



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of April 22, 2006**

DATE: April 20, 2006

SUBJECT: SP #25 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT for Waterview Office, L.P. to increase the amount of construction signage located at 1919 N. Lynn St. (RPC #16-018-004, -010)

Applicant:

Waterview Office, L.P.
c/o Kathleen Webb
The JBG Companies
4445 Willard Avenue, Suite 400
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

By:

John G. Milliken, Attorney
Venable LLP
8010 Towers Crescent Drive, Suite 300
Vienna, Virginia 22182

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve, subject to all previous conditions and four (4) new conditions which apply solely to the subject construction sign.

ISSUES: Should the County Board permit additional construction sign area for site plan buildings?

SUMMARY: The applicant requests a site plan amendment to increase the amount of construction signs around the Waterview construction site located at 1919 North Lynn Street. The proposed signs would be installed on the fencing that surrounds and secures the site. The signs will feature images and text to promote the Rosslyn area as well as recognize the partners and contractors for the specific project. The proposed sign would set a precedent for construction signs for site plan buildings and may lead to similar requests in the future. However, such temporary signs could promote the general area, would cover chain-link fences which surround construction sites and, if properly controlled would not have a substantially detrimental impact on adjacent properties or traffic safety. Therefore, it is recommended that the site plan amendment be approved, subject to all previous conditions and four new conditions.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Jill Griffin, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4300

BACKGROUND: The current project for SP #25 (Waterview) was originally approved in 2000 with a major site plan amendment approved in May 2002. The project consists of two towers containing ground floor retail; an office tower and a hotel and residential tower. The towers are connected with a fourth level terrace. The project is currently under construction with fencing surrounding the project for safety and security reasons.

The following provides additional information about the site and location:

Site: The 2.16 acre (94,204 square feet) site is located on the northeast corner of the block bounded by North Lynn Street, 19th Street North and I-66. To the north of the site is the entrance ramp to I-66. To the south of the site is 1801 North Lynn Street and to the east of the site is the 19-story Park Tower office building built in 1989; both designated “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel on the General Land Use Plan and zoned “C-O-Rosslyn.” To the west of the site is Rosslyn Building East, a 12-story office building built in 1969 and designated “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel on the General Land Use Plan and zoned “C-O.”

Zoning: “C-O-Rosslyn” Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts.

Land Use: “High” Office-Apartment-Hotel (3.8 FAR office; 4.8 FAR residential; and 3.8 FAR hotel).

Civic Association: North Rosslyn

Public-Private Partnership: Rosslyn Renaissance

Proposed Sign Package: The proposed sign package would consist of five separate panels installed around the perimeter of the site. All of the panels would be 5.5 feet high and would vary in width dependant on the location.

Sign	Location	Dimension	Size	Material
1	Lynne Street Walkway	144' x 5.5'	729 sf	Printed synthetic plywood (MDO) with laminate and mounted to fence
2	Corner of Lynne Street	120' x 5.5'	660 sf	Mesh vinyl fastened to fence
3	19 th Street, near Lynne Street	120' x 5.5'	660 sf	Mesh vinyl fastened to fence
4	Lynne Street (north of walkway)	37'-10" x 5.5'	208 sf	Mesh vinyl fastened to fence or printed synthetic plywood (MDO) with laminate and mounted to fence
5	Lynne Street (south of walkway)	32'-4" x 5.5'	178 sf	Mesh vinyl fastened to fence or printed synthetic plywood (MDO) with laminate and mounted to fence
Total			2,435 sf	

DISCUSSION: The intent of this proposed sign package is to add color and liveliness to North Lynn Street during the construction period, and to provide an attractive alternative to standard chain-link construction fencing while balancing concerns for public safety and other public interests. Staff concurs with the applicant that such a sign package would provide an enhanced alternative to the fencing.

The Zoning Ordinance specifically permits construction signs for development projects. Section 34.F.5.c states that the following regulation shall apply to signs with commercial messages allowed on a temporary basis:

“One (1) construction sign for buildings in "C," "M," and "RA" Districts other than one- and two-family dwellings, not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet, listing the development team may be placed on a site. The sign may be freestanding. It shall be temporary and such sign shall be removed at the time of the issuance of the shell and core and first partial certificate of occupancy. The height of the sign shall not be greater than eighteen (18) feet for a freestanding sign and thirty-five (35) feet for other signs. All other signs are prohibited.”

The proposed sign package is a significant increase in sign area over that which is permitted by-right with a sign permit. However, much of the added area will be signs promoting the Rosslyn community.

The *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* serve as a basis for staff recommendations to the County Board on sign requests for site plan buildings. However, these guidelines were written expressly for permanent signs and the subject proposal is for temporary signs. Comprehensive sign plans for site plan buildings often permit modifications to the Zoning Ordinance within the parameters of the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings*. This proposal is a temporary element of a comprehensive sign plan for the site plan.

