



Meeting Summary July 21, 2021

Attendance

Panel Members:

Robert Gorman, Vice Chair
Dan Lovette
Ethan Marchant
Larry Quarrick
Vivian Stone

DPZ Staff:

Anthony Cataldo, Nick Haines, Melissa Maloney

Applicants and Presenters:

7561 Washington Blvd – Rob Vogel, Brendan Glass, Victoria Crouch
Scott Property – Chris Malagari, Brian Boy, William Erskine

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman opened the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

2. **Review of Plan No. 21-08, 7561 Washington Blvd, Elkridge MD**

Owner/Developer: Samson Realty

Engineer: Vogel-Engineering & Timmons Group

Architect: Brasher Design

Background

The proposed structures will be constructed on the 1.74-acre parcel and the property is Zoned B-1. The existing office building and stone supply store will be replaced with a small retail building parking lot and associated amenities. The proposed retail uses support the B-1 district goals providing the general public with retail sales and services. The 7561 Washington Blvd retail project consists of a new retail strip, parking lot, associated infrastructure, and landscaping. The proposal includes sidewalk along Route 1, street trees, landscape enhancements, site furnishings, and storm water management facilities.

Applicant Presentation

The applicant presented the project at 7561 Washington Boulevard which is located north of Rt 175, south of Rt 100, east of Rt 1 (Washington Blvd) and just south of Kit Kat Rd. The applicant has been involved with the Blue Stream Dr project which is just south of the subject site on the opposite side of Rt 1 and adjacent to that is the Morris Place project, which is located on the opposite side of Rt 1 and behind the flea market property. North of that area is a historic church and the Business Parkway with large office, warehouse and flex warehouse space, is also nearby. South of Blue Stream, towards Rt 175, is the Howard Square mixed use project. Adjacent to their facility there are office and flex warehouse spaces that the Merritt organization owns, whom they have been working with in conjunction with this project. There is a shared use in common access to this property. It was noted that Maryland State Highway completed a project at the intersection of Kit Kat Rd and Rt 1 for safety improvements, resulting in a sidewalk being constructed along the frontage of Kit Kat Rd property and

to the intersection. The signal, including a pedestrian signal, was recently completed at Blue Stream Dr. and Rt. 1 to facilitate crossing at Rt 1. A nursing home facility is located on Rt. 1 across from the Blue Stream property and that includes sidewalk along Rt. 1. Sidewalks are proposed along Rt. 1 and the side of the retail area as the applicant wants the small retail use to be accessible by pedestrians from the new higher density, residential projects that don't contain any retail or serve the community. Access to the site will utilize the existing use in common drive and the parking lot will be located behind the building in accordance with the Rt 1 manual.

The applicant has deferred to the guidance of the Rt 1 design manual by organizing the site and designing the building to encourage walkability and enhance the street scape. The building is situated on the site, close to the setback to maximize the visibility of the primary façade with the Rt 1 corridor. The parking is shielded from view from Rt. 1 and publicly accessible amenity spaces are proposed to integrate functions of the building with the surrounding community to further enhance the relationship with the street. The public patio areas are located within their property and proposed to include outdoor furniture and seating for use by visitors to this site, but also by the public at large as they anticipate a fair amount of pedestrian traffic to this site. The patio will be located where the grade drops in with a sitting wall around the perimeter and patio space on the side of the proposed retail building. The connections to Rt. 1 are not only pedestrian friendly but handicap friendly as well. The proposed dumpster location will be back in the southwest corner to get it away from the building and public view and to allow trash trucks to pick up and turn around easily in the parking lot.

The site grade falls from Rt. 1 to the rear with storm water management. This site is part of the Dorsey Run watershed that is required to address 100-year storm water management in addition to ESD practices and full storm water detention. The applicant has been working with Merritt to grant easement to the underground storm water detention into their storm drain system to address their obligation. This will prevent the unmanaged and unmitigated run off from this site onto the Merritt site.

