

Ross Langhorne Stevens
3374 Middle Mountain Road
Crozet, Va 22932

September 11, 2024

County of Albemarle
Community Development
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Va 22901

RE: 1234 Carter Street - Homestay Special Exception

Dear Lea,

I am requesting a Special Use Exception for a Homestay application for 1234 Carter Street, located in downtown Crozet behind the post office. The current zoning is R-2 and is designated as Mixed-Use in the Crozet Master Plan. I currently own nine parcels between McComb Street, Carter Street and Blue Ridge Avenue, totaling 4.19 acres. We have tried to rent 1234 Carter Street as 30+ day rental and the vacancy rate is too high between rental periods and we lose too much revenue. My wife and I currently own and operate *Stay in Crozet*, which has three units registered in the Albemarle County Homestay program; two studio apartments and a two-bedroom single-family home in downtown Crozet. 1234 Carter Street would complement these offerings under our professional management company located at 5785 The Square, only 673 feet from the subject property.

I am requesting two exemptions:

1.) Non-owner occupied - Resident manager on site:

We would like to request an exemption from the requirement that an owner must be on site during all hosted stays. We would have an approved resident manager living in the basement.

2.) Three bedrooms:

We are requesting an exemption to the maximum number of two guest rooms. The home has three bedrooms with a full finished basement. The resident manager would be on site in the basement and we would like to rent all three bedrooms upstairs.

I was born and raised in Greenwood on my grandparents farm (Ramsay) and I have raised my family in an historic log home on the Moormans River in Sugar Hollow. My great-grandfather owned Mirador and we have been active in this community for many generations.

I am the sole owner/member of The Square LLC and have owned property on Carter Street, High Street, The Square, and Blue Ridge Avenue since early 2005. All of my properties have been updated and are offered as full-time rentals, except for those currently operating as vacation rentals. We offer four homes as full-time rentals to local residents of Crozet and one home as an assisted living facility. I spend a considerable amount of time taking care of these properties including the restoration of two historic homes and I personally perform all landscaping including extensive landscape beautification projects to keep this area maintained and attractive. I take great pride in the appearance of these properties.

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My wife and I have operated Stay in Crozet since 2016 and we pride ourselves on creating a professional short-term rental company. We also own Stevens & Company, offering real estate brokerage in Albemarle County. Stevens & Company has been in operation continuously since 1938. We are very proud to have a Crozet branch office.

We see the need to offer quality lodging for many people visiting family in nearby neighborhoods, as well as travelers attending local weddings or visiting wineries, breweries or enjoying the abundant hiking trails close by. These visitors frequent local merchants and enjoy convenient downtown Crozet walkability.

In the Master Plan, 1234 Carter Street is zoned Mixed Use which represents areas with a mixture of residential, commercial and office uses. Reading directly from the Master Plan, “This designation is used inside mixed use centers - - such as Old Trail and Clover Lawn and as transition areas around Downtown.” This is exactly the area in which 1234 Carter Street is located. The Master Plan goes on to say that “The types of retail and services, as well as dwelling unit types, vary depending upon the nature of the center.” 1234 Carter Street as a Homestay provides a much-needed service to Downtown Crozet by creating a place for visitors to stay.

I hope you will agree that this a conforming use and supports the guidelines and principles of our Crozet Master Plan. I am dedicated to my community and want to offer much-needed lodging for travelers visiting our beautiful area. I have worked hard on my land and improvements and feel this is a good service for the residents of our community and and supports a vibrant downtown. I am available to give anyone a personal tour of our small business and to discuss the asset that we feel we are to Albemarle County.

Cordially,

Ross L. Stevens
Stevens & Company, LLC
Stay in Crozet, LLC
The Square, LLC