While the proposed total sign area is significant in terms of size, most of the sign area is of images or text that is generic and promotes the Rosslyn area. The text includes the words “LIVE,” “WORK,” “PLAY” and “STAY” as well as the saying “Building a Better Rosslyn.” The images are of people working, shopping and dining. There is also an image of the proposed building showcasing the new Rosslyn skyline. Twelve foot sections within three of the proposed signs include logos of the Rosslyn Renaissance, the Rosslyn BID, Arlington Economic Development, as well as the logos of the development company, financing company and construction company. The area of each section is 66 square feet and the total area of these logo sections is 264 square feet. The actual logos cover less than one-half of these section areas. The total amount of sign area specific to the project is less than 100 square feet.

Staff supports the applicant's desire to include more color and visual vibrancy in the area, and to promote economic development in Rosslyn with the proposed temporary signs. Further, this temporary, non-traditional, freestanding construction sign provides an opportunity to create a livelier street frontage and adds interest to the Rosslyn area in general. However, staff remains concerned about the impact on public safety and the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the

potential for requests of this nature to occur frequently. Accordingly, staff offers the following amended policy regarding such signs.

Amended Staff Policy: The proposed signs would be considered freestanding signs per the Zoning Ordinance and as such should only be supported on a limited basis. Freestanding signs have a greater impact on the neighborhood and traffic than do signs attached to buildings because these signs are often placed closer to the street. Although staff supports allowing more temporary, non-traditional, freestanding signs, which screen construction sites, limits should be placed on their use. Further, such temporary, non-traditional, freestanding signs should be allowed only for a limited time period.

With the amended policy, the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* would permit the County Board to approve temporary, non-traditional freestanding signs, as described above with the following criteria:

- Special exception use permit or site plan amendment approval by the County Board for a previously approved special exception use permit or site plan project.
- The sign is displayed in lieu of a traditional freestanding construction sign.
- The amount of message content will be limited.
- The location and content of signs will not adversely impact public safety.
- The sign is a temporary installation permitted only between the first permit (demolition or excavation, sheeting and shoring) through the issuance of the first partial Certificate of Occupancy. However, in no instance shall this type of sign be permitted for more than two years.
- The sign proposal includes a maintenance plan.
- The sign is part of the construction fencing (plywood) or attached to the construction fencing (vinyl mesh).

Civic Association: The President of the North Rosslyn Civic Association was notified of the proposal. At this time, staff has not received any comments.

Public-Private Partnership: The applicant met with the Rosslyn Renaissance prior to submitting the site plan amendment application. The Rosslyn Renaissance supports the proposal and made several suggestions which have been incorporated into the proposed sign package.

CONCLUSION: Staff supports the applicant's request to locate the temporary, non-traditional, freestanding sign as an alternative to the standard construction fencing under the criteria stated in the attached staff policy. Its color and visual vibrancy, in contrast to the typical construction fencing, create a livelier street frontage. The signs will feature images and text to promote the Rosslyn area as well as recognize the partners and contractors for the specific project. The proposed sign would set a precedent for construction signs for site plan buildings and may lead to similar requests in the future. However, such temporary signs could promote the general area, would cover chain-link fences which surround construction sites and, if properly controlled, as this proposed sign is, would not have substantially detrimental impact on adjacent properties or traffic safety. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed site plan amendment request be approved subject to all previous conditions and new Conditions #1 through #4, which apply solely to the proposed temporary, non-traditional, freestanding construction sign.

1. The applicant agrees that the design, color, dimensions, material and placement of the proposed sign will be in accordance with the drawings prepared by Axis, with the date of 4/5/06 and as presented and approved by the County Board at its April 22, 2006 meeting. No additional signs are allowed on the subject site after the proposed signs are installed, until they are removed and other signs are approved by the County.
2. The applicant agrees that should any graffiti and/ or other damage occur on the sign, the applicant will immediately (within ten (10) calendar days) repaint and/or replace the sign (or any portion of the sign) to eliminate such damage. In addition, the applicant agrees to inspect the sign daily to determine whether such damage has occurred.
3. The applicant agrees that the overall message content shall be limited to 750 square feet, of which no more than 100 square feet will include the names and/or logos of developers, contractors, financing, and the like.
4. The applicant agrees that the sign is to be temporary and shall be removed before the issuance of the first partial Certificate of Occupancy for any building in the project or by May 1, 2008, whichever occurs first.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

- December 16, 1961 Approved a rezoning (Z-1573-61-1) from "M-2" to "C-O" on the 1100 Block 19th Street North, north side, and part of 1900 Block North, east side.
- January 25, 1964 Approved site plan (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) for the Pomponio, Lynn and Donato Buildings at the northeast corner of North Lynn and 19th Streets North subject to conditions.
- September 26, 1964 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) for conversion of sub-basement-mechanical space to parking; conversion of basement-mechanical space to parking; elimination of first floor up-ramp, parking placed in north side and added on east end; elimination of parking on second floor; and provision of office space on floors three to twelve.
- April 16, 1966 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) for the Pomponio Building allowing an additional 10,974 square feet of parking structure.
- August 5, 1967 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) for the Pomponio Building to permit construction of an antenna subject to all previous conditions of the site plan approval.
- September 23, 1967 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) for the Pomponio Building relative to signs.
- August 3, 1974 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit a sign for State Loan Company of Rosslyn, Inc.
- October 12, 1976 Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit counseling and therapy groups with a maximum of 8 clients, and seminars with 12 to 15 clients, at premises known as 1925 North Lynn Street, subject to review in two years.

