

To: Vienna Town Council
From: Michael Gelb, Planning Commission Chair
Re: Sunrise Assisted Living Facility at 380 Maple Avenue West
Date: December 23, 2019

Overview

At its December 11, 2019 meeting, the Planning Commission (PC) reviewed the proposed amendments to proffered conditions by Sunrise Assisted Living for construction of an assisted living facility at 374-380 Maple Avenue West. The Planning Commission also considered Sunrise's request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for assisted living and a modification request regarding loading space. The property was previously approved by Town Council in June 2019 for construction of a mixed use retail/residential project in the MAC Maple Avenue Commercial Zone.

Discussion

At its December 11, 2019, the Planning Commission held a public hearing at which all members of the public who testified supported the Sunrise request. In their comments, members of the public said they supported the project as a better outcome than the previously approved project. They also praised Sunrise for outreach to the neighbors, listening to neighbors' concerns and responding positively to those concerns. The speakers uniformly expressed concern about the impact of increased automotive traffic generated by the development at 380 Maple as well as development planned nearby at 444 Maple and the WAWA under construction at the corner of Nutley and Maple Avenue. Several speakers urged the Planning Commission to recommend traffic calming measures such as closing Wade Hampton Drive where it intersects Glen Avenue.

After closing the public hearing, the PC voted unanimously (9-0) to recommend that BZA approve a conditional use permit for assisted living. In separate votes, the Planning Commission also voted 9-0 to recommend that Town Council grant the requested modification for loading space and that Council approve the proposed amendments to proffered conditions.

In its discussion, several members of the PC said they were not prepared to make a recommendation regarding traffic. A number of Commissioners said that the issue of traffic was separate from the requests pending before the Commission. Some members suggested that traffic was the domain of the Transportation Safety Commission (TSC), not the Planning Commission. Others suggested that TSC and the PC could work collaboratively on the traffic issue at the appropriate time. Some Commissioners added that they believed that any action regarding traffic should wait until the new buildings were operating and substantially occupied to see the actual traffic impact rather than trying to act on the basis of supposition. Several Commissioners said the Town should take responsibility for monitoring traffic impacts and addressing any problems on its own initiative rather than placing the onus on neighbors to petition TSC.