

CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

December 15, 2006

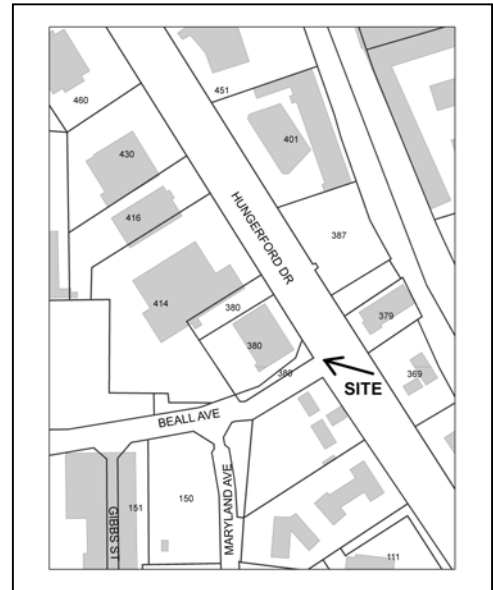
SUBJECT:

Use Permit Application USE2005-00694

Applicant: Rockville Volunteer Fire Department #3
c/o Ray Whalen
380 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Planning Commission Review Date: December 20, 2006

REQUEST:



In accordance with Section 25-193 of the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant submits the subject use permit application, a development proposal to expand and fully renovate the existing fire station, along with other associated site improvements, i.e., installation of new side walk along both site street frontages, upgrade and modify existing vehicular site entrances, resurface and re-stripe site surface parking facilities, etc. The subject property is currently zoned for TC-3 (Town Center-Three (3) land usage.

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTION:

Use Permit U-233-65, Rockville Volunteer Fire Department – a proposal to construct a new “headquarters company” fire station for the Rockville Volunteer Fire Company on the subject site located in the (then) C-2 (General Commercial) Zone. Approved by the Planning Commission on August 11, 1965.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval is recommend subject to the following conditions:

1. Proposed site improvements and building construction activity must be conducted in substantial accordance with site development and building plans submitted by Macris, Hendricks & Glascock, P.A. and Bignell Watkins Hasser Architects P.A. respectively.
 - a. Applicant must submit amended building elevations and floor plans to reflect modification of the proposed north side building addition which was revised at the northeast corner of the addition to insure free flow turning movements in and around that area of the proposed building expansion. **Note, applicant must amend the TCM-1 site zoning reference on the use permit’s proposed site development plan to TC-3.**

2. Submit for the approval of the Chief of Planning, eleven (11) copies of the site development plan/s revised to illustrate that the following departments and/or review agencies site development issues have been satisfactorily addressed:

a. A ten (10) foot wide walkway must be provided along the entire length of the Beall Avenue frontage, which requires relocation of the existing brick wall towards the abutting patio area.

Note, sidewalk design and materials shall be consistent with the Town Square Development.

b. Provide an eight (8) foot wide sidewalk and a six (6) foot wide grass/buffer next to the curb along the length of Hungerford Drive frontage. The fire station signal and utility poles are to remain within the grass/buffer strip.

Note, appropriate permits must be obtained from the Md. State Highway Administration (SHA) for any/all work done within State right-of-way (r/w).

c. Signs must be installed/posted along the site's Hungerford Drive frontage, to alert pedestrians and bikers traveling along said roadway that fire and rescue equipment exit routinely onto Hungerford Drive.

d. All internal and external traffic control devices, such as signs, markings and devices placed on, over, or adjacent to a roadway or pathway to regulate, warn or guide pedestrians and vehicular traffic, shall comply with the latest edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). A signage and pavement-marking plan must be submitted to the Department of Public Works (DPW) and approved by the Chief of Traffic and Transportation prior to the issuance of a Public Works permit.

e. Modify Beall Avenue curb-to-curb dimension to be 58 feet in width. Accommodated in this proposed new roadway section will be four (4) travel lanes, a four (4) foot wide median and two (2) five (5) foot wide bike lanes.

f. A fifty- (50) foot long taper must be provided at the end of the Beall Avenue proposed bike lane, using pavement markings.

g. A ten (10) foot wide public-utility easement (PUE) must be provided along both Beall Avenue and Hungerford Drive.

h. Obtain approval and/or permits from the Environmental Protection Agency and/or Maryland Department of the Environment that confirm the station's fueling system is in compliance with agency regulations.

i. Appropriate bonds must be posted and permits obtained from DPW.

