



Meeting Summary May 19, 2021

Attendance

Panel Members:

Fred Marino, Chair
Robert Gorman, Vice Chair
Ethan Marchant
Sujit Mishra
Larry Quarrick

DPZ Staff:

Anthony Cataldo, Nick Haines, Melissa Maloney

Applicants and Presenters: Kilber Arrington, Dinko Miljkovic, Doug Williams

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Chair Fred Marino opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.
2. **Review of Plan No. 21-04:** Port Capital, Elkridge, MD

Owner/Developer: The Port Capital Center of Maryland LLC

Engineer: Timmons Group

Architect: Lennar Homes

Background

The 1.79-acre site is zoned R-A-15 (Residential: Apartments) and is comprised of Parcel A; with access to Port Capital Drive. The proposed use will be subject to the requirements established in the Howard County Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations for residential projects. The property currently is an undeveloped grass lot. The surrounding neighboring properties are multi-family residential apartment units to the north and east. There is a townhome development located to the west opposite of Port Capital Drive. There is a light industrial zoned site located to the south that contains a model interior business.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Arrington began the presentation with an overview of the site context. The project area is between the 95 and Route 1 corridor. The applicant already has a development in the neighborhood, Blue Stream – Delacour, which is currently in the ground with the same exact product. Neighboring condo communities include Parkside and the Village at Arundel Mills. The parcel of land for this project is currently just grass and is located off Port Capital Drive. The applicant states that plans should be familiar to DAP as this is condo product has been used previously. DPZ asked for supplemental material which have been provided, including community information, Lennar's standard landscape plan and the site development plan in greater detail. The applicant feels that their product blends well with the existing community. Across the street is Howard Square which is an urban, contemporary condo community with a commercial strip below it and townhomes. To the east of the property is a commercial building and to the west is the Willows complex. Pictures of the Blue Stream community were shown and are the same product and elevation style. The architecture of Beazer Homes is a little

bit different and the Village at Arundel Mills is more contemporary, but the proposed architecture is still consistent with the area at large. Stoney Run Village is more in line with their product and is located near the mall. The proposed community is not very large.

Staff Presentation

Staff advised that this is a simple site with a 2 over 2 condo model and a total of 26 individual units on a 1.79-acre site. The site is located off Port Capital Drive and is accessible from Route 1 and falls within the Route 1 corridor. There will be 3 condo buildings on site. The proposed drive is Gringotts Way and each unit will have its own garage and driveway. Parking overflow will be at the entrance of the site located on Gringotts Way. Some community space will be provided in the form of a tot lot and potentially some other outdoor amenities. Stormwater management will be handled through underground facilities and micro bioretention facilities located around the borders of the property. The required landscaping is being provided on site with adequate screening along the perimeters as well as in front of the units and at the roadway edges. DPZ would like DAP to make recommendations on the orientation of the layout configuration of the site plan, to ensure that the site will fit into the existing community as well as other elements or ideas that may improve the site. Recommendations on landscaping, hardscaping, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, as well as site amenities would be welcomed. Also, recommendations on the architecture would be helpful, although what is proposed is very similar to the surrounding community. The styles and models being used have been used many times before and can be seen in the Blue Stream community.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Design

DAP noted that the garages will be located back to back on Gringotts Way and building #3 does not have street frontage. To enter the front door of these units, residents will need to walk around the backside of the building. When entering the community from Port Capital Drive the dumpster will be immediately visible. Even with an enclosure this is not ideal. It was confirmed there are 8 spots for visitor parking at the entrance to the community and 6 additional spots on Gringotts Way behind building #2. Approximately 1 visitor spot per lot will be provided. There is a turnaround at the end of Gringotts Way for emergency vehicles or cars leaving the community.

DAP recommended that the open amenity space at the end of Gringotts Way would better serve the whole community if it was designed as a community gathering space with grills and picnic benches instead of a tot lot, which oftentimes are not used. This is not an age restricted community. It was also recommended that a pavilion and possibly a firepit be added to the space so that residents could enjoy the outdoor space. Possibly a small play structure could be added as well.

DAP commented that there is very little opportunity for greenspace since the backs of the buildings face each other and the balconies will overlook cars, garbage cans and pavement. If possible, it would be better to reorient the development differently, possibly perpendicular to Port Capital, so that the fronts would face each other to create a center green court that would give the appearance that every unit had a front yard. Per the applicants, different approaches were considered with the site plan, but unfortunately this is a small site and it is a very land constrained plan. From a road standpoint, the stem of the road is off to the left-hand side, which does not allow you to create a courtyard area. These concerns were brought up internally, but due to limitations this was the best option available. The applicant agreed that the pavilion seems like a great idea to give outdoor living space.