There will be landscaping proposed all around the perimeter and parking area of the site. The trees and vegetation proposed are consistent with the adjacent project that was reviewed to have some continuity in the area.

Site amenities are being provided which are similar to the adjacent project for some consistency. Amenities include overhead lighting, trash receptacles and seating for the patio area.

The applicant has proposed a human scale architectural design with a more dynamic treatment to articulate the building corners, encouraging mobility and pedestrian activity around the site. The storefronts shown on the elevation include shade awnings and metal canopies to enhance visual comfort, reduce glare and add texture and depth to the building. The elevations show the variety of materials used including fiber cement, brick veneer, wood composite panels, fabric and metal canopies with lots of texture and variety of a natural color palette. The articulation on the side of the building will include parapets rising and lowering at each bay to break up the scale of the building. The applicant is emphasizing the corner of Rt. 1 and the common access drive with the raised parapets, metal canopies and providing the site amenities with the patio to emphasize pedestrian activity and engagement. The building is close to Rt. 1, to participate in the street scape and the community. The palette for the site furniture relates to the wood composite panels and the metal storefront that they are proposing for the building. All the glass is shaded by metal or fabric canopies to reduce glare on the sidewalk as well as limit direct sunlight from coming into the building itself. They are treating all four sides of the building, architecturally, in order to reduce any appearance of a 'back-side'.

Staff Presentation

DPZ staff agreed with the presentation the design team put together for the proposed retail center at 7561 Washington Boulevard and noted that it was very thorough and comprehensive. Staff commented that site is 1.74 acres and is zoned B1 and does have direct frontage on Washington Boulevard (Rt. 1) and is therefore subject to the Howard County Route 1 Design Manual. This is a simple layout with a retail structure and parking behind and they are looking to tie into the pedestrian network. DPZ noted the site borders the Kit Kat property which DAP reviewed last year for a similar type of commercial proposal with retail in the rear and a gas station and convenience store towards the Rt. 1 frontage. The applicant is a similar palette and design elements to tie the projects together. DPZ requested the DAP evaluate orientation layout and configuration of the site plan, specifically how it relates to the Rt 1 frontage. DPZ requested the DAP to advise on recommendations for the frontage design to better interface with Rt 1 to give more of a presence along the street scape and include some landscape or site elements that have not been considered by the applicant. Lastly, DPZ requested DAP comment on any recommendations on the proposed building materials, articulation and massing of the structure itself.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Design

Overall it was a very thorough presentation and DAP appreciates the gestures toward recognizing the Rt. 1 guidelines. The guidelines do help to enforce the street presence and locate the building facade close to Rt 1. DAP appreciates that the applicant is trying to treat the front and back equally and are not ignoring one side. Functionally there will be a service side and it is not clear where the front door would be located and if visitors will need to park in the back and walk around to the front to enter. It was noted at Maple Lawn that the street front is the front entrance and the back entrance is a service entrance. It was recommended to have more distinction and articulation between the front and the back so there is more storefront on the functional front of the building.

DAP appreciates the attention to the pedestrian frontage and the creation of a plaza but noted that tenants will choose to have the front door along the parking lot if given the choice. Because of this, the design needs to be thoughtful of when a store front facing Rt. 1 choses a vinyl film put on top to block the view into the service area. As this is likely to happen, and landscape is important to create a veil that mitigates that approach to the main street.

The applicant concurred that there were some good points made by DAP. The building will be entered from the parking lot and the front entrance along Rt. 1 will be back of house. The applicant's approach based on the manual was made to look as much a part of the street scape as possible. DAP previously thought the retail space was comprised of stores in the front of the building and different stores in the back, but the applicant confirmed they will be through stores instead. Visitors can enter through the parking lot side and exit at the Rt. 1 side if they wish.

Regarding the amenity space, DAP suggested that porous pavement could be used to help with stormwater. The curved entrance wall could include a few low flagpoles with 2 on each side with colorful banners flying to animate the space to give it a special feature when viewing the corner from Rt. 1. DAP was concerned that there will be an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic and inquired if there was a traffic study completed for this project as there is not a light at the intersection with Rt 1.

