



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

August 5, 2010

REQUEST: City Council Bill #10-0530/Zoning – Conditional Use Community Correction Center – 4900 East Monument Street

RECOMMENDATION: Amend and approve: Amend the bill, as appropriate, to include the statement that Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc. are responsible for the operation and control of the facility.

STAFF: Ken Hranicky

PETITIONER(S): Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc., Represented by Dusky Holman

OWNER: Durrett-Sheppard Steel Co. Inc.

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The parcel is ±2.06 acres of land located along the northern edge of 4900 block of East Monument Street. The site is currently improved with a 56,000 square foot building with a parking lot. The site is zoned M-3.

General Area: This site is located in the Orangeville neighborhood, which is represented by a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The immediate area around the site is mainly heavy industrial. Along the northeast boarder of the site is a CSX rail line.

HISTORY

No previous Planning Commission actions for this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's LIVE section, Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents.

ANALYSIS

Project Summary: This site will be used by Volunteers of America Chesapeake for a Community Corrections Center. The existing structure will be retained and rehabbed. The intent is to provide housing, counseling, and related services on a referral basis to transition inmates back into society following their release from prison. This land use will require a conditional use by an Ordinance from the Mayor and City Council. The program has been in existence since 1981 at the current location at 4601 East Monument Street with 112 beds capacity. Upon relocation to this site, the capacity will increase to approximately 135-145 beds. This relocation will also allow supporting office uses to be on-site.

The Volunteers of America Chesapeake's Residential Re-Entry Center (RRC) accepts referrals from federal correctional institutions and courts as well as from the Federal Probation and Pretrial Services Department. While in the program, each resident is required to be employed (unless restricted by the courts) and must participate in support services including educational programming, mental health services, financial counseling, GED preparation, individual and group counseling, job search and placement, substance abuse counseling, and referral to follow-up community services. Family integration is also fostered in the program through individual family counseling or incorporating the residents' family. This program is operated under a ten year contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The current program operates pursuant to a conditional use ordinance and is a 106-bed program, which assists men and women in making a successful transition from prison back into the Baltimore community through pre-release and work-release programs. The RRC began in the 1980's and moved to its current location in February 1988. The current location, a refurbished motel, is leased from the City of Baltimore. While the current facility has served the needs of RRC residents for many years, it has become outdated and has led Volunteers of America Chesapeake to seek a new state-of-the-art facility located just a few blocks away from the current home of the RRC. The new facility, located at 4900 East Monument Street, will better allow Volunteers of America Chesapeake to transform lives by offering additional programs, and it will also allow VOAC to provide a more aesthetically pleasing and secure option for their neighbors. The proposed new facility will increase the space available for programs that assist residents in making a successful transition to society. Additionally, the purpose-built design will offer a higher level of security for the residents and community. This new facility will allow this well-established program to continue to bridge the gap between the prison and society, providing a means for former inmates to become productive members of the community

COMMENTS:

Environmental/Landscaping:

- Five new trees are proposed. While this site does not trigger formal Forest Conservation requirements, we would encourage more trees to improve the City's tree canopy. Any additional shading of the parking lot will also help reduce urban heat island effects. There are two triangles in the parking lot, consider making them tree areas with amended soil and planted with large shade trees.
- The limit of disturbance will be kept less than 5,000 sqft and will not trigger stormwater management.

Parking/Traffic:

- There will be about 45 employees (some part-time) and there are visitation hours in the evenings for residents. At present, about six employees drive to work, and two company vehicles are kept on-site.
- There will be a roll-up door that will provide access to the building for deliveries and to provide access for trash pick-up.
- 56 total parking spaces are shown, each at 10' by 18' which is acceptable. Two of the parking spaces are handicapped accessible, and are connected to the building by a marked path.
- The applicant has been directed to contact the Department of Transportation for a determination whether or not a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) will be required.

Site Plan Review Committee: This project was reviewed by the SPRC on June 2, 2010. and the plans were finally approved on August 2, 2010.

Required Findings:

1. **The establishment, location, construction, maintenance, and operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, security, general welfare or morals:** The proposed community correction center is to replace an existing center that is located in the near vicinity. The new facility will have better accountability of its residents, provide more services on-site and generally promote the public health, security, and general welfare of the community.
2. **The use is not in any way precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan:** The proposed conditional use is not precluded by any other law.
3. **The authorization is not otherwise in any way contrary to the public interest:** The proposed conditional use is to rehabilitate and afford a place for transition from the penal system to the general public. This is not contrary to the public interests.
4. **The authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this article:** The proposed conditional use has been reviewed by staff and the local community is aware and supportive of this action. The location of the use is not detrimental to neighboring land uses.
5. **All bills introduced to approve a conditional use for a community correction center must be accompanied by a statement that clearly identifies all state or municipal authorities, private contractors or other persons responsible for the operation and control of the facility:** The Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc. are the persons responsible for the operation and control of the facility. CCB# 10-0530 needs to be amended to meet this requirement.

Staff notified the Orangeville Improvement Association of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director