DAP asked the question if the applicants explored moving the tot lot (amenity space) to the other end of the development so that would be a visible feature when you enter the site. Due to the utility line placement as well as the elevation of the site this was difficult, but the applicant agreed to investigate

the option again. Having the green, landscaped, amenity space at the entrance to Gringotts Way with a pavilion and barbecues would be beneficial to the community and would help soften the alleyway as you come into the community. The midpoint of building #3 could possibly line up with the greenspace between building #1 and #2. If building #3 could be eliminated it would be best.

DAP commented that residents will need to use their back doors and garages to get into their units. The front entrance of building #3 will not be used because of the distance from the parking. DAP suggested that in the future it would be better to have the fronts of these types of units facing each other. DAP asked if the units would be rentals and the applicant confirmed that these units will be condos for purchase. The comment was made that the number of units will not be reduced.

DAP commented that having the dumpster at the back of the site may not be ideal either with a truck driving through the neighborhood. The suggestion was made to move the dumpster behind the stormwater management pond to allow some creative screening. It was suggested that the park may be better in its current location since it is central to the community and would not have passing traffic. DAP recommended adding some more landscaping and street trees to the front and side of the buildings to make them more attractive. The applicant noted that the stormwater management pond may be situated in the current location due to how the site naturally irrigates.

DAP asked if a dumpster is needed in this community where there are individual units and residents will be putting out their own trashcans in the alley for pickup. Most residential neighborhoods do not have a dumpster unless there is a commercial use, or it is an apartment building. The applicants will verify if the dumpster is required and look at the HOA documents. The applicant confirmed that the roads will be private streets and a service will be needed to be provided to pick up the trash and recycling. DAP cautioned that adequate space will be needed for the truck to turn around at the end of Gringotts Way.

Landscape

DAP commented that although there are limitations on landscaping due to the utilities and driveways, there is still opportunity on the front elevations of the buildings to add significant landscaping and street trees in front of every unit or every other unit to soften the views. There are space restrictions in the alley, but it would help to soften the whole project. Shade trees will also help to provide shade and reduce the heat in the summer. It was recommended to have large shade trees, taller than dogwoods, to shade the seating area and activity area in the amenity space.

Architecture

DAP recommended that the southern façade of building #2 should have slightly elevated architectural enhancements and features since it will be the primary view as you approach the neighborhood from Port Capital Drive. This primary view is more important than the front façade of the building and would warrant using brick material instead of vinyl. It would be a justified study to look at doing something at the corner to enhance the elevations on the side. The Applicant agreed and did not think this would be difficult to implement and could be something as simple as adding a water table or two stories of brick. This view can be seen from both Route 1 and Port Capital Drive.

DAP commented that only one unit in the building perspective is showing a front porch. It was recommended that this feature be repeated possibly on the 4th unit since there are 6 units. DAP also noted that the skyline of the façade is one plane and recommended to have a recess in the front and back as well as vary the roofline heights of the units. These changes would make a good overall view to the block. The applicant commented that these drawings are for demonstration purposes only and this is not how they intend to set up the buildings. Elevations will be assigned so that there will be enough variation.

DAP asked if the front doors enter a common foyer for the 2 units. It was confirmed that they enter an open-air foyer that is about 5 feet deep with a door on the left side to the first unit. From the alley the only entrance to the unit is through the garage. DAP asked in the future that the application consider that entering a unit through the front door is always best.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:

That the applicant should plant additional small or medium street trees in the front entry facades of unit (buildings) 1, 2 and 3.

DAP Chair Fred Marino seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:

That the applicant should consider converting the amenity space to a more community focused space instead of just a tot lot.

DAP Chair Fred Marino seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0

DAP Chair Fred Marino made the following motion:

That the applicant will investigate the site plan to resolve the trash collection issue to determine if a dumpster is needed.

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:

If it is determined that a dumpster is needed that the applicant will locate it further back on Gringotts Way behind the stormwater management area so that the stormwater management area can act as screening.

DAP Chair Fred Marino seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0

DAP Member Ethan Marchant made the following motion:

That the applicant should plan to use elevated materials on the approach view on unit #2 that faces the public street to improve the aesthetic of the community.

DAP Chair Fred Marino seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0

3. Other Business

DPZ noted no other business on the agenda.

4. Call to Adjourn

DAP Chair Fred Marino adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.