

ZMA2019-1: 999 Rio Road
Places29 Rio CAC Meeting (#2)
December 5, 2019

Summary of discussion:

Staff gave a brief overview of the history and timeline of this project. Staff also stated that this second community meeting was not required, however the applicant opted to hold the meeting. The application is scheduled for Planning Commission public hearing on January 14, 2020, and for Board of Supervisors public hearing on March 4, 2020.

The applicant presented a PPT on their updated application. The applicant stated that they have continued to meet with smaller groups of neighbors and are open to additional meetings. The applicant summarized the concerns heard at the Board of Supervisors public hearing as: traffic, the constraints of the small size of the property, the potential impacts to nearby residential properties, and the designation of the property as Entrance Corridor. The applicant has reduced both the maximum density and maximum non-residential square footage by 40 percent. The permitted non-residential uses have been revised to only a furniture store and office uses. The trips generated during peak hours have been reduced by approximately 52-59 percent.

There was discussion on the proposed townhouses with basement (accessory) apartments, with community members interested in how these units would function and what the parking requirements would be. The applicant stated that there would be approximately 5 townhouses with 5 basement apartments, for a total of 10 units. This would be like the Riverside Village development. There would be a two-car garage for each unit, plus additional surface parking for guest parking. The townhouses will be facing Belvedere Boulevard. The apartments will be accessed from the back of the townhouses. There will also be a garage in back, and a door to the side of the garage. Someone would likely purchase the townhouse, and then rent out the apartment. This could help someone with homeownership, as the rental income could contribute to the mortgage.

There was also discussion on the revised commercial uses. Some community members stated they felt that no non-residential uses were appropriate with this development. Others felt that the applicant had significantly scaled back the proposal to address concerns. There was a question on how the loading area would work for furniture trucks, if the Artful Lodger did locate here. The applicant responded that the company would use their short box trucks, which are the same ones they use currently for the Downtown Mall location. Larger trucks would only go between warehouses and homes for deliveries, and there would be no warehouses on this site. It would be a showroom only. The applicant stated that it would not be financially feasible to develop this site without a non-residential component, and that the Board had not necessarily wanted the non-residential aspect completely eliminated, but had wanted the scale, massing, and impact reduced.

Some community members asked how this proposal is different from the R-4 by-right allowed development. The applicant responded that a R-4 development would be administrative, with no community input, and would just need to meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. No amenities or greenspace would be required. No ARB review would be required for R-4 development. A maximum of 11 units would be allowed with bonus factors. This application for the rezoning will require ARB review at the site planning stage, has a 20 percent amenity/greenspace requirement, and has community input.

There was significantly less discussion on traffic issues compared to the first community meeting. Some community members discussed how residents currently drive from Greene County and into the City for their jobs and use Route 29 and Rio Road. Community members wanted an update on the applicant's engagement with VDOT. The applicant stated that they have met with VDOT many times, and VDOT considers this a relatively minor development that does not generate enough trips to show up in their traffic models. Even so, the applicant stated that they have lowered the intensity of uses and density of this proposal to respond to traffic concerns.