



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 12, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill 15-0483/ Planned Unit Development – Amendment 1 – New Lafayette Courts

For the purpose of approving an amendment to the Development Plan of the New Lafayette Courts Planned Unit Development.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER: Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Inc.

OWNER: The Petitioner

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 1200-1242 East Fayette Street is located on the north side of Fayette Street between Aisquith Street and Central Avenue. The nearly triangular-shaped property measures approximately 1,470' along Fayette Street and contains approximately 0.955 acre. It is improved by a two-story 30,000 square foot medical and clinical office building constructed in 1999 by the owner as a branch medical center. This building has been vacant for approximately four years. The portions of the property not covered by the building are open landscaped spaces surrounded by a metal picket fence.

General Area: This site is part of the southern portion of the New Lafayette Courts Planned Unit Development, a residential mixed-use redevelopment of a former public housing site. The majority of the residential area created in the PUD is now known as Pleasant View Gardens. Most of Pleasant View Gardens consists of new attached two-story single-family dwellings; to the northeast of this property, along Central Avenue, is a four-story multiple-family dwelling for elderly persons. Opposite this property on Fayette Street is the Old Town Friends Meeting House, a designated historic landmark.

HISTORY

- Ordinance 488/ Zoning – Planned Unit Development – New Lafayette Courts, establishing the PUD, was adopted February 10, 1995.

- Final Design Approval exclusive of the medical center building was given by the Planning Commission on November 14, 1996.
- Final Design Approval of the medical center building was given by the Planning Commission on February 13, 1997.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed use, a school, which would re-use an existing structure, would help implement the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, Learn Goal 3, Encourage a Culture of Learning by Enhancing Educational and Vocational Opportunities for all Baltimoreans.

ANALYSIS

This amendment to the New Lafayette Courts PUD is being sought to enable constructive re-use of the now-vacant building at 1200 East Fayette Street as a charter school. Two decades ago, when the PUD was being created, there was a focus on what were then perceived to be the immediate needs and concerns of the future community of new residents, as well as the relationship of that community to the City of Baltimore at large. As a result, no consideration was given to potential changes in land use that would be needed to respond to changing or changed conditions in Baltimore. Schools have always been allowed as part of residential zoning districts under the Zoning Code, and since explicit authorization of schools was omitted from the 1995 PUD ordinance, this bill would bring greater consistency between the New Lafayette Courts PUD and the Zoning Code. To the extent that some school attendees or staff might come from Pleasant View Gardens, the bill could also allow a vacant building potential to serve the needs of some of its nearest neighbors.

As there is no change of the physical layout of the PUD associated with this request, a Site Plan Review Committee review of a preliminary site plan for this use was not needed. The petitioner has indicated interest in presenting certain minor design changes to the site if this request is approved, and would return to discuss those with Planning staff prior to their presentation to the Planning Commission for approval.

As addition of the proposed use is the only amendment proposed to the New Lafayette Courts PUD, Planning staff recommends approval of City Council Bill #15-0483.

Community Input: The following community organizations have been notified of this action: Pleasant View Gardens Resident Council, Historic Jonestown Business Association, Homeowners Association of Pleasant View Gardens, Jonestown Planning Council, and Sojourner-Douglass College.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director