



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

October 17, 2013

REQUEST: Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval/Harbor Point PUD – Exelon, Central Plaza, Parking, and Phase 1 Roads

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Natasha Becker

OWNER: Harbor Point Development LLC

PETITIONER: Same

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: To date, the Harbor Point PUD is only improved by the Thames Street Wharf office building at the western end of Thames Street and a facility maintenance building to the north. The rest of the site contains surface parking and temporary promenade. The site is divided by on-cap and off-cap portions that reflect the environmental clean-up that occurred for many years previous to any development.

General Area: The Harbor Point PUD is located on the western peninsula of the Fells Point community. Across Caroline Street to the east of the site is the heart of the Fells Point Historic District, to the north is the Living Classrooms Foundation main campus and beyond is the Harbor East development area. The Ferndale Fence property and The Living Classroom Foundation's Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park are located immediately to the southeast.

HISTORY

- Ordinance #93-260, approved August 1993, established the Allied and related sites Planned Unit Development.
- Ordinance #04-0682, approved May 10, 2004, repealed the original Allied PUD and replaced it with the Harbor Point PUD
- On May 18, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for the Thames Street Wharf Building and Street Closings for Dock, Willis, Block and Philpot Streets within the Harbor Point PUD
- Ordinance #07-429, approved May 17, 2007, implemented the rezoning for Historic Southeast Baltimore Ordinance #07-555, approved November 26, 2007, repealed the old URP, and established Fells Point as a Baltimore City Local Historic District
- Ordinance #07-575, approved November 27, 2007, established the Fells Point Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan

- Ordinance #07- 625, approved December 3, 2007 amended the Development Plan of the Harbor Point PUD
- On March 6, 2008, the Planning Commission approved the Final Design for 803 South Caroline Street – The Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #08-16, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on May 27, 2008, was Amendment #2 to the PUD and expanded the boundaries to include 803 South Caroline Street – The Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #09-153, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on April 7, 2009 authorized the sale of the property known as 950 South Caroline Street
- On February 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval for Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf
- On October 21, 2010, the Planning Commission recommended approval of City Council Bill #10-0594/Harbor Point Development District
- On November 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the minor amendment for US Lacrosse.
- Ordinance #13-136, approved June 18, 2013, repealed the previous Harbor Point PUD and designated it anew.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

These actions conform following sections of Baltimore City’s Comprehensive Master Plan:

- LIVE Goal 1, Objective 2 – Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City of Baltimore
- LIVE Goal 1, Objective 5 – Increase the City’s Population by 10,000 Households in Six Years
- LIVE Goal 2, Objective 3 – Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Mixed-Use Development to Reinforce Neighborhood Centers and Main Streets
- PLAY Goal 3, Objective 1 – Maintain a Well-Managed System of Parks and Open Spaces
- PLAY Goal 3, Objective 2 – Protect and Enhance Baltimore’s Natural Habitat and Environmental Resources

ANALYSIS

Ordinance #13-136, approved on June 18th of this year, repealed the former PUD for the Harbor Point development site and designated a new PUD and corresponding development plan. The new PUD increases the allowable build-out on the site to a maximum of 3.02 million square feet (pursuant to its underlying zoning) and is based on a master plan that underwent extensive design and technical reviews, with high density mixed-use and transit-oriented development at its core. Now Harbor Point Development, LLC wishes to move forward with the first phase of development, which will consist of a mixed-use building on Parcel 2, a central park, underground garage parking, and related roadways.

The building is the much-publicized Exelon Baltimore headquarters, to be comprised of approximately 647,000 gross square feet and to feature a 2-story trading floor. Other building components include ground-floor retail fronting on the central park, 103 apartment units, and structured parking. Another major element in this first phase of development is an underground parking garage with an urban park of approximately ¾ of an acre above. The garage will serve

the entire Harbor Point development, meaning that all future buildings will connect to it below grade. The first park being constructed is the most urban and formal of the various proposed Harbor Point parks and has been designed to accommodate a wide variety of users. The first phase of roadways being constructed to provide site access include Dock Street, Point Street (which will eventually connect to the Central Avenue bridge), a portion of Block Street (surrounding the central plaza), and a portion of Wills Street.

Following is greater detail on the various site elements:

- **Exelon Building** – The building is being constructed on Parcel 2 of the PUD and will include 646,945 total gross square feet, consisting of 490,162 square feet of office space, 116,966 square feet of residential space (103 efficiency and 1-BR units), and 39,817 square feet of retail space. The building’s office lobby will be located on the south façade and has been designed as a two-story minimalist glass cube, reminiscent of an Apple store. The residential lobby entrance will be located on the building’s north façade. Similarly, there will be two separate vehicular entrances: the underground plaza garage entrance on the north façade along Dock Street and the building’s garage entrance on the east façade along Wills Street. Spaces will not be dedicated or assigned, so users will be able to self-park how they choose. The total count of vehicular spaces provided in the building garage is 743 (432 full size and 311 compact).

