



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of July 8, 2006

DATE: June 27, 2006

SUBJECTS: Request to Advertise public hearings on proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments to Section 34. Nameplates, Signs, and Other Displays or Devices to Direct, Identify and Inform:

- A. Subsection 34 F. Signs Permitted in All Districts, Unless Otherwise Specified, With Permits of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit construction and rental/leasing signs for buildings in “C”, “M” and “RA” districts, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage;
- B. Subsection 34 F. Signs Permitted in All Districts, Unless Otherwise Specified, With Permits of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to allow the Zoning Ordinance Administrator to approve additional signs for sites with multiple buildings, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage.

C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize advertisement of public hearings by the Planning Commission on September 5, 2006 and the County Board on September 16, 2006, on an ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the Zoning Ordinance provisions in Section 34. of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit both construction and rental/leasing signs for buildings in “C”, “M” and “RA” districts, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage.

ISSUES: None

SUMMARY: The proposed amendment would allow additional flexibility related to construction signs and rental/leasing signs without allowing any additional sign area. The current language in the ordinance is ambiguous and has been interpreted by the Zoning Administrator to allow only a construction sign or a rental/leasing sign. The allowed sign is permitted to be 100 square feet in area and to have a maximum height of 18 feet for a freestanding sign and 35 feet for the other signs. The proposed amendment would keep in place the limit on total sign area and height; however, it would allow this sign area to be divided between a construction sign and a rental/leasing sign. The maximum height limit of 18 feet and 35 feet would continue to apply to all allowed signs individually. Additionally, the proposed amendment would allow the Zoning Administrator the flexibility to approve additional

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: James Brown, Planning Division, DCPHD

PLA-4412

construction and leasing signs for projects or developments that contain multiple buildings.

BACKGROUND: The language under Section 34. F. 5. c. permits:

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.

One (1) "for rent" or "for lease" sign per project use for buildings other than one- and two-family dwellings, not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet, may be placed on a site. The sign may be freestanding. It may be permitted when a full building permit has been issued, and such sign shall be removed one (1) year following the issuance of a shell and core and first partial certificate of occupancy. The height of the sign shall not be greater than eighteen (18) feet. All other signs are prohibited.

This language has been interpreted to mean that only one sign, for either construction or for rental/leasing notification, is allowed by sign permit on a site during development. Additionally, this section has been interpreted that sites with multiple individual buildings that have been approved as one project are only allowed one sign for the entire site. Therefore, if a construction sign has been approved for a site, a leasing sign is not allowed.

The intent of the proposed amendment is to allow one construction and one rental/leasing sign per building on a site with an approved sign permit. These two signs (cumulatively) would still be limited to the overall signage area prescribed in the existing ordinance. Thus the total sign area would remain at 100 square feet. Additionally, the maximum height would remain at eighteen (18) feet from grade for a freestanding sign and thirty-five (35) feet for other signs. All other signs would remain to be prohibited. Also the maximum duration of time permitted for "for rent" or "for lease" signs, which is one year following the issuance of a shell and core and first partial certificate of occupancy, would not be changed.

DISCUSSION: As Arlington County continues to pursue policies aimed at promoting an active and vibrant pedestrian realm in many areas of the County, there will continue to be an increasing number of site plan projects that contain a mixture of uses including, prominently, retail uses. These retail uses are vital to the activation of the pedestrian environment and to maintaining an attractive street edge. To achieve this end, it is important that leasing activities related to approved projects be allowed to start at a relatively early point in development, generally overlapping with construction of the project. The presence of rental/leasing signs early in the construction process will help ensure that retail areas are leased upon completion of the building. This helps avoid the presence of empty retail areas during the period following completion of construction. Additionally, it is important that information related to residential space is available to provide residents and potential residents the best information possible relative to

development under construction. Furthermore, construction signs should be allowed to overlap with rental/leasing signs so as to maintain an adequate level of information relative to the appropriate contacts for the developer and site contractors. By maintaining the current limit on the total sign area, this information can be provided without encouraging the over-proliferation of signs on any site. Finally, complicated development sites with multiple buildings may have different contractors and rental/leasing managers. In order to ensure that adequate information is available related to all buildings, it is recommended that the ordinance be amended to allow two signs for each building.

CONCLUSION: Staff recommends that the County Board authorize advertisement of public hearings by the Planning Commission on September 5, 2006 and the County Board on September 16, 2006, on an ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the Zoning Ordinance provision in Sections 34 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit both construction and rental/leasing signs per building in “C”, “M” and “RA” Districts, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage and sign height to allow the Zoning Ordinance Administrator to approve additional signs for sites with multiple buildings, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage and sign height.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE ADVERTISEMENT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 34. NAMEPLATES, SIGNS, AND OTHER DISPLAYS OR DEVICES TO DIRECT, IDENTIFY AND INFORM, SUBSECTION 34 F. SIGNS PERMITTED IN ALL DISTRICTS, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, AT THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2006 PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2006 COUNTY BOARD MEETINGS TO PERMIT CONSTRUCTION AND RENTAL/LEASING SIGNS FOR BUILDINGS IN "C", "M" AND "RA" DISTRICTS, SUBJECT TO LIMITATIONS ON THE OVERALL AREA OF SUCH SIGNAGE AND TO ALLOW THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL SIGNS FOR SITES WITH MULTIPLE BUILDINGS, SUBJECT TO LIMITATIONS ON THE OVERALL AREA OF SUCH SIGNAGE.

The County Board of Arlington County hereby resolves to advertise the following amendment to 34. Nameplates, signs, and other displays or devices to direct, identify and inform, subsection 34 F. Signs permitted in all districts, unless otherwise specified, with permits of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance for public hearings at the September 5, 2006 Planning Commission and the September 16, 2006 County Board meetings, to amend, reenact and recodify the proposed Zoning provisions; to permit construction and rental/leasing signs for buildings in "C", "M" and "RA" districts, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage and to allow the zoning ordinance administrator to approve additional signs for sites with multiple buildings, subject to limitations on the overall area of such signage in order to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; and for other reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning practice:

* * *

SECTION 34. NAMEPLATES, SIGNS, AND OTHER DISPLAYS OR DEVICES TO DIRECT, IDENTIFY, AND INFORM

F. Signs Permitted in All Districts, Unless Otherwise Specified, With Permits.

5. The following regulations shall apply to signs with commercial messages allowed on a temporary basis:

* * *

- c. ~~One (1) construction sign for buildings in "C," "M," and "RA" Districts other than one- and two-family dwellings 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.

~~One (1) "for rent" or "for lease" sign per building other than one and two family dwellings may be placed on a site. The sign may be freestanding. It may be permitted when a full building permit has been issued, and such sign shall be removed one (1) year following the issuance of a shell and core and first partial certificate of occupancy. The height of the sign shall not be greater than eighteen (18) feet. All other signs are prohibited.~~

Up to two (2) construction or "for rent" or "for lease" signs per main building may be placed in "C," "M" and "RA" Districts, other than on lots containing one or two family dwellings. The total sign area of the two signs shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet per main building. The sign(s) may be freestanding, and shall be temporary. Construction signs shall be removed at the time of issuance of the shell and core and first partial certificate of occupancy. Any "for rent" or "for lease" sign shall be removed one (1) year following the issuance of a shell and core permit. The height of a freestanding sign shall not be greater than eighteen (18) feet; thirty-five (35) feet (from grade) shall be the height limit for other signs. All other signs are prohibited.