The applicant advised that a traffic study will be prepared in conjunction with the submission of the site development plan and noted the improvement with the addition of the new traffic signals at Kit Kat Rd. and at Blue Stream Dr. The area between the two signals will have a break in traffic.

DAP inquired if the applicant had looked at a crosswalk for pedestrian traffic going south to north across Route 1. The applicant responded that the pedestrian crosswalk is just off the map on the south side which was put in with conjunction with the signal at Rt. 1 and Blue Stream Dr. This sidewalk will connect to the sidewalk at the existing signal and will provide a safe crossing to the location. DAP inquired if striping could be put in instead without having a signal. The applicant advised they can investigate that with SHA but was not optimistic.

DAP cautioned that due to space limitation in the back that enough room be allocated for storm water management, especially since they are being held to the 100-year storm criteria and recommended to include recycling bins along with the trash bins in the amenity space. The applicant advised that they already passed the 100-year requirement due to the deep run watershed and will continue designing as they work towards the site development plan.

Architecture

DAP commented that the symmetrical scheme might benefit from breaking up that symmetry a little bit and responding to the site itself. Emphasize the corner at Rt. 1 and the private road as an opportunity for more interesting architecture there and not be beholden to pure symmetry. DAP recommend carrying horizontal lines or bands across with the same color so that it is not so choppy. This will add articulation to weave it all together. DAP noted that light sconces, doors and store front were included, but recommended another element to break up the wall along the street. Creating additional height at the corner could also help to address screening rooftop mechanical equipment. There was discussion around the topography of the site and the proposed building. The section-views show the land falls away from the street and the high point will be along Rt 1. The proposed building is low with low parapets. Sightline studies for the mechanicals on this building are very important.

DAP advised that the approach to creating an architectural façade is on point and is better than creating a very distinct back of house and the applicant has made the most of the situation and they did not recommend changing any of the fenestration on that façade.

Landscape

Since the same team created the building next to this project it would be beneficial to carry the street front landscaping through. It doesn't have to mimic it, but it is an interesting opportunity to have some cohesion and have the two sites work together.

DAP recommended adding a row of trees lining the sidewalk to help soften the edge and filter the view should these storefronts become the back.

DAP recommended planting smaller trees that can be planted a certain distance away from the power lines along the frontage with overhead lines and along the sidewalk. They suggested Columnar Beech or Crape Myrtle as options. DAP complimented the applicants on their selection of plant material with 50-70% of the plants being native and recommends softening the parking lot by putting trees in the islands and at the left edge of the parking lot to bring in some shade. DAP suggested the walkway could be perpendicular to the back of the building and then still branch off to the amenity space. This would create an island planting area that you could use for perennials, flowers, shrubs to make the space special. DAP recommended that the applicant plant small enough trees in the island on Blue Stream Drive that will have enough area and water to live.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

DAP Member Larry Quarrick made the following motion:

That the applicant develop a landscape plan that is sensitive to the needs of the parking lot in terms of shade and enhances the appearance of the building from Rt. 1, including the walkways that connect to the amenity space.

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman seconded.

Vote: 5-0

DAP Member Ethan Marchant made the following motion:

That the applicant studies the cornice lines of the building side and celebrate the signature corner and perform a sightline study to ensure that rooftop mechanical systems are concealed from view.

DAP Member Vivian Stone seconded.

Vote: 5-0

3. Review of Plan No. 21-08, 7561 Washington Blvd, Elkridge MD

Owner/Developer: South Trotter LLC

Engineer: Benchmark Engineering, Inc

Developer: Brandon Boy

Background

The proposed project will be constructed on the two parcels whose combined area is 9.75-acres and is Zoned R-20. Age Restricted housing is permitted in R-20 zoned properties with the approval through a conditional use hearing. The proposed use will be subject to the requirements established in the Howard County Zoning Ordinance for age restricted adult housing. The property is currently undeveloped and contains a pond, wetlands, stream and some vegetated areas. The surrounding neighboring properties are single family residential and the property borders the Clarksville Middle School property.

