



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of January 26, 2008

DATE: January 17, 2008

SUBJECT: U-3191-07-1 USE PERMIT for a group home for women and their children at 4624 S. 9th St. (RPC #23-037-017)

Applicant:

Joy Myers, Executive Director
Borromeo Housing, Inc.,
3304 Washington Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22201

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request for a dormitory use, subject to the conditions of the staff report, with a County Board review in one (1) year (January 2009).

ISSUES: This is a request for a new use permit for a home for young mothers and their babies. No specific issues have been raised regarding the subject property although neighbors have raised concerns regarding other private residences in this neighborhood.

SUMMARY: The proposed use permit is a dormitory use operated by the Borromeo Housing program for up to four (4) young mothers and their children. The program provides emotional, educational, and financial support to teen mothers to encourage them to continue their education while balancing the needs of their children. There are neither land use nor zoning issues associated with the proposed use permit. The proposed conditions mitigate any potential impacts of the dormitory use. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the request for a dormitory use, subject to the conditions of the staff report, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (January 2009).

BACKGROUND: Elizabeth House is a transitional housing program for teen mothers and babies sponsored by Borromeo Housing, Inc. Borromeo Housing is an Arlington-based non-profit organization founded by parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in 1988. This community service agency's mission is to operate the Elizabeth House to provide housing and address the needs of teen mothers. In 2001, Borromeo Housing's transitional housing program was designated a "Second Chance Home Program" as provided under welfare reform legislation in 1996. The Borromeo Housing program is currently applying for Community Development Block Grant funds through Arlington County for the acquisition of this property, which is addressed in a separate report.

County Manager: _____

Staff: Rasheda DuPree McKinney, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4863

Site: The proposed site is a 6,171 square foot parcel with a two-story single-family masonry dwelling. The dwelling, constructed in 1961, is comprised of 1,300 square feet. The lot has a fenced rear yard and a 2-3 car driveway on the eastern portion of the lot. The site is bound by single family dwellings to the south, east, and west, and the Columbia Park Garden Apartments to the north.

Zoning: The subject property is zoned “R-6”, One-Family Dwelling Districts.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “Low” Residential 1-10 units per acre.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Barcroft School and Civic League boundary. The civic league and residents have expressed concerns about property maintenance, commercial vehicle parking, and concerns about the neighborhood. The Code Enforcement Office is following up on code complaints on several properties on South 9th Street and has been working with property owners to bring these sites into compliance. The Arlington Police Department’s Third District has taken enforcement action to reduce commercial vehicle parking and will continue to monitor parking and public safety issues in this neighborhood.

DISCUSSION: The proposed dormitory will provide housing for up to three (3) homeless, pregnant teenage mothers and their babies. An on-site resident advisor would provide 24-hour supervision. The dwelling would house up to eight (8) people total, including the resident advisor, mothers and their babies. Enrollment in Arlington’s teen parent high school program or NOVA is required for all residents. Childcare is provided off-site daily while the mothers attend classes. Staff would report to the house to provide services such as counseling and education workshops on-site for the residents up to three (3) times per week and by appointment. The program will enforce an 8 p.m. curfew on weeknights and 11 p.m. curfew on Saturdays. Male visitors are prohibited, excluding staff, and female visitors are allowed by staff approval. The resident advisor would be the only resident to own a vehicle on-site, and transportation would be provided for the mothers and children daily.

If the use permit is granted, housing would be provided at the subject property for each mother and child for up to two (2) years. After this period, each mother and child would be transitioned to independent living in an off-site apartment. The program would subsidize the mother’s rental and other living expenses and would require weekly meetings with program staff. Occasionally, the mothers may be invited back to attend group activities at the main residence, but their attendance would not be required.

CONCLUSION: The Borromeo program has operated for 20 years and has successfully provided guidance to increase school attendance and employment and decrease homelessness and incidences of repeated teen pregnancy among the young mothers in their program. The

proposed dormitory use meets the County goals of promoting a diverse and inclusive urban community. The program provides skills and counseling to young mothers to promote their independence and help ensure that they continue their lives as successful members of the community. The proposed home for homeless teen mothers and their children would provide an affordable housing option which, with the conditions proposed below, would be well integrated into an established single-family community. The use presents no land use or zoning issues. The applicant will continue to work with the civic association and will provide a liaison to the association to respond to neighborhood questions or concerns. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit request for the proposed dormitory use subject to the conditions of the staff report, with a County Board review in one (1) year (January 2009):

1. The dwelling shall meet the requirements of the Community Code Enforcement Office, the Environmental Health Bureau, and the Fire Department, including securing the required assembly permit as specified by the Fire Marshal's Office.
2. The applicant agrees to identify a person who shall serve as liaison between the subject use and the neighborhood. The liaison shall be empowered to address any concerns identified as emanating from the dormitory. The name and telephone number of the liaison shall be shared with the Zoning Administrator, the nearby residents, the Barcroft Civic Association, and any interested residents who request the information, prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for a dormitory use.
3. The applicant agrees to comply with all state and local laws and regulations not expressly modified by the County Board's action in this use permit and shall obtain all necessary permits for any work on or improvements to this property. The applicant agrees to endeavor to ensure that all residents in the dormitory shall abide by all state and local laws.
4. The applicant agrees to limit the residential occupancy of the dormitory to eight (8) persons, including staff, at any given time.
5. The applicant agrees to limit the number of vehicles on the site to no more than three (3) at any given time.
6. The applicant agrees that the property, including all physical structures and landscaping, shall be maintained in good condition and must be maintained free of debris at all times.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS: There have been no previous County Board actions on this site.