



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: October 28, 2015

TO: Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council, Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Tree Commission

SUBJECT: Proposed Mason Row Project at Broad and West Streets – Voluntary Concessions

Introduction

On October 5, 2015, Spectrum Development presented the City Council with Revised Voluntary Concessions for the proposed Mason Row mixed-use development project. At our October 21 meeting, we discussed the project for potential impact on the City's urban forest. In our review, we restricted commentary consistent with the role of the Tree Commission to advise the City's Arborist, Council and Manager on tree conservation, removal and replacement, both on public and private property, and in particular during commercial and residential development projects. In addition, the Tree Commission makes recommendations on current and proposed regulations, policies, practices and staff plans that promote the City's overall goal of preserving the tree canopy and maximizing its ecological and aesthetic benefits to the community.

This memo responds to the Voluntary Concessions and is intended to assist Council in its evaluation of the project and we have tried to avoid repeating previous commentary.

Comments

In the Conceptual Design, the Market Square ("Surface level plaza") no longer appears on the Conceptual Plan to be green space. The TC requests that developer create a public green space (with well-draining soil mixes covered by tough shade grasses) where Market Square is designed. This would seem to be a minimum voluntary concession given the exceptional size and height of this project.

In the Voluntary Concessions, the TC notes and appreciates that the cap on spending has been removed from W&OD green space.

In the Streetscape paragraph of the Voluntary Concessions, the TC requests that the streetscape design refer explicitly to the Streetscape Plan for West Broad Street, approved in 1987 (including any approved updates to the 1987 Plan's tree planter

standards, which are currently under development). We believe it is the developer's intent to follow these standards and request confirmation.

The second paragraph of the Streetscape item in the Voluntary Concessions states that maintenance of all streetscape will be subject to an agreement with the City Manager. The TC notes that any streetscape maintenance agreement must exclude street trees due to requirements under the City Code. City Code Section 44-24(a) states that all street tree plantings and maintenance are to be under the direction of the City arborist:

"Sec. 44-24. - Plantings along streets and public use easements. The planting, pruning or other treatment of trees upon the streets and public use easements shall be under the direction of the arborist. No tree upon any street or public use easement in the city shall be destroyed, cut down or otherwise removed without the consent of the arborist. No trees or plants of any kind shall be planted upon any street, public use easement or public property except with the consent of the arborist."