



Town of Vienna

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Town Hall
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Vienna VA, 22180

Legislation Text

File #: 16-086, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Request to set a Public Hearing for Vienna Market Rezoning Application for May 23, 2016.

EXPLANATION AND SUMMARY :

Introductory Comments / Property Characteristics / Current Proposal:

The Vienna Market (Marco Polo) project is a mixed-use proposal with 26,000 square feet of first-floor retail and 49 townhouse condominium units above. The 1.9-acre site is located at 245 Maple Avenue West and 101, 107, 115 Pleasant Street NW, all in the C-1A Special Commercial zoning district (*Requested zoning is MAC Maple Avenue Commercial*). Application filed by Doug D'Alexander, Vienna Vision, LLC, Owner and Contract Purchaser.

Staff Review and Comments:

Since both the rezoning and site plan must meet Maple Avenue Commercial Corridor (MAC) standards, staff has provided a summary comparison of the applicant's proposal and the stated vision and goals of the (MAC). The MAC requires that rezoning requests include a site plan and, at staff's, Planning Commission's, and Council's request, the applicant has submitted a Traffic Impact Study (hard copies are included).

Three work sessions have been conducted to review this project before the Planning Commission's March 23 public hearing. An additional public hearing was held on April 13, 2016. Staff has completed its review of the site plan and the applicant has amended the plan to address staff review comments and technical issues.

MAC Analysis:

The Vision

1. Compact, pedestrian-oriented, and human-scaled development - *Yes, but could be better*
2. Mixed-use and destination retail-style development - *Yes*
3. Promote a wider variety of housing options in Town - *Yes*
4. Enhance Town's economic vitality - *Yes*
5. Maintain and promote eclectic character and visual interest of building design and site configuration - *Yes*
6. High-quality and compatible development with adjacent neighborhoods - *Yes*
7. Improve environmental quality - *Need additional information and defer it to DPW*

Department of Planning and Zoning:

1. **Compact, pedestrian-oriented, and human-scaled development -** *Yes, but could be better*
Currently, Maple Avenue does not have many structures above three stories (most are only one story tall). The

proposed four-story structure and Maple Ave. plaza area together will create an improved pedestrian environment on an appropriate human scale. In other words, buildings physically define public spaces, particularly through proportions between height and width, and create street spaces that are comfortable to pedestrians. Ideally, the ratio from the building wall height to the street width is 1:1 or 1:2. In this case, the building height ranges from 51 feet to 41 feet and the width from the building front to the front property line across the street ranges from 100 feet to 83 feet, creating 1:2 ratios. Therefore, the proposal improves the Maple Avenue street spaces consistent with the MAC.

However, the townhouse level is not really pedestrian-oriented. For units located internally, there are no streets, only alleys and one pedestrian mew, which is internalized and will enjoy little public use. Special paving and landscaping needs to be provided to soften the condition, but was not included on the site plan.

This proposal, as revised, reduced an existing curb cut on Maple Avenue, and the applicant eliminated the loading space from the front to allow pedestrian-oriented activities and a pedestrian plaza area in the front of the retail space. Both of these amendments (suggested by the Planning Commission) benefit the project, however, better integration of the two uses and a physical connection of both form and function between the two uses could be better.

2. Mixed-use and destination retail-style development - Yes

Structurally, this is a non-typical, mixed-use building type with townhouse condominium structures on top of a structural garage with retail liner at the front. However, the proposed corner retail with an atrium structure promotes pedestrian interest and engagement with outdoor seating and façade transparency. The design has been improved, based on comments received from BAR and Planning Commission, through revision of the finished elevation for easy access and relocation of the loading space from the front of the building to the back of the building.

3. Promote a wider variety of housing options in Town - Yes

Currently, townhouses and condominiums are not common housing products in the Town (only 17% of all residential units). However, compact development along Maple Avenue was an original intent of the MAC. This project adds to the diversity of housing options in the Town and addresses potential increased demand for housing options for the elderly, empty-nesters and millennials.

4. Enhance Town's economic vitality - Yes

Physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework. While this proposal does not increase retail square feet on the property, it does provide needed redevelopment of the commercial space and provides additional housing options for employers and employees in a mixed-use project that makes the Town more attractive to new businesses.

5. Maintain and promote eclectic character and visual interest of building design and site configuration - Yes

The existing site has a 17' grade change across diagonally. The step-down plaza design combined with appropriate streetscape features will provide visual interest with a sense of enclosure for users of the plaza. The proposed design includes high-quality materials and attractive turn-of-the-century brownstone architecture for the condominiums that could set the standard for quality development along Maple Avenue. The brownstone-style architecture has not been introduced to the Town to date, but adds to the eclectic mix in Town and is compatible with the historic neighborhood and nearby commercial on Church Street.

A6. High-quality and compatible development with adjacent neighborhoods - Yes

The applicant designed the uses and height to be compatible to adjacent neighborhoods. Most of Pleasant Street and all of Church Street elevations are strictly residential with elevations limited to only three stories (compared to the four-story structure along Maple Ave.). The project faces single-family homes and a three-story office building along Church Street.

A7. Improve environmental quality - Need additional information and defer to DPW

Applicant is proposing to build a bus stop shelter on the property as a way to meet one of the incentives listed in the MAC ordinance. Currently there are no other bus stop shelters located along Maple Avenue West. As long as WMATA is willing to move the existing bus stop for the 15M bus route, which is currently located half a block away near the John Alabaster Watch and Clock Shop, this bus shelter will provide better facilities for public transportation options along Maple Avenue West.

Required Board Approvals:

Section 18-95.3 describes the process by which existing properties may rezone to the MAC district. Designations may only be approved as a rezoning in accordance with Article 24 of Chapter 18, Zoning. The rezoning application must be accompanied by a site plan prepared per standards set forth in Article 25 and must include building elevations. The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) shall then review the proposal and make a recommendation regarding its compliance with requirements of Article 13.1. This recommendation will then accompany the application through the rezoning process, per the requirements of Article 24. Following recommendation by the Planning Commission and approval of a rezoning by Town Council, site plan approval per Article 25 also is required.

Departmental Recommendation : The Vienna Market rezoning and site plan meet the goals and objectives of the MAC. The applicant has been responsive to requested changes from both the Planning Commission and Board of Architectural Review, resulting in a pedestrian-friendly, high-quality redevelopment project that could serve as a model for MAC projects in the future. Staff recommends the project move forward for a May 23, 2016 public hearing.

Finance Recommendation : N/A

Purchasing Recommendation : N/A

Town Attorney Recommendation : Town Council may set a public hearing to receive public input and consider the proposed MAC rezoning in Town Council's discretion.

Town Manager's Recommendation : I recommend Town Council set the public hearing date to consider the Vienna Market rezoning for May 23, 2016.

Cost and Financing: N/A

Account Number: N/A

Decision Needed by This date: N/A

PROPOSED/SUGGESTED MOTION

"I move to set the public hearing date to consider the Vienna Market rezoning for May 23, 2016."

Or

Other action deemed necessary by Council.