Merrifield or those kinds of places where you talk about what percent of glazing do you have and how transparent should things be at the street level in order to get the kind of animation you want. I think that is true. Is it true?

Mark Looney, Esquire, Cooley LLP: Mr. Lawrence, I'm Mark Looney on behalf of –

Chairman Murphy: Wait, hold on. That mic is not on, Mark. I'm not sure what is going on. Can we have the mic on at the podium please?

Mr. Looney: Is that better?

Chairman Murphy: No. It's even worse.

Mr. Looney: Is it on now? There we go.

Chairman Murphy: Yes, go.

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Mr. Looney: Commissioner Lawrence, I'm Mark Looney with Cooley on behalf of the applicant. In response to your question, the applicant has developed – or let me back up and say that what you have before you, I'll characterize, is the frame to the picture and the actual picture or painting will then be filled in – inside of this frame. Part of what we're doing with this is responding to proffer obligations to set forth some of – kind of the retail store front component to show materials really for what goes on around it because there's a larger structure behind the retail store fronts that are the original mall property itself. The applicant and the developer does have design standards for how individual retailers are expected to paint the picture that fits within the frames that we're showing here tonight. For example, they are expecting to – every retailer to have a minimum transparency of somewhere between 60 and 80 percent of the window space. So that instead of a drug store, let's say, filling up the window space with merchandise where walkers and passers-by can't see inside the facility, they're going to have to provide at least 60 to 80 percent transparency depending on the type of use that is located therein. They also will allow the retailers to have some flexibility to address their own unique branding requirements that – you know, will need to be addressed as part of the leasing process. But we anticipate at this point that most of these store fronts that we're looking at tonight are going to be restaurant spaces and so they will want to have that transparency and that sort of ground floor uniqueness that I think you're looking for.

Commissioner Lawrence: Thank you very much, Mr. Looney. That's exactly what I was looking for. And if I may, let me offer my small suggestion. I note that you have several areas in which you have large blank walls and you have to because of the nature of what you are doing. For example, there is a place where there's a walk-over or a fly-over bridge that goes through a parking deck into an entrance near where the theater is. I suggest that as the center develops – and this is not something that has to be done tomorrow afternoon – that you consider making some arrangements with local art groups in Lorton and putting on display on those walls, in or on a rotation basis, pieces of art that are sustainable outside. And that will give people a real experience walking back and forth on that bridge or in any other place where there's a large area of blank walls. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Murphy: Thank you. Anyone else? Yes, Mr. Flanagan.

Commissioner Flanagan: Yes, just one observation. From looking at the drawings, it appears to me that the exterior is going to be much more helpful to strangers. One of the dictums of "Architecture School 101" is that you never puzzle a stranger with how to get into a building. That's the reason why most of our buildings have rather dramatic entrances because they tell everybody that's coming to a building, "Here's how you get in." Are you going to have on each of these elevations a rather dramatic entrance so that there's no – in the past, there has been a lot of puzzlement whether you're getting into Entrance 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. It kind of was a numbers game previously. So is that numbers game going to go?

Mr. Looney: It will be gone. One of the things to keep in mind is that Springfield Mall developed over time in pieces. And there were, I'll say, bolt-on pieces added to bolt-on pieces that resulted in the layout and the entrances that you have today. A part of what the applicant is doing with the

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renovation project that's underway now is to consolidate the number of entrances – consolidate some of the corridors in a way that makes more sense for people trying to penetrate the property from the outside as well as to navigate your way once you get inside the property. And there will be better demarcation of where entrance locations are as part of the renovation project and then going on into the future.

Commissioner Flanagan: Are the theaters going to be consolidated in one area?

Mr. Looney: Yes sir, out toward the Macy's garage side of the property.

Commissioner Flanagan: All right. So that parking on that side of the building will have to be really, really intense I would think.

Mr. Looney: Well it's actually better balancing the parking on the site from what is there today. Right now, most of the parking demand is along the Loisdale Road frontage.

Commissioner Flanagan: Right.

Mr. Looney: Because that's where the bulk of the uses are and the access points to those uses. By placing the food court on one side of the property – the movie theater is on another side of the property over by the Macy's garage – it actually takes advantage of the very underutilized parking structure adjacent to Macy's in a way that the present layout doesn't.

Commissioner Flanagan: Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Okay, I just had my two cents. In the neighboring district, I'm just glad to see that Springfield Mall is on track. I think it's a dramatic change to what is down there revitalization-wise. And we look forward to all the new construction that's going to go on down there to make it that town center flavor. I think you did a great job. Mr. Migliaccio.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we have you here, Mr. Looney, can you just do a quick 30-second recap of what's going on at the mall currently? Because we get quite a few questions on that.

Mr. Looney: Sure.

Commissioner Migliaccio: I know it's not about the elevations, but –

Chairman Murphy: He's never done a 30-second presentation in his entire life.

Commissioner Migliaccio: All right, well 30 seconds equals three minutes.

Chairman Murphy: Okay. Go ahead.

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Mr. Looney: I can do 30 seconds.

Chairman Murphy: Okay.

Mr. Looney: Interior demolition is underway presently. You walk inside the mall, the only things you're going to see are the anchors and not the interior stores. Exterior demolition is likely to start along the Loisdale Road side of the property a little before or a little after Thanksgiving, at which point reconstruction will then begin on the new buildings and structures probably in the first quarter, the beginning of second quarter 2013. And you're talking about 18 to 24 months of construction work after that before the mall fully reopens. The plan is to be up and running by Christmas two years from now if we can do it.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Okay, thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Thank you very much.

Mr. Looney: Thank you.

Chairman Murphy: Please.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I have a motion to make regarding this administrative item. I MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION FIND THAT THE APPLICANT FOR RZ 2007-LE-007 HAS SATISFIED PROFFER NUMBER 9.

Commissioners Flanagan and Lawrence: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Flanagan. Is there a discussion of the motion? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Litzenberger: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Murphy: Yes.

Commissioner Litzenberger: I was not present for the briefing.

Chairman Murphy: Okay, Mr. Litzenberger abstains. Not present for the briefing. Did we have a briefing?

Commissioner Hall: No.

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Chairman Murphy: No, we didn't have a briefing.

Commissioner Migliaccio: Unless you just stepped out.

Chairman Murphy: Unless you weren't present anyhow.

Commissioner Litzenberger: This was –

Chairman Murphy: This was the briefing.

Commissioner Hall: This was it.

Commissioner Litzenberger: This was the briefing. In that case I vote in the affirmative.

Chairman Murphy: Okay. We've changed that.

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(The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Hart and Sargeant absent from the meeting.)

JLC