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Planning

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August 27, 2010

Via Hand Delivery

Jay Fisette  
Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
Suite 300  
2100 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Requests to Advertise a General Land Use Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment  
Premises: 2401 Wilson Boulevard (RPC #15-060-001, and -002)  
Applicant: 2401 Wilson, LLC

Dear Chairman Fisette:

On behalf of the Applicant, the following is submitted as a request for the Arlington County Board to advertise a General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment from "Service Commercial" to "High Medium Residential Mixed Use" for the above-referenced property. The Applicant also requests advertisement of an amendment to Section 16A of the Zoning Ordinance to formally codify an administrative ruling to permit hotel in the "R-C" District.

In the way of background, in March 2009, the Applicant submitted a GLUP Amendment from "Service Commercial" and "Low" Residential to "Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel" for the entirety to the properties identified as RPC #15-060-001, -002, -007, -008, and -009 from Wilson Boulevard to 16<sup>th</sup> Street North. The associated site plan application that was submitted concurrently included a hotel located on the southern portion of the site along Wilson Boulevard and a park located on the northern portion of the site along 16<sup>th</sup> Street North. After a public hearing in October 2009, the request to advertise the GLUP Amendment was denied. The concern with this request was not the proposed use or the organization or location of density on the southern portion of the site along Wilson Boulevard. The main concern was amending the "Low" Residential GLUP designation and single family zoning along the northern portion of the site. There was also a question of whether open space was the appropriate transition or whether another type of transition or buffer should occupy the northern portion of the site. Although the request was ultimately denied by the County Board, the Planning Commission did have a split-vote on this matter as many liked the use on the site but were not comfortable with the change in the single family GLUP.

Since that time, the Applicant has been diligently working with staff and the community to develop an alternative that honors the County Board's and community's desire to preserve the

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single-family residential designation on the parcels on the north side of the property. The Applicant has developed a plan that necessitates a GLUP Amendment only for the parcels (currently zoned C-2) on the southern portion of the property and maintaining all of the parcels (currently zoned R-6) on the northern portion of the site.

Specifically, the Applicant is proposing a LEED Gold certified hotel along Wilson Boulevard containing approximately 143 rooms and associated parking. The hotel is proposed at seven stories along Wilson Boulevard, tapering to six stories and then to five stories as it moves north along N. Adams Street. This height of the hotel is comparable to the surrounding buildings to the east and west. This application will also maintain all of the "Low" Residential/"R-6" zoned land along 16<sup>th</sup> Street North. This Request to Advertise reflects this revised plan.

In addition to the site plan request for the hotel, the Applicant intends to file an application for a Unified Residential Development (URD) for four single family homes on the northern portion of the site along 16<sup>th</sup> Street North. The previous application only included three of the four residential lots due to a life estate on the fourth lot. As the life estate ended, the fourth lot is now included in the application, completing the block and providing a continuous buffer from N. Adams Street to the McLean Apartments to the west. The URD will also allow County and community input into the design of the homes and other site configuration and design decisions. During meetings with residents of Lyon Village, they indicated that they preferred homes at the scale approximately equal to the McLean Apartments to the west as opposed to an open space transition. The residents felt that the homes would provide a better buffer to the higher density use as well as be an aesthetic improvement over the existing homes on that portion of the property.

The Applicant has carefully considered numerous design criteria for this site, including the designation, zoning and scale of adjacent properties. Specifically, the property to the east (former Demar site) is also designated "High Medium Residential Mixed Use." The designation on that property actually extends farther to the north than proposed for this site and includes the entire depth of that block north to the Key School. The proposed designation only extends approximately half of the depth of the block and, in turn, is only half the depth of the Demar site's designation. The Applicant believes that this designation is appropriate for this site and would create a project that is of compatible scale and design and consistent with the long-term development goals for this area. In addition, the "High Medium Residential Mixed Use" and associated "R-C" zoning for half of this block would create a transition to the west from the full block designation at the Demar site to this proposed half-block designation to the half-block "C-O-2.5" zoning to the west at the AUSA site. Therefore, the Applicant is requesting to amend the GLUP designation for the parcels identified as RPC #15-060-001 and -002 from "Service Commercial" to "High Medium Residential Mixed Use."

In addition, based upon a desire expressed by the community, the Applicant is requesting that a note be added to the GLUP to address the height on the "High Medium Residential Mixed Use" portion of the property that would read as follows:

Within the area shown as "High Medium Residential Mixed Use," building heights shall be limited to a maximum of 75 feet, measured from average site elevation to the surface of the main roof of the building, stepping down to less than 60 feet at the northern end of the building adjacent to residential neighborhoods for the block west of N. Adams Street.

Associated with this request, the Applicant also requests advertisement of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Section 16A "R-C" Apartment Dwelling and Commercial Districts. On December 13, 2006, administrative confirmation was received from the Zoning Administrator that the County Board could modify the use to hotel in approving a site plan in the "R-C" District. However, this ruling has never been formally codified in the Zoning Ordinance. As such, the Applicant requests advertisement of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to Section 16A.B.1 to include hotel as a permitted use in the "R-C" District at the same density as residential uses (3.24 FAR), as follows:

"By site plan approval: Apartment and hotel projects not to exceed a maximum floor area ratio of 3.24 to 1."

This amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, in conjunction with the proposed GLUP amendment and schematic hotel plan is consistent with the intent of the "R-C" District, which is stated in the preface to Section 16A.

"The purpose of the 'R-C' District classification is to encourage high-medium density residential development while also providing for a mixed use transition area between high density office development and lower density residential uses. This district is designed for use in the vicinity of the Metro-rail stations and, to be eligible for this classification, a site or the major portion of a site, shall (1) be within a one-quarter (1/4) mile radius of a Metro-rail station entrance and (2) be located within an area designated "high medium residential" or other compatible designations on the general land use plan. Determination as to the actual types and densities of uses to be allowed will be based on the characteristics of individual sites and on the need for community facilities, open space and landscaped areas, circulation and utilities."

The proposed amendment to the Ordinance and the proposed GLUP amendment for the hotel are consistent with the intent of the district as stated in the preface above. The mixed-use nature of the site plan application, which will follow this request, with a hotel with ground floor activation will provide a transition from higher density office areas within the Courthouse Metro Station Area, such as the Navy League Building and Courthouse Plaza, to the low density single family homes to the north within Lyon Village. The site with the proposed hotel lies within 500 feet of the Metro Station entrance and, in combination with the proposed URD on the northern portion of the site, will provide the effective and desired transition to the community.

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Should these advertisement requests be granted by the County, the Applicant is prepared to submit associated requests for rezoning (including waiver of minimum lot area) and site plan for a hotel and limited below-grade parking and the URD application for the four single family homes described above. The hotel is significantly smaller than the previously submitted project (reduced from 174 units to 143 units) but maintains the character and scale of development that is appropriate for this site and provides an appropriate transition with the proposed single family homes.

If you have any questions regarding these requests or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As always, we appreciate your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

WALSH, COLUCCI, LUBELEY, EMRICH & WALSH, P.C.

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