

SP201800019 Greenfield Terrace Apartments

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

TAX MAP/PARCEL(S): 04500-00-00-15700; 04500-00-00-15800

LOCATION: Greenfield Terrace: undeveloped area at the end of the cul-de-sac. Approx. 420' from the intersection of Greenfield Terrace and Berkmar Drive, and approx. 310' from the intersection of Station Lane and Rio Road W.

PROPOSAL: Amend existing SP200000074 to remove Tax Map Parcel 04500-00-00-15800 from the existing SP. New SP201800019 to build 33 multifamily residential dwelling units in a new 39,000 sq. ft. three-story building on Tax Map Parcels 04500-00-00-15700 and 04500-00-00-15800.

PETITION: Amendment to existing SP200000074 to remove Tax Map Parcel 04500-00-00-15800. New SP to allow R-15 (15 du/acre) multifamily residential units under Section 23.2.2.9 of the Zoning Ordinance. 33 multifamily residential units were proposed on two parcels (TMP 45-157 and TMP 45-158) on a total of 1.96 acres at a density of 16.84 du/acre. Special Exception request to waive the 20' buffer requirement for adjacent lots zoned residential per 18-21.7(c). Special Exception request to use 18-4.19 residential setbacks instead of 18- 4.20 commercial setbacks per 18-21.7(a) and (b).

ZONING: Commercial Office – offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre).

OVERLAY DISTRICT(S): Airport Impact Area; Entrance Corridor; Steep Slopes- Managed
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Flex Area within Rio29 Small Area Plan – area intended to allow a flexibility of uses including residential, commercial, retail, office, institutional and employment uses. Buildings with heights of 2-5 stories, built close to the street, with pedestrian access and relegated parking. (Tori Kanellopoulos)

Ms. Kanellopoulos introduced herself as the reviewer for the application. She said this was a public hearing for a special use permit to establish 33 multifamily residential dwelling units on two parcels totaling 1.96 acres. She said the proposed multifamily residential building would be located on a street called Greenfield Terrace adjacent to where the public street intersected with a private street called Station Lane. Ms. Kanellopoulos said this was approximately 420 feet from the intersection of Greenfield Terrace and Berkmar Drive and said this was 310 feet from the intersection of Station Lane and Rio Road West. Ms. Kanellopoulos said there were five adjacent town homes on Station Lane and there was an existing daycare and office use. She said there were also several existing professional and medical office uses along Greenfield Terrace.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the property was zoned for Commercial/Office, which allowed for multifamily residential uses by special use permit. She said the adjacent parcels were zoned for Commercial/Office, R-4 and R-6 residential. She said the property was designated Flex in the Rio Road Small Area Plan. Ms. Kanellopoulos said properties with this designation may include residential, commercial, retail, office, institutional, and employment uses. She said that meant the proposal was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the proposal would require two motions and therefore two application numbers for approval. She said the first was SP-2019-1 to remove TMP 45-158 from the existing special use permit, SP2000-74, which established the adjacent townhomes on Station Lane. She said the conditions of SP2000-74 were no longer relevant and did not need to be applied to TMP45-158. Ms. Kanellopoulos said the office building that was approved for this parcel was never built.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the second application number was SP-2018-19 to establish 33 multifamily residential units in a three-story, 39,000-square-foot building with one and two-bedroom rental units. She said that special use permits in Commercial/Office zoning would allow for residential units of R-15 density and the applicant had proposed to use affordable units to qualify for a density bonus to allow for a density of 16.84 units per acre. Ms. Kanellopoulos said this request would be finalized at the site planning stage.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said there were no major concerns noted by staff or during the community meeting. She said the main issue raised at the community meeting was traffic which transportation planning staff, and VDOT did not have concerns about. Ms. Kanellopoulos said VDOT had stated the additional unit count was not sufficient to warrant any intersection improvements. She said if the special use permit was approved, the applicant would have to go through the site plan process as well as the Architectural Board Review approval process because the property was within an Entrance Corridor.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said there were also two special exceptions requested in the proposal and the intent of both was to treat it as residential even though the property was within a commercial district. She said the first was to waive the 25-foot commercial buffer requirement between residential commercial districts per section 18-21.7(c). Ms. Kanellopoulos said there was only one adjacent parcel where this requirement was not being met, which was the adjacent and undeveloped parcel to the north owned by Albemarle County and shown in the exhibit in the purple box.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the proposal will still need to meet steep slope and screening requirements at the site planning stage. However, she said the 25 foot undisturbed buffer was intended for commercial uses and not for residential uses and in order to allow for the proposal to fit within the site, staff recommended approval of the special exception.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said the second special exception was to apply residential setbacks for section 18-4.19 instead of commercial setbacks under section 18-4.20. She said that staff had recommended approval of the special exception given that the proposal was a residential use. She said that parking would still need to be screened per site plan requirements, and there might need to be additional Architectural Review Board landscaping requirements.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said staff recommended approval of the special use permit application with the conditions, but she would not go through them in detail because they were in the staff report -- although she could answer questions and elaborate on the reasons.

