

FILE NO.: Z-6932-C

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NAME: Arkansas Association of the Nigerians African Heritage House

LOCATION: 9802 Geyer Springs Road

DEVELOPER:

Arkansas Association of the Nigerians  
c/o Woods Group Architects  
2200 South Main Street  
Little Rock, AR 72206

SURVEYOR:

Harbor  
8114 Cantrell Road, Suite 350  
Little Rock, AR 72227

AREA: 0.43 acres

NUMBER OF LOTS: 1

FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

WARD: 2    PLANNING DISTRICT: 15 – Geyer Springs West    CENSUS TRACT: 41.06

CURRENT ZONING:    Revised PCD

ALLOWED USES:    Specified C-3, General Commercial District Uses

PROPOSED ZONING:    Revised PCD

PROPOSED USE:    Allow an addition to the existing building

VARIANCE/WAIVERS:    None requested.

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BACKGROUND:

The property at 9802 Geyer Springs Road contains a 2,400 square foot commercial building and paved parking lot that were constructed prior to the property being annexed into the City in 1980. The structure was built as a convenience store with gas pumps in the 1970's. Subsequent to the convenience store closing, the building has housed a number of commercial uses including a restaurant, a bar and a pawnshop. When the property was annexed into the City, it was zoned R-2, Single-family and rendered

nonconforming. The nonconforming C-3, General Commercial Zoning District status was maintained by the continuous occupancy of the site by the commercial uses. On December 12, 2000, the Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 18,394 rezoning the site from R-2, Single-family to PCD, Planned Commercial Development. The approved PCD utilized the existing as-built survey as the site plan and limited the uses of the property to a specific list of uses proposed by the applicant. The approved PCD expressly prohibited any alcoholic beverage sales from the property. The following listed uses were approved uses for the site: Antique shop, Appliance repair, Barber and beauty shop, Cabinet and woodwork shop, Clothing store, Day nursery or day care center, Convenience store with gas pumps, Food store, Hobby shop, Key shop, Pawn shop, Photography studio, Secondhand store, Tool and equipment rental (inside only).

Ordinance No. 18,536 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on August 21, 2001, revised the previously approved PCD to allow the addition of eating place, inside to the permitted uses allowed for the site.

Ordinance No. 19,316 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on May 3, 2005, added fraternal organization to the allowable uses for the site. The Arkansas Association of Nigerians had purchased the site and requested to utilize the site for their weekly meetings. The request included the allowance of all previously approved uses to continue as allowable alternative uses for the site.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is now proposing to amend the previously approved PCD, Planned Commercial Development to allow an addition to the existing building. The addition is approximately 1,600 square feet and is comprised of a meeting room, two (2) women's restrooms, two (2) men's restrooms and office space. The existing building contains approximately 2,500 square feet of floor area. (4,100 total floor area proposed) The plan indicates the placement of 19 on-site parking spaces to serve the use.

Previously the applicant indicated the membership was a non-profit organization with the intent to utilize the property as a cultural center. The applicant indicated the building would be used for educational purposes, with speakers coming from all over the world.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The property is located on the west side of Geyer Springs Road, several blocks south of Baseline Road. Several tracts of undeveloped land and a developed residential neighborhood characterize the immediate area. The properties adjacent to the north and west are undeveloped and zoned R-2, Single-family. There is a church to the south. To the east of the site, across Geyer Springs Road, is a single-family subdivision and an apartment complex.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

All property owners located within 200-feet of the site, the Allendale Neighborhood Association, the OUR Neighborhood Association, the Santa Monica Neighborhood Association and Southwest Little Rock United for Progress were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

1. Geyer Springs Road is classified on the Master Street Plan as a minor arterial. A dedication of right-of-way 45-feet from centerline will be required.
2. Repair or replace any curb and gutter or sidewalk that is damaged in the public right-of-way prior to occupancy.

E. UTILITIES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT/COUNTY PLANNING:

Little Rock Wastewater: Sewer available to this site.

Entergy: Entergy does not object to this proposal. A three phase overhead electrical line runs along the north and west edges of this property and proposed building extension. There do not appear to be any existing conflicts with Entergy facilities on this property. However, extreme caution should be used when doing construction work near electrical power lines so that proper clearances are maintained. Also, please contact Entergy in advance to discuss the exact location of the building expansion so that access to Entergy's electrical facilities can be maintained for the future. Discussion will also need to take place regarding service requirements, new facilities locations and adjustments to existing facilities (if any) as this project proceeds.

Centerpoint Energy: No comment received.

AT & T: No comment received.

Central Arkansas Water: No objection. All Central Arkansas Water requirements in effect at the time of request for water service must be met.

Fire Department: No comment.

Parks and Recreation: No comment received.

County Planning: No comment.

Rock Region Metro: The site is located on the Mabelvale-Midtown (Route #22) and the Mabelvale-Downtown (Route #17) Rock Region Metro Routes.

F. ISSUES/TECHNICAL/DESIGN:

Building Code: Project is subject to full commercial plan review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit. For information on submittal requirements and the review process, contact a commercial plans examiner:

Curtis Richey at 501.371.4724; [crichey@littlerock.org](mailto:crichey@littlerock.org) or  
Mark Alderfer at 501.371.4875; [malderfer@littlerock.org](mailto:malderfer@littlerock.org)

Planning Division: This request is located in Geyer Springs West Planning District. The Land Use Plan shows Park/Open Space (PK/OS) for this property. Park/Open Space category includes all public parks, recreation facilities, greenbelts, flood plains, and other designated open space and recreational land. The applicant has applied for a revision to the PCD zoning (Planned Commercial Development) to allow an addition to the existing building for additional meeting space.