DPZ noted that several comments were received from the community and those comments were forwarded to DAP for review prior to the meeting. DAP commented that their role is as an advisory panel for DPZ on design issues. Their goal is to make the project as good as it can be for the community and developer. They are not a regulatory agency with veto power but can make recommendations that do carry some weight with the final approval.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Malagari began the presentation with an overall review of the site. The site is in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of South Trotter Rd and Swimmer Row Way. South Trotter Rd is a major collector road and Swimmer Row Way is a public access road. The site consists of 2 lots, one of which has an existing house with a driveway off South Trotter Rd. Both parcels are zoned R-20. There are no existing sidewalks on South Trotter Way but there are sidewalks along Swimmer Row Way from the intersection to the existing residential neighborhood. There is an existing farm pond (wet pond) that sits in the middle of the site that was built in the late 1950's-early 1960's. This pond is not a storm water management facility. There is a small existing flood plain in the bottom left corner of the property that borders the pond. The drainage area exceeds 30 acres and, according to county regulations, must be analyzed for the 100-year flood. Four culvert pipes go under the road and do pass the 100 years storm. DAP inquired if storm water from the existing neighborhood flows down into the property. The applicant confirmed it did not since they had micro bio retention and rain gardens in that area. The applicant did advise that drainage does come from the middle school parcel, through a culvert pipe under the driveway that moves through the pond. That water then outfalls from the pond and through pipes under Swimmer Row Way. The existing wet pond does not handle storm water storage. The average depth of the pond is 6-7'. The applicant is processing plans through the state to remove the

pond and restore the existing stream that used to traverse through the property from the school towards Swimmer Row Way. MDE and DNR would like the pond removed and the stream restored since this is a class 4 cold water stream. The pond does not have any current state standards, specs for pond embankments or out fall control structures. The restored stream will meander through the property and when stormwater discharges from the school into the stream it will continue to pass through the stream system within the River Hill open space areas.

DAP inquired if the impacts were studied if the existing pipes could handle the increased volume since the pond would have delayed the water passing through. The applicant responded that there was a 100-year floodplain study conducted by a company called Bay Hands that specialize in stream restoration. They analyzed the drainage area to the property and the culvert pipes under Swimmer Row Way.

The developer is proposing a 55 and older adult community and are planning to go through the conditional use process through the R-20 zoning regulations. They are proposing 25, detached, age restricted single-family homes. The home designs will be 2800 square feet, have a 2-car garage, and will be 1 story with a possible 2 story with basements. There will be an HOA condominium regime that will handle maintenance of the common areas and snow removal, etc.

The applicant commented that many school children walk along South Trotter Rd and they are proposing a new sidewalk from the existing crosswalk that crosses South Trotter Rd between Pointers Run Elementary and Clarksville Middle School to the intersection of Swimmer Row Way and South Trotter Rd. The road is an open section road and the applicant will be providing curb and gutter along their side of the road from the beginning of the property to the intersection of Swimmer Row Way. There will not be any public roads on this site. The 16 units on the eastern side will be served by a common driveway that will be 24' instead of the required 16' to allow easier access into the units and to allow for some street parking. The required community building will be 500 square feet in size and can be accessed from the public road and will include 10 parking spots. Trash collection for the project will be public. The trash pad is proposed at the beginning of the common driveway for the 16 homes. Residents on South Trotter Rd will put their trash outside their units for pickup by the county. They are proposing public water and sewer that will be extended from Swimmer Row Way and tie directly into the units on South Trotter Rd.