Ms. Kanellopoulos presented staff with motions for the Commission's consideration. She noted there were three other motions for the other special use permit application number and the two special exceptions. She said the two special use permit applications had the same conditions. She asked if there were any questions on the motion.

Hearing none, Ms. Kanellopoulos went on to state the next motion also recommended approval with the same conditions. She said there was an additional finding for that motion because the new building would be in the airport impact overlay district and in order to achieve bonus density the Planning Commission had to make the finding that the development was acceptable.

Ms. Kanellopoulos displayed the motion for the special exception request to waive the commercial buffer requirement and then displayed the motion for the final special exception to use residential setbacks.

Mr. Keller said that in total the Planning Commission would be doing four motions.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said yes.

Mr. Keller said that after the last meeting, they wanted to be totally clear on the number of motions.

Mr. Keller asked the Commission if they had any questions. Hearing none, Mr. Keller opened the public hearing.

Mr. Greg Powe introduced himself as having an architectural firm in town that focused on urban mixed-use and multifamily properties. He said he was also part of a development services group called Urban Places.

Mr. Powe said he had had the pleasure of working with the workgroup with the Rio Road Small Area Plan with members such as Mr. Dotson. He said he was enthusiastic for the potential of a real town center on US 29. He said when this property became available, because it fell within the area of the Small Area Plan, his firm felt that it was well worth developing. He noted that it was undeveloped at the moment.

Mr. Powe said his firm had looked at the zoning and felt that a multifamily focus would be more appropriate to the market and would bring more diversity to the little cul-de-sac which was really just an employment site right now. Mr. Powe said it was within easy biking distance of the future town center and when the improvements such as trails happen, it would also be within walking distance. Mr. Powe said the property sat right on two major bus routes.

Mr. Powe said his firm was not proposing a mixed-use on the site but submitted that by adding multifamily to Greenfield Terrace they would be creating more of a mixed-use street to start working on the edges of what would become the town center area.

Mr. Powe said that Planning Commissioners might have known about his involvement with affordable housing. He said his firm was proposing six affordable units and that they could do that without subsidizing at 80 percent of the area annual median income. He said he had not talked to the county yet about whether there were any programs to subsidize lower than amount. He said he would have no problem with that but financially the project could be sustained at 80 percent of AMI for six of the units. He said he would like to see the mix of the affordable units be the same as the mix of wach building itself, half of which would be two bedroom / two bath units and the other half would be one bedroom. Mr. Powe said he thought that would be the sensible thing to do with the affordable units.

Mr. Powe said his firm saw this project as being millennial-focused but not exclusively so the two bedroom units would be designed with two separate suites with their own rest rooms and a shared living room. He said the one bedroom units would work for others as well, including younger couples.

Mr. Powe said after looking at the context of Greenfield Terrace and not finding a lot of merit in what was there to relate to, they decided to look forward and not backward on this project with a modern expression. He said part of the selfishness of that was that it would have a flat roof. He said they had a lot of fun in D.C. right now with 28 affordable unit apartment building that was net zero. He said he really wanted to try to get there with this building and that flat roof would help with a solar array if the trees to the west do not foil that goal.

Mr. Powe said the impacts of the development would be modest and noted that VDOT said they had not problems.

Mr. Powe said the development would try to preserve as much of the trees to the west. He said the site steeply rises to the west and they would have to flatten out enough of the land to get parking but they would preserve as much as they could. He said that would require some retaining walls in order to stay out of a buffer to the west.

Mr. Powe said that to the north, they did not show a buffer, but the land was owned by the County and was adjacent to a County school. He said it had been assumed that would be kept either for parkland or for future school use, but that had not been determined by the county. He said the property had the benefit of woods directly to the north.

Mr. Powe asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Keller asked Commissioners if they had questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing.

Mr. Bivins asked if there were any individuals who would like to speak to this matter.

Mr. Bivins noted that no one wished to speak to the item.

Mr. Keller invited the applicant to come forward to make a summary or to answer questions.

Mr. Dotson referred to Attachment I in the packet which was a letter from a resident on Station Lane who talked about losing the access through Station Lane and on down so that they could get out on Rio at the signalized intersection. Mr. Dotson said that in looking at the site plan in the packet, it looked like the access would be retained.

Mr. Powe said that not only would the access be retained, but that the county had requested it be maintained as a private road that interconnects the cul-de-sac to Rio Road.

Mr. Dotson asked for confirmation that it was not an issue that Station Lane would be closed. Mr. Powe responded that was correct.

Ms. Firehock said she had a design question that did not necessarily have to do with her vote. She said she was curious that they put the recreation area on the side of the cul-de-sac and across from the parking. She said she was thinking that someone wanting to go out their door and recreate close to their residence and not having to go down the street and cross the parking.

Mr. Powe said he thought that there was room closer to the building on the building side as well. He said topography was a challenge and that the initial uses that they were thinking of did not lend themselves to the topography. He said they thought about croquet and bocce as passive nice green areas. He said they did not want to put too much of an outdoor congregation area right out front of the units themselves. He said it was a combination of topography and privacy but added that the site plan would have to be far more definitive of what those outdoor recreation areas are.