Master Street Plan: To the east of the property is Geyer Spring Road and it is a Minor Arterial Road on the Master Street Plan. A Minor Arterial provides connections to and through an urban area and their primary function is to provide short distance travel within the urbanized area. Entrances and exits should be limited to minimize negative effects of traffic and pedestrians on Geyer Springs Road since it is a Minor Arterial. This street may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

Bicycle Plan: There are no bike routes shown in the immediate vicinity.

Landscape:

1. Site plan must comply with the City's landscape and buffer ordinance requirements. Existing vehicular use areas may continue as nonconforming until such time as a building permit is granted to enlarge or reconstruct a structure on the property exceeding ten (10) percent of the existing gross floor area. At such time ten (10) percent of the existing vehicular use area shall be brought into compliance with the landscape ordinance and shall continue to full compliance on a graduated scale.
2. An approximate 1,600 square foot addition is proposed to the 2,460 square foot building. A minimum of sixty-five (65%) of the parking shall be brought into compliance with the landscape code.
3. If building rehabilitation exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost then the landscaping and buffer must also come into compliancy accordingly.
4. Any new site development must comply with the City's landscape and buffer ordinance requirements.
5. The City Beautiful Commission recommends preserving as many existing trees as feasible on this site. Credit toward fulfilling Landscape Ordinance requirements can be given when preserving trees of six (6) inch caliper or larger.

G. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (October 12, 2016)

The applicant was present representing the request. Staff presented an overview of the item stating there were additional technical items necessary to compete the review process. Staff stated the parking proposed for the site did not meet the typical minimum parking required for this type use. Staff questioned if additional parking was being proposed off-site. Staff also requested additional information concerning the proposed use of the site, the hours of activities and the activities taking place at the site. Staff stated the parking spaces located at the ends of the parking areas did not allow for adequate back-out area. Staff requested additional information concerning any proposed fencing.

Public Works comments were addressed. Staff stated Geyer Springs Road was classified on the Master Street Plan as a minor arterial. Staff stated a dedication of right of way to 45-feet from centerline was required. Staff stated any broken curb, gutter and sidewalk was to be replaced prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Landscaping comments were addressed. Staff stated as the building was expanded and the building was being rehabilitated additional landscaping and upgrades to the landscaping would be required. Staff stated with the additional floor area a minimum of sixty-five (65) percent of the site was to come into compliance with the landscape ordinance requirements.

Staff noted the comments from the various other departments and agencies. Staff suggested the applicant contact the departments or agencies directly with any questions or concerns. There were no more issues for discussion. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

H. ANALYSIS:

The applicant submitted a revised site plan and cover letter to staff addressing the technical issues associated with the request which were raised at the October 15, 2016, Subdivision Committee meeting. The applicant has reduced the number of parking spaces to allow for additional landscaping and to allow proper backing from the end parking stalls. The applicant has also indicated there will not be any fencing added to the site at this time.

The request is to amend the previously approved PCD, Planned Commercial Development, to allow a building addition to the existing building. The building addition is approximately 1,600 square feet and will be used for meeting space, two (2) women's restrooms, two (2) men's restrooms and administrative office space. The existing building contains approximately 2,500 square feet of floor area allowing for a total of 4,100 square feet of floor area upon completion of the addition.

The plan indicates the placement of 19 on-site parking spaces to serve the use. Per the Zoning Ordinance parking for lodge halls, exhibition halls, clubs (and similar places of public assembly) typically requires the placement of one (1) space per one hundred (100) gross square feet of floor area. Based on the square footage of the building with the addition the typical parking required would be 41 parking spaces. The applicant is working with a church which is located south of this site to determine if a parking agreement can be reached.

The applicant has indicated building signage will be utilized for the site. The building signage will comply with building signage typically allowed in commercial zones or a maximum of ten (10) percent of the façade area. The applicant has indicated should a ground sign be added in the future signage will comply with signage allowed in commercial zones with a maximum height of 36-feet and a maximum sign area of 160 square feet.

The applicant states the site will be utilized by the Arkansas Association of Nigerians African Heritage House for their fraternal organization meetings. The meetings are typically held in the evening after 5:00 pm and on Saturday. The organization also host seminars which are also typically held in the evening after 5:00 pm or on weekends from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

There is a dumpster located on the site. Currently the dumpster is not screened. The site plan notes the dumpster will be screened per the typical ordinance standards with the new construction.

Staff is supportive of the applicant's request provided the applicant can secure parking to accommodate the use. As noted the ordinance would typically require the placement of 41 parking spaces to serve the intended use. The plan as indicated proposes the placement of 19 on-site parking spaces. According to the applicant for most activities the 19 on-site parking spaces will accommodate the users. On occasional seminars parking may become an issue. Staff recommends prior to the issuance of a building permit for the addition the applicant secure a long term lease for a minimum of 22 parking spaces. If at any time the lease is voided or discontinued, the PCD must be brought back to the Commission for review and approval.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the request subject to compliance with the comments and conditions as outlined in paragraphs D, E and F of the agenda staff report.

Staff recommends prior to the issuance of a building permit the applicant provide staff with a long term lease for 22 parking spaces. If at any time the lease is voided or the use of the property is discontinued, the PCD must be brought back to the Commission for review and approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(NOVEMBER 3, 2016)

The applicant was present. There were no registered objectors present. Staff presented the item with a recommendation of approval of the request subject to compliance with the comments and conditions as outlined in paragraphs D, E and F of the agenda staff report. Staff presented a recommendation that prior to the issuance of a building permit the applicant provide staff with a long term lease for 22 parking spaces. Staff stated if at any time the lease was voided or the use of the property was discontinued, the PCD was to be brought back to the Commission for review and approval. There was no further discussion. The item was placed on the consent agenda and approved as recommended by staff by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 noes, 2 absent and 1 open position.