The building has been designed in three separate masses: a short and tall tower separated by a façade recess with the tall tower projecting to the south a bit more (along its primary southern façade), then a lower-slung horizontal mass separated from the short tower by another façade recess but holding the same build-to line as the short tower. There is garage parking in the building on floors 3-7, wrapped by residential units. Retail occupies the first two levels (responding to grade changes across the site), and there is a two-story trading floor occupying level 8 and mezzanine of the easternmost building mass. Office space occupies the upper tower floors, which rise to 23 stories and an absolute height of 336’, including an enclosed mechanical penthouse (compared to the maximum allowable 350’ height for this site). Additionally, there is a central loading dock space and a Honeywell monitoring facility in the building.

It should be noted that when the PUD was originally approved, residential was not proposed for this particular site (though of course permitted anywhere within the PUD). As such, a minor amendment to the PUD is needed to reflect this change in the development program. Staff was immediately supportive of the change to bring a broader mix of uses in the first phase of development.

- **Central Plaza** – The central plaza is approximately 360’ x 100’ or 0.826 acres, including both hardscaped and landscaped areas. It will feature a double row of trees on the north (accounting for sun exposure) and a single row on the south side. The west side features a tree grove and moveable café seating, while the east side will feature public art in the form of a large sculpture (which has not yet been designed). Seating will generally be provided in benches incorporated into large landscape planters. Hardscape materials will range from stone dust, pavers, and wood decking to marble block planters. Softscape

areas include tree zones, lawn space, and planters comprised of native shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants. Pursuant to separate Harbor Point TIF (tax increment financing) legislation, all open space within the PUD will ultimately be City-owned.

- Underground Garage – Beneath the Central Plaza and loop road, a single level of structured parking will be provided that interfaces with the lower level of the Exelon building footprint. It will include 294 vehicular parking spaces (289 full size and 5 compact), plus 128 bike parking spaces. Permanent parking garage access will come from a proposed driveway and ramp located on the east face of the proposed building along Wills Street. Temporary access to the plaza garage will also be provided via connections to the existing surface parking lots east and south of the proposed garage. Subsequent phases of development will tie-in to the garage at their lower level in the same manner as Exelon. This means that someone could park in the underground parking facility, and come up into any building on site
- Phase 1 Roads – The Harbor Point road network is established by the approved PUD Development Plan. The first phase of roads to be constructed include:
 - Dock Street (between the intersection of Central Avenue and Point Street on the west and Caroline Street on the east) – A 60’ right-of-way consisting of two 12’-wide travel lanes (2-way), two 8’-wide parking lanes (both sides), and sidewalks
 - Point Street (between Dock Street and Central Plaza) – A 64’ right-of-way consisting of two 12’-wide travel lanes (2-way), two 8’-wide parking lanes (both sides), and sidewalks
 - Wills Street (between Dock Street and Central Plaza) – A 65’ right-of-way consisting of two 12’-wide travel lanes (2-way), two 8’-wide parking lanes (both sides), and sidewalks
 - Central Plaza Loop Road (between Point and Block Streets) – Roadways to consist of two 12’-wide travel lanes (1-way), one 8’-wide parking lane (one side), and sidewalks


Roads to be constructed in future phases include an extension of Dock Street, an extension of Wills Street, and the Block Street entrance corridor. Note that the Central Avenue Bridge will be constructed by the City’s Department of Transportation through a separate Design/Build contract. Pursuant to separate Harbor Point TIF (tax increment financing) legislation, all roads within the PUD will ultimately be City-owned.

In its review of the current request, staff has considered the following:

- PUD Compliance – Exelon’s proposed building’s massing conforms to the PUD’s maximum permitted height limit, and its uses conform to those uses permitted within the overall PUD area. However, at the time the PUD was approved, residential was not proposed for this specific site, so a Minor Amendment is needed to the PUD. The Central Plaza is as proposed at the time of original PUD approval, in terms of size and location, as are the major infrastructure elements (roads and underground parking).

- Site Plan Review – All project elements have been reviewed by members of the Site Plan Review Committee and have been approved, as recently as October 11th. This included extensive coordination with the Department of Transportation, to ensure that the road network will be able to handle projected capacity and will be designed to City standards for future maintenance needs.
- Design Review – Design review was conducted by members of the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel, and both the Exelon building and Central Plaza have been approved (October 10th for the building, and September 26th for the plaza). Minutes from the meeting in which Exelon was granted final approval cited opportunities for design refinement on a few minor points, and staff will work with the applicant’s architects to address these prior to issuance of a building permit. One key building feature that has not yet been designed is its signage. The building will feature identification signage on the tower and at the major south façade entrance. But the precise size, location, and design has not been finalized. So a future Planning Commission design approval will be required for that element.
- Environmental Reviews – An updated Critical Area master plan has been submitted, and a staff environmental planner has confirmed that it meets all requirements. It has been forward to the State Critical Area Commission and is currently awaiting staff review and approval.

The following groups and interested parties have been notified of the current request: Baltimore Development Corporation, Fells Point Residents’ Association, Fells Point Community Organization, Fells Point Main Street, Fells Point Task Force, Greenspace Action Partnership, The Preservation Society, Southeast CDC, Waterfront Coalition, Fells Prospect, Upper Fells Point Improvement Association, Perkins Homes Resident Advisory Council, Broadway Area Business Association, Rich and Henderson, PC, and The Inn at the Black Olive.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director