Mr. Powe said bikes would be an important part of the project because of the trails and so every one would have private bike parking in the basement. He said they wanted an adult tot-lot. He said the county still required tot lots so they would find something that was millennial for recreation.

Ms. Firehock asked Mr. Powe if he imagined the millennials would be having children. She said he had said that the target market was millennials but she said she had some millennials who had kids. Ms. Firehock said people like to be able get to recreation sites to see their children play.

Mr. Powe said that in this market, family housing tended not to be apartments. He said these units would be smaller one and two-bedroom units. He said they were not small for one and bedroom units, but they were one and two bedroom apartments. He said that would certainly be suitable for a child in the second bedroom. He said that possibility was by no means not welcomed. Mr. Powe said that this location being close to the future village center that it would be attractive for young folks and for empty nesters such as himself who were looking to downsize.

Ms. Riley said she appreciated Mr. Powe's commitment to building affordable housing but that he had been speaking with a lot of clarity about what he was providing tonight. She asked Mr. Powe what his understanding was for the length of time and the term that the units would be affordable.

Mr. Powe said the County had very specific guidelines and his firm's goal was to be more ambitious than the guidelines. He said they were already going beyond the minimum number that the County would normally look for in a special use permit. He said his firm was talking with even more partnership potentials which could get even more affordable units. Mr. Powe said his firm was comfortable with the numbers because they were at 80 percent sustainable without a subsidy. He said they wanted to explore the potential for subsidy. Mr. Powe said he was not sure that the County had a clear path to that but he was on the Regional Housing Partnership's executive board with Supervisor Ned Gallaway and others. He said hopefully there would be clarity coming out of that on a regional basis and Albemarle County had been embracing that whole regional approach to looking at affordable housing shortage. Mr. Powe said he was optimistic that there might be ways to find some subsidies beyond the market rate.

Ms. Riley said she thought it was great that Mr. Powe would consider going below 80 percent AMI.

Mr. Powe noted that there was not enough housing for 80 percent around so he would not feel guilty if that was what this product does. He said his firm does plenty of 100 percent affordable projects as well.

Mr. Bivins thanked Mr. Powe for the project and said he was excited about the project and how it had gotten a lift because of the Rio Road Small Area Plan.

Mr. Bivins asked for confirmation that the cul-de-sac on Greenfield Terrace would still remain open. He asked if he would be able to come down the street and come into the new development and exit out onto Rio Road. Mr. Powe responded yes and noted that was an existing possibility because it was a through private road today. He said the County was specifically asking for this. He noted he was surprised it was not a condition.

Mr. Bivins asked Mr. Powe to tell the Commissioners the make-up of the six units. He said there would be three different types of dwellings.

Mr. Powe responded that they did. He said 50 percent of the mix would be two bedroom units and the other 50 percent would be one bedroom units and one bedroom units with a den. He said the dens would happen around stairs. Mr. Powe said his firm was saying that the affordable mix should be the same as the building mix.

Mr. Bivins offered advice that Mr. Powe not market the property to empty-nesters because there were a bunch of people his age who never had children and who did not have a nest that will

ever be empty who would perhaps want to live in these units. Mr. Powe said he understood the point and said there was a lot of jargon that should really be more considered.

Mr. Powe said that some people did not like the term senior, either, but they fit the description.

Mr. Keller closed the public hearing. He asked Commissions for discussion and action.

Mr. Dotson said he was willing to make a series of motions if that was desired. Mr. Keller asked staff to counsel the Commission that there were making the motions in the proper order. Ms. Kanellopoulos said she would try.

Mr. Dotson made a motion to recommend approval of SP-2019-1, Greenfield Terrace Amendment, with conditions as stated in the staff report. Ms. Riley seconded. Ms. Banton called the roll.

The motion was approved by a vote of 6:0 (Spain absent).

Mr. Dotson made a motion to recommend approval of SP-2018-19, Greenfield Terrace, with conditions as stated in the staff report and with the finding that this development will reduce or be equivalent to hazards and/or noise impacts anticipated under standard level conventional development in the Commercial/Office zoning district. Ms. More seconded. Ms. Banton called the roll.

The motion was approved by a vote of 6:0 (Spain absent).

Mr. Dotson made a motion to recommend approval of the requested special exception to waive the 20 foot buffer requirement for the reasons outlined in the staff report and Attachment F. Ms. Riley seconded.

The motion was approved by a vote of 6:0 (Spain absent).

Mr. Dotson made a motion to recommend approval of the requested special exception to use 18-4.19 residential setbacks instead of 18-4.20 commercial setbacks for the reasons outlined in the staff report and Attachment G. Ms. More seconded. Ms. Banton called the roll.

The motion was approved by a vote of 6:0 (Spain absent).

Mr. Keller thanked staff and the applicant and said the item would be moving on to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Keller said the Commission would take a five minute break.

After the break, Mr. Keller introduced the next item.