

MCP-Chair

From: Stan Smith <stanfsmith54@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 7:03 PM
To: MCP-Chair; OZAH@montgomerycountymd.gov;
nana.johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: proposed senior living in Potomac
Attachments: senior living project.pdf

Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

Hi All,
Please see attached letter in support of the Spectrum project.
regards,
stan smith
202-441-7882

June 18, 2020

Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Lynn Robeson Hannan
Office of Zoning & Administrative Hearings
100 Maryland Ave., Room 200
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Chairman Anderson and Hearing Examiner Hannan,

I am co-owner of Strosnidars Hardware stores which have a location in Potomac, writing to lend my support to Spectrum Retirement Communities' plans for a new senior community at 9545 River Road in Potomac.

Having personal experiences as the former chair of the Primary Care Coalition and helping start Montgomery Hospice Society while servicing their prescription needs for 25 years I understand the needs of today's seniors. Quality services for the different difficult stages of aging are needed in Montgomery County. The business model for the current use doesn't work anymore and the location seems very appropriate for senior housing.

We should all welcome a new community that gives Potomac seniors the services they need, in a beautiful and quiet residential environment that allows them to age in place in their neighborhood.

Strosnidars will continue its legacy of service, with the many seniors that work at our different locations. I encourage you to approve Spectrum's application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stanley Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stanley Smith
5103 Bradley Blvd.
Bethesda MD 20815
202-441-7882

cc: Richard Weaver
Elsabett Tesfaye
Sandra Pereira

MCP-Chair

From: joy <joy@knopf-brown.com>
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 1:10 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Wright, Gwen; 'David W. Brown'; Tesfaye, Elsabet; sarobins@lercheary.com; ecrogers@lercheary.com
Subject: CU-20-05 Spectrum - Agenda 11 July 30 hearing
Attachments: Anderson Letter 7 27 20.pdf

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Attached please find a letter from David Brown re the captioned matter which is currently scheduled for the July 30 hearing, #11. Please distribute appropriately and confirm receipt.

Sincerely yours,

Joy Noel Johnson
Office Administrator

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July 27, 2020

Sole Practitioner

Via Email

Mcp-chair@mncppc.org

Planning Board Chair Casey Anderson
and Members of the Board
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**Re: Conditional Use CU-20-05 Spectrum Retirement Communities
Agenda Item #11 – July 30, 2020**

Dear Chair Anderson and Members of the Board:

I represent a significant number of Potomac homeowners who live adjacent to or in close proximity to the nursery proposed to be transformed into a Residential Care Facility along heavily-traveled River Road leading into Potomac Village. I also represent the West Montgomery County Citizens Association. On behalf of both groups, I urge you to cast a far more critical eye than does the Staff Report on the compatibility of the proposed facility with the single-family detached residential neighborhood in which it is proposed to be constructed.

First, in evaluating neighborhood harm due to non-inherent adverse effects, the Staff Report (at 30) claims that one of the inherent effects is "[a] building large enough to house the proposed number of residents." This cannot be correct. It means the size and bulk of the building can never be a non-inherent adverse effect, so long as it matches the applicant's occupancy target, be it 100, 200 or 500 beds. A far more appropriate framework for assessing the impact of the size and bulk of the building on the neighborhood is to compare its size to that of existing residential care facilities in residential neighborhoods, and, especially, RE-2 neighborhoods, which are at the very low end of the density range of single-family detached home neighborhoods. Had such a survey been conducted, I believe the proper finding would be that the size and bulk of this building in this location is most certainly not an inherent adverse effect.

Second, the staff under appreciates the sheer magnitude of the building, an error compounded by an over appreciation (or, indeed a misunderstanding) of the extent to which architectural features and building materials might reduce the impact of its size and bulk. As the applicant self-servingly stated (and is repeated in the Staff Report at 10): “The overall effect is a decidedly residential place that complements the residential character of the surrounding area.” But “shutters, trellises, balconies and gables,” *id.*, cannot hide the fundamental fact that this building, set back from the property line only 8 feet more than the legal minimum, will have a three-story appearance along its entire frontage, which appears to be over 400 feet long, or well more than a football field complete with end zones. It will also be a glaring contrast to the large open lawns and fields that are characteristic of adjacent RE-2 developed properties and, indeed, the vast majority of properties all along River Road, both north-west and south-east of Potomac Village, and related side streets.

Third, it is clear that the applicant is seeking to build the largest possible structure that it can fit on the property. This is revealed by the fact that the building will utilize 100% of the allowed lot coverage of 25% of the lot. This means the building footprint will be at the allowed maximum of the product of building length times width. The third dimension, height, is also effectively maximized with three stories everywhere except a small area of two stories on part of the building’s end wings. Height may vary slightly in the range of 42 feet to 50 feet, but it is three stories nonetheless. There is no FAR limitation on this use, but staff computes the planned gross floor area at 152,655 square feet, or 3.5 acres on a 5-acre lot. This is an effective FAR of .7. By contrast, residences in the RE-2 zone, though not FAR-limited, are very unlikely to result in an FAR above .25.¹ The staff’s conclusion that “[t]he size, scale and scope of the proposed Residential Care Facility will not adversely affect the residential character of the neighborhood,” Staff Report at 31, is far from convincingly demonstrated. Indeed, upon viewing the artist renderings of the proposed structure, it strains credulity.

In the final analysis, it seems quite clear that much could be done to truly integrate this institutional use into the residential neighborhood if the applicant were advised that its goal of maximum size and bulk is not consistent with that objective, but quite possibly could be achieved with a degree of moderation, imagination and innovation in project design that is sorely lacking in the present plan.

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list of the ways in which my clients believe that consideration of this conditional use application merits more critical analysis than staff has provided. Other concerns still under evaluation are likely to be advanced at the OZAH hearing.

¹ Where single-family homes are FAR limited, the lower the density of the zoning, the lower is the FAR limit, and that limit is far below .7 even in considerably denser half-acre zoning. For example, in Alexandria, the FAR limit for homes in the 20,000 square foot lot zone is .25, increasing to .30 for the 12,000 square foot lot zone, .35 for the 8,000 square foot lot zone, and .45 for the 5,000 square foot lot zone. Alexandria Zoning Ordinance §§ 3-106(B), 3-206(B), 3-306(B), 3-406(B).

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In any case, I urge you to supplement the staff recommendation to OZAH with your own evaluation after considering the views I have expressed on behalf of the most immediately affected neighbors and the West Montgomery County Citizens Association.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David W. Brown". The signature is written in black ink and extends across the width of the page.

David W. Brown
Counsel for West Montgomery Citizens Association
and Abutting and Nearby Residents

/enclosure

cc: Gwen Wright, Planning Director - gwen.wright@montgomeryplanning.org
Elsabett Tesfaye - Elsabett.Tesfaye@mncppc-mc.org
Steve Robins - sarobins@lercheary.com
Elisabeth Rogers - ecrogers@lercheary.com