Perimeter landscaping will include street trees along South Trotter Road and maintaining the existing street trees along Swimmer Row Way. There will be landscaping around the community building and trash pad and the micro bio retention that is proposed in the front of the site. The landscaping will include Maples, London Planetrees and Red Oaks along the road as well as White Pines scattered throughout the perimeter planting areas. Storm water management will be handled through dry wells for the rooftops and micro bio retention for the common driveway.

The applicant is proposing a series of pathways through the open space that will start at the sidewalk on South Trotter Rd along the stream with a few benches along the path and then tying back into the sidewalk on Swimmer Row Way. On the eastern side of the stream the applicant proposes another path off the T turnaround, connecting to the community building and the existing sidewalk along Swimmer Row Way. The pathways were not connected as there was some concern with school children from the neighboring community walking through the property to go to school.

The applicant displayed artist's renderings of the site. The builder for this site has not been confirmed, but they have been in discussion with NV Homes. The products, elevations and renderings displayed are from other NV 55 and older communities. The floorplans utilize single floor living but come with an optional second floor and/or finishing the basement. They will have a combination of walk out and in

ground basements. The community building will be similar in architecture to the homes. The applicant feels this product is in high demand and fits in with the surrounding community.

Staff Presentation

DPZ commented that the applicants did a good job presenting what they are proposing for lots 1 and 2 found at the intersection of South Trotter Rd and Swimmer Row Way. DPZ noted the two properties are on 9.758 acres and are zoned R-20. Since an age restricted community is proposed, a conditional use petition and hearing will be required to move forward. They are proposing 25 homes that will use a private access way creating 2 rows of housing surrounding the stream restoration project. DPZ requested the DAP address the major items and comments made by the public. DPZ also requested the DAP discuss the layout and configuration of the site plan and architecture to see if the context fits with the surrounding neighborhoods and residences. DPZ also requested the DAP comment on the amenity spaces on site. DPZ also commented that the applicant's proposed community building does meet the requirements, but asked DAP if a better layout for this space could be recommend.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Design

DAP discussed the density of the site and commented that under conditional use the R-20 zoned property could potentially yield twice as many age restricted houses than the current zoning allows for. The applicant advised that with R-20 zoning there are many ways this property can be developed including single family detached (2 units per acre/19 units), 2 units per net acre/18 units, single family attached or conditional use. Under conditional use they are allowed 4 units per net acre which would equate to 36 units, but the developer is proposing 25 units.

DAP feels, generally, this proposal is incompatible with the neighborhood and concerned that the pathways are not connecting to the school. There is concern that too many units are proposed and no internal street trees are planned. It was noted that the proposed house footprints appear to be the same size as those on Swimmer Row Way, but those units have much bigger lots. The units are clustered very tightly together, especially on the private road. DAP commented that parking may be an issue since most people park their cars in the driveway and there won't be any room for guests. DAP advised there may be an issue with the trash pad off Swimmer Row Way with 16 homes having their trash cans and recycle bins out.

DAP advised they are supportive of repairing buffers and restoring streams, but this does not seem to be a free-flowing stream. There was discussion of the pond and its source. The pond seems to retain the water because of the existing dam structure, but it is very extreme at the bottom end of the site and the water is just coming off the parking lots or drainage pipe. DAP commented that the proposed stream restoration may be more of a dry stream bed unless there is a rain event and feels they are trying to restore a stream that is not there anymore. The applicant advised the pond is a wet pond because there is a spring there, which is a water source. The water that will be discharged off the school property will add to the flow through the stream channel before going through the culvert pipes and down through the rest of the open space area and stream that currently exists to the River Hill community to the north. The applicant advised during a non-rain event there should still be a base water flow through the stream. DAP was concerned with the water quality with the run off from the school if there is not a retention basin. It was noted it is not this project's responsibility to address storm water management or quality management for other properties, but that water must pass through the site which they are accounting for.

DAP advised that there is an opportunity for a roadway or an internal connection across the stream, close to the school parking lot, which would eliminate having the stream bifurcate the site.