September 10, 1977	Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to convert 14,185 square feet of parking (second floor) to commercial space and 6,480 square feet of gross floor area on premises known as 1111 19 th Street North, subject to conditions.
August 1, 1978	Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to convert 3,824 square feet of approved parking area to commercial or office space, on premises known as 1111 19 th Street North, (Lynn Building), subject to the converted space being used for commercial purposes.
October 14, 1978	Continued site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit counseling and therapy groups at 1925 North Lynn Street, subject to review in 5 years.
March 10, 1979	Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit a building addition on premises known as 1117 19 th Street North subject to conditions.
February 9, 1980	<p>Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit a horizontal sign reading "Metropark" and a vertical sign reading "Park" for the parcel known as 1925 North Lynn Street.</p> <p>Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit a horizontal sign reading "Metropark" for the parcel known as 1111 19th Street North.</p> <p>Approved a site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit a horizontal sign reading "Park" for the parcel known as 1117 19th Street North.</p>
October 1, 1983	Continued site plan amendment (Z-1573-61-1 and/or SP #25) to permit counseling and therapy groups at 1925 North Lynn Street, with no further review.

December 12, 1998	Approved the advertisement of a rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008).
February 6, 1999	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the July 10, 1999 County Board meeting.
July 10, 1999	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the October 2, 1999 County Board meeting.
October 2, 1999	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the December 11, 1999 County Board meeting.
December 11, 1999	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the February 12, 2000 County Board meeting.
February 12, 2000	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the March 11, 2000 County Board meeting.
March 11, 2000	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the May 20, 2000 County Board meeting.

May 20, 2000	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008) to the July 22, 2000 County Board meeting.
July 22, 2000	Approved a rezoning request (Z-2453-98-1) from "C-O" to "C-O Rosslyn" for 1001, 1111, and 1117 19 th Street North, 1925 N. Lynn Street, and vacant parcels (RPC #s 16-018-006 and 16-018-008). Approved a major site plan amendment request for a mixed use office, retail, hotel and residential development, including staff recommended improvements to the intersection at 19 th Street North and North Lynn Streets, subject to the conditions of the staff report which supersede all previous conditions.
May 18, 2002	Approved a major site plan amendment request for a mixed use office, retail, hotel and residential development, including previously approved improvements to the intersection at 19 th Street North and North Lynn Streets, subject to the conditions of the staff report which supersede all previous conditions.
October 2, 2004	Deferred a site plan amendment request to extend the term of the site plan from May 2005 to May 2007 to the December 11, 2004 County Board meeting.
December 11, 2004	Deferred a site plan amendment request to extend the term of the site plan from May 2005 to May 2007 to the February 2005 County Board meeting.
February 12, 2005	Deferred a site plan amendment request to extend the term of the site plan from May 2005 to May 2007 to the April 16, 2005 County Board meeting.
April 19, 2005	Approved a site plan amendment request to extend the term of the site plan from May 2005 to May 2007.

STAFF POLICY PAPER ON NON-TRADITIONAL FREESTANDING RETAIL SIGNS

PURPOSE FOR CONSIDERING “SPECIAL” SIGNS

In order to accommodate increasing interest in permitting, on a limited basis, temporary, non-traditional freestanding signs for construction signs, i.e., the proposed alternative to construction fencing at the Waterview site located at 1919 North Lynn Street, staff recommends the following policy. Freestanding signs have a greater impact on the neighborhood and traffic than do signs attached to buildings because these signs are often placed closer to the street. Therefore, although staff supports allowing more temporary, non-traditional, freestanding signs around construction sites, some limits should be placed on their use.

With the amended policy, the *Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings* would permit the County Board to approve temporary, non-traditional freestanding signs, as described above with the following criteria:

- Special exception use permit or site plan amendment approval by the County Board for a previously approved special exception use permit or site plan project.
- The sign is displayed in lieu of a traditional freestanding construction sign.
- The amount of message content will be limited.
- The location and content of signs will not adversely impact public safety.
- The sign is a temporary installation permitted only between the first permit (demolition or excavation, sheeting and shoring) through the issuance of the first partial Certificate of Occupancy. However, in no instance shall this type of sign be permitted for more than two years.
- The sign proposal includes a maintenance plan.
- The sign is part of the construction fencing (plywood) or attached to the construction fencing (vinyl mesh).