



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

August 8, 2013

REQUEST: City Council Bill #13-0231/Conditional Use Elderly Housing – 1600 N. Chester Street (Mary Harvin Center)

RECOMMENDATION: Amendment and approval:

- Add a new Section 3 to read as follows: AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That the approved site plan as depicted on Sheet L100, "Rendered Site and Landscape Plan", dated July 31, 2013 is attached to and made a part of this ordinance. Furthermore, a variance from rear yard setback requirements as depicted on Sheet L100 is approved.
- Renumber subsequent section(s) accordingly.

STAFF: Natasha Becker

PETITIONER(S): Southern Baptist Church and The Woda Group, Inc.

OWNER: Same

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The subject site lies at the confluence of North Chester, East Federal, and Gay Streets in East Baltimore. It is 37, 748 square feet in size, zoned R-7 and B-3-2. The site was acquired from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and most of the former rowhouse structures on site have been demolished. Two that are still standing at the corner of North Castle and East Federal Streets will be demolished shortly. A third row home within the block lies at the corner of North Chester and East Federal Streets and is privately owned and used as a convenience store. This property is not part of the subject site and will remain.

General Area: The site lies within the Broadway Urban Renewal Plan Area, which is characterized by a mix of residential (row house), commercial, and institutional uses. The main Southern Baptist Church facility is located directly across the street at 1701 N. Chester Street. There is another senior housing facility nearby on Gay Street, across from the historic American Brewery site.

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The subject site lies within the Broadway East Urban Renewal Plan Area and conforms to all requirements of that plan.

ANALYSIS

Southern Baptist Church, in partnership with The Woda Group, Inc., proposes to construct a 5-story, 57-unit senior housing building on the property known as 1600 North Chester Street. The facility will also feature a small walk-in clinic as an accessory use on the ground floor, intended for building residents and parishioners. This location is adjacent to their main church campus as 1701 North Chester Street and is seen as a compliment to their mission. The site was acquired from DHCD via a Land Disposition Agreement in December of 2011 and will utilize a combination of City, State, and private funding sources.

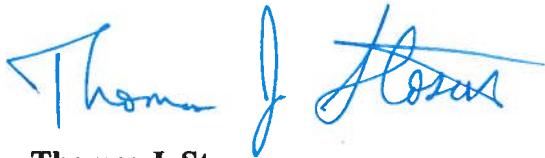
In its consideration of the current request, staff offers the following:

- **Zoning Conditional Use Standards:** Conditional use required findings are contained in Section 14-204 of the Baltimore City Zoning Code. Pursuant to that section, staff makes the following observations:
 1. The establishment of this elderly housing facility, including its construction, maintenance, and operation, will in no way be detrimental to or endanger the public health, security, general welfare, or morals.
 2. The proposed use is not precluded by any other law and is found to be consistent with the Broadway East Urban Renewal Plan.
 3. The authorization of this conditional use is not contrary to the public interest.
 4. The authorization of this conditional use is in harmony with the purpose and intent of Article 14 of the Baltimore City Zoning Code.
- **Other Zoning:** Per Ordinance 11-480, approved August 17, 2011, the City Council is authorized to approve variances as part of an ordinance authorizing or amending a conditional use or authorizing or amending a Planned Unit Development. In this case, the building's layout does not conform to setback requirements of the underlying zoning district (the applicant proposes a 5.5' rear yard in lieu of 30' required). But because this rear yard directly abuts North Castle Street, which is a 40' right-of-way, there are no concerns about overcrowding of adjacent uses or inadequate provision for light and air. As such, staff is supportive of the variance request.
- **Site Plan:** The building is to be set back from East Federal Street. Surface parking for 18 cars will be provided, as will a small garden. Vehicular access will be from North Chester Street, and there will be pedestrian walkways to access the building from both North Chester and East Federal Streets. The site will feature black aluminum fencing around its perimeter, with brick piers along Federal Street. Signage incorporated into the piers flanking the pedestrian path will mark the entrance along this frontage. The site layout has been reviewed and approved by the Site Plan Review Committee.
- **Building Design:** The building will be five stories with a partial basement, and all units will feature private balconies. The primary building materials are to be brick, fiber

cement panel, and fiber cement siding. The building's name "Mary Harvin Center" will appear in aluminum stand-off letters on its south elevation. Additional signage will mark the ground floor "Transformation Center" entrance. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel.

- Landscaping: The project triggers Forest Conservation requirements, and landscape planting plan has been submitted that fulfills those requirements.
- Traffic Impact Study: Due to the number of dwelling units proposed (>50), a traffic impact study may be required. A letter has been sent to the Department of Transportation to make this determination.

Community Input: The following community organizations have been notified of this action: 2100 Oliver Street Block Club; Biddle, Broadway, North Avenue, Chester Support Council; Collington Square Non-Profit Corporation; Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition; Milton Avenue Community Association & Development Corporation; New Broadway East Community Association; Pharoah's Assentive Community Association; and Washington Wolfe Gateway Community Association.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director