DAP commented that they do see an opportunity for age restricted housing on this site, but the striking straight lines and orthogonal geometries on natural topography does not work. There is a precedent in the vicinity of smaller, dense housing off Rt. 32. This, however is a 4-sided property that is bifurcated by the stream. DAP commented that stacking up that many homes along South Trotter Rd is foreign (in terms of the immediate context) and appears harsh. DAP cautioned having school children walk to school and crossing 9 driveways could be difficult and recommended that the applicant create a community space in the green area that creates a pedestrian connection through the site that would be a safer route to school. Also, since the applicant is opening the stream valley and creating the landscape it is recommended that the community be invited to the property to enjoy it as well. With the removal of the pond the community is losing an asset. DAP recommended to make a loop walkway so that the community can walk around the environmental area from both the north and south. DAP recommended widening the sidewalks to invite the kids and community through the neighborhood and to connect better to the school.

DAP did not feel that the 9 units on South Trotter Rd were appropriate and encouraged the applicant to allow the street to follow a more natural topography and create a more organic pattern of housing. DAP recommended possibly having some of the houses on the end of South Trotter Rd face Swimmer Row Way and recommended looking at having the driveways for the units on South Trotter Rd in the back instead. DAP also recommended having one street created off Swimmers Row Way that adds a bit of density and allows the other half of the site to be less dense and more traditional. DAP recommended that the applicant look at this project as a double headed approach and examine the contexts from all four sides. The street off Swimmer Row Way should have the number of houses reduced and have room for a real turn around at the end to allow for snow removal. DAP recommended that the turnaround needs to be widened so that trash trucks and the fire department get through there more easily.

DAP commented that, although required, in this case, it may be more beneficial if the community building were eliminated since these buildings are often not used when there are fewer than 40 units. The proposed community building is not well thought out. DAP recommended that applicant find a more creative way to meet this requirement.

DAP recommended possibly building along Swimmer Row Way instead of placing so many homes along South Trotter Rd. There is more frontage and the houses could be further apart and this could soften the edge along South Trotter Rd. The applicant needs to look at how it matches and fits in with the community. This is a very inward facing site and the frontage on South Trotter Rd is very foreign and is unlike anything in the area.

Architecture

The architecture of the buildings is very nice and there are a mix of materials. DAP felt the perspectives seem very misleading and look a lot further apart than they will be. The applicant responded that there will be 15 feet between each unit.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:

That the units along South Trotter Rd be reduced and more reflect the condition of the community on the other side of Trotter Road.

DAP Member Ethan Marchant seconded.

Vote: 5-0

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the pathway system be enhanced to create a full loop both north and south so the residents and community can enjoy the stream.
DAP Member Ethan Marchant seconded.
Vote: 5-0

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the private street off Swimmer Row Way have less units, have more separation between units and have a real cul-de-sac at the end.
DAP Member Dan Lovette seconded.
Vote: 5-0

DAP Member Vivian Stone made the following motion:
That the houses be oriented facing Swimmer Row Way.
The motion was not seconded.

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the applicant lobbies the zoning commission to not require a community building that is proposed on the site, but instead connect to the school and encourage that connection.
DAP Member Ethan Marchant seconded.
Vote: 5-0

DAP Member Larry Quarrick made the following motion:
That the applicant takes a closer look at the internal green space area, particularly where the stream is shown to determine if a stream is feasible on the site.
DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman seconded.
Vote: 5-0

DAP Member Vivian Stone made the following motion:
That the applicant investigates a more organic street network.
DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman seconded
Vote: 5-0

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the applicant responds to the DAP comments and has a second review with the panel.
DAP Member Ethan Marchant seconded.
Vote: 5-0

4. Other Business

- DPZ advised that there is nothing scheduled for the next meeting yet and the deadline is July 22nd.
- DPZ advised that the terrace system behind the Sheraton Hotel along Lake Kittamaqundi will have designs soon and they would like DAP to review and make comments in an unofficial capacity. DPZ will share the summary and motions from the previous meeting.

5. Call to Adjourn

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.