



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 17, 2008**

DATE: May 2, 2008

SUBJECT: Request to Advertise “On the County Board’s Own Motion” public hearings on the Special Exception Use Permit Form Based Code application for the proposed Arlington Mill Community Center at 4975 Columbia Pike (RPC #22-001-004).

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached resolution to advertise public hearings by the Planning Commission on June 2, 2008, and the County Board on June 17, 2008, on the Special Exception Use Permit Form Based Code application for the proposed Arlington Mill Community Center at 4975 Columbia Pike (RPC #22-001-004).

ISSUE: An abbreviated review period is needed to allow technical documents, including development plans, to be finalized after the normal filing deadline of April 18, 2008. Final plans will be submitted by May 19, 2008 to commence the final review phase for this project and in order for the project to commence construction later this year. No other major issues have been raised with this action.

SUMMARY: This is a request for the County Board to authorize “On its Own Motion,” advertisement of public hearings by the Planning Commission on June 2, 2008 and the County Board on June 17, 2008 for consideration of a Special Exception Use Permit for the Arlington Mill Community Center Form Based Code project in a timeframe that is less than the typical 55-day review period. Staff and the developer have been working diligently to bring this project forward for County Board consideration at its June 17, 2008 meeting. However, additional time was needed to address community comments, adjust the proposal to address budget constraints, and to finalize a set of FBC-compliant plans, which precluded this use permit application from being submitted by the standard filing deadline of April 18, 2008. Therefore, it is essential that the County Board authorize the advertisement of public hearings on the proposed FBC use permit application “On its Own Motion” to commence the formal review period. The documents are in the final production phase and will be completed and submitted to the County by May 19, 2008.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Jennifer Smith, CPHD, Planning

PLA-4969

Staff recommends that the mixed-use project with community center, residential and retail uses be considered at the June 17, 2008 County Board meeting in order for the developer to submit plans for permit review and approval as soon as possible so that construction may commence later this year. Further delays could result in higher development costs and could impact the overall construction timing. This project has undergone a significant community review process to date including a review of the Concept Plan by advisory commissions and the County Board in January 2008. The shortened timeframe will not reduce the remaining community process, however. Staff and the developer will participate in a community meeting, anticipated during the week of May 19, 2008, and advisory commission meetings as described in this staff report. If the County Board approves the advertisement of public hearings on the consideration of the Use Permit for its June 17, 2008 meeting, staff anticipates that several other associated items would come to the County Board for review and consideration at that same meeting including the proposed master plan for the plaza and proposed vacations and encroachments.

BACKGROUND: In March 2002, the *Columbia Pike Initiative-A Revitalization Plan* was adopted by the County Board. A major recommendation of the plan was to develop a new regulatory zoning tool and review process to evaluate redevelopment proposals in the Columbia Pike corridor, which became the Columbia Pike Form Based Code. In February 2003, the County Board adopted the FBC, which applies to a special revitalization district encompassing four development nodes along the Columbia Pike corridor. Under the FBC, two types of approval processes are permitted once a complete and compliant FBC application has been accepted by the County: 1) a 30-day Administrative approval process for sites 40,000 square feet in size or less; and 2) a 55-day Special Exception Use Permit review process for sites larger than 40,000 square feet or, for projects no matter the size, that seek modifications of FBC regulations as permitted by the FBC. Approval for the Special Exception Use Permit option is determined by the County Board. The County Board may advertise public hearings “On its Own Motion” in a timeframe less than the otherwise required 55-day timeframe. For public projects, the review process is extended and an extensive community review process is undertaken to determine the preferred concept and final development proposal prior to the formal approval process. This community review process has been utilized for the Arlington Mill Community Center process.

General Land Use Plan and FBC amendments were approved by the County Board related to the Arlington Mill Community Center site in December, 2007, January, 2008, and April, 2008 to fully implement the FBC tool for this project.

DISCUSSION: As part of the initiative to prepare a joint public/private redevelopment proposal for rebuilding the Arlington Mill Community Center, staff has been working through a process with the community that is different from a typical FBC project. The ongoing process seeks to ensure that a development project on County property, utilizing public funds, meets County policies and community expectations. Numerous steering committee, broad community, and plan review committee (similar to Site Plan Review Committee) meetings have been held since September 2007. In addition, advisory commissions (Planning, Transportation, Park & Recreation, Environment & Energy Conservation, and Housing) and the County Board reviewed the Concept Plan on January 29, 2008 in order for the project to be submitted to the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) for consideration of its 9% low-income housing tax

credits. The preliminary VHDA ranking indicates positive approval of the submitted tax credit application in order to achieve a rich contribution of affordable housing units with this proposal.

The project, located at 4975 Columbia Pike (see attachment), includes the reconstruction of the Arlington Mill Community Center property as a new mixed-use development that includes community center uses, a new gymnasium, retail, and new housing including a portion of affordable housing units. These uses would be contained in two structures: one building is generally five-stories above the average site grade and one plaza-level partially below grade with a mix of uses including the community center, retail, and residential (33 units) uses and the other 5-story structure contains the remaining housing units (159 units). A new public plaza will also be constructed as part of the project, as specified by the FBC.

In light of the extensive community process to date and in order for the project to commence construction as soon as possible, staff recommends that the County Board consider the Special Exception Use Permit FBC application at its meeting on June 17, 2008 meeting. However, in order to address the community comments and budget constraints, additional time was needed to prepare the necessary technical documents, including development plans, which precluded them from being ready and available by the standard filing deadline of April 18, 2008. Therefore, it is essential that the County Board authorize the advertisement of public hearings on the project “On its Own Motion” to commence the formal review period.

Staff and the applicant will be presenting the project at the following meetings as part of the final review process for this project:

- Anticipated during the week of May 19, 2008 – Community Meeting on FBC Compliance (to be scheduled)
- May 27, 2008 – Park & Recreation Commission meeting
- June 2, 2008 – Planning Commission meeting
- June 5, 2008 – Transportation Commission meeting
- June 17, 2008 – County Board meeting

CONCLUSION: Staff recommends that the County Board authorize “On its Own Motion” advertisement of public hearings by the Planning Commission on June 2, 2008, and the County Board on June 17, 2008, on the Special Exception Use Permit FBC application for the Arlington Mill Community Center project in order for the project to remain on schedule and commence construction later this year.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE ADVERTISEMENT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE COUNTY BOARD'S OWN MOTION ON THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE PERMIT FORM BASED CODE APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ARLINGTON MILL COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT AT THE JUNE 2, 2008 PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE JUNE 17, 2008 COUNTY BOARD MEETINGS.

The County Board of Arlington County hereby authorizes advertisement of public hearings at the June 2, 2008 Planning Commission and the June 17, 2008 County Board meetings on the Special Exception Use Permit Form Based Code application for the proposed Arlington Mill Community Center at 4975 Columbia Pike (RPC #22-001-004).