- j. Detailed engineering plans for sediment control and planned public improvements must be submitted for DPW review and approval.
 - k. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall contribute a monetary contribution of \$6,500 for the installation of a bus shelter to be located on Hungerford Drive. The contribution will be incorporated into the Bus Shelter CIP for implementation.
3. The Maryland State Highway Administration requires the following information be provided and/or action taken:
 - a. Label the MD Route 355 replacement curb as MD-620.02 and replacement sidewalk as MD 655.11.
 - b. Provide details for the proposed six (6) foot wide stamped concrete pattern pedestrian path to be located along Hungerford Drive.
4. The City Forester must formally approve the project's forest conservation and landscape plans, prior to the issuance of building permits. Note, the site's proposed landscape plan must be incorporated into the forest conservation plan (FCP).
 - a. A continuous soil panel is required for trees planted on Bell Avenue.
 - b. Ornamental trees must be 2.5" caliper and single stem.
 - c. The street trees along Beall Avenue should be changed to male Kentucky Coffee tree, to match trees being planted further west of the subject site.
 - d. The proposed FCP must be signed by a qualified preparer.
6. The City's Inspection Service Division requires that the site and building plans comply with the following:
 - a. Proposed site and building construction must comply with the State of Maryland Accessibility requirements and adopted codes and standards of the City of Rockville.
 - b. Access to the site must comply with Fire Department turning radius requirements.
7. The applicant is required to comply with the Publicly Accessible Art in Private Development Ordinance (adopted February 2004). There are many options for compliance available to the applicant. Options may include, but are not limited to, visual art on-site, donation to the City's Friends of the Arts fund or to an eligible arts organization, build arts infrastructure or space for arts activities, or partner with another development within the same planning area.

8. The applicant must provide a detailed phasing plan, which includes construction staging and how the station would continue to operate in conjunction with on-going site construction activity that is slated to last for nearly two (2) years.

ANALYSIS:

Property Description

The subject site is located on the northwest corner of Hungerford Drive and Beall Avenue. The existing station was constructed in 1965, is two stories (with a basement) in height, masonry in construction, and approximately 20,173 square feet in size. Based on available information, the station is staffed by thirteen (13) paid staff members during weekdays and 25 volunteers that work during the evenings, nights, and weekends. The station is operational seven days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day. The applicant's representative affirms that the station has responded to approximately 15,000 emergency calls during the 2006 calendar year.

Aerial Overview of Rockville Vol. Fire Station



The subject property is approximately 40,032 square feet in size, which is comprised of two (2) parcels recorded by deed and a record lot. The site has vehicular access on both Beall Avenue and Hungerford Drive. The site entrance on Hungerford Drive serves as the primary exit point for fire and emergency vehicles responding to emergency calls. Fire and emergency vehicles returning to the station primarily use the Beall Avenue site entrance, which allows the vehicles to access the station from the rear, or travel around the north side of the station building to access the station from the front of the site. Pedestrian access to the site is provided via the pedestrian walkways located along both of the abutting streets.

The property is bounded to the south by the currently developing Town Square development project, and to the west, north, and east by an array of office and commercial land uses. The existing fire station is comprised of two primary component parts. The station's administrative offices, operational command center, restrooms, dressing/locker rooms, meeting/conference areas, sleeping accommodations, and kitchen/food preparation facilities are located in the southern portion of the building. The station's vehicle parking/storage bays, where fire trucks and other emergency vehicles are parked and readied for service, makes up the larger north side of the station building. In addition to the storage of service vehicles, other associated support equipment and materials are also stored in that larger area of the station, all readily accessible and in close proximity to the station's fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.

As shown on plans submitted with the site development proposal, the fire station site contains very little green space, sparse amounts of vegetative materials, and a few mature trees located on the Beall Avenue site frontage (See Exhibits 1 & 2). The site is primarily covered with impervious surface materials, i.e., the fire station, and accompanying site surface parking facilities, which forms an "L shape" around the west and north sides of the station building. The site's surface elevation is relatively flat with little or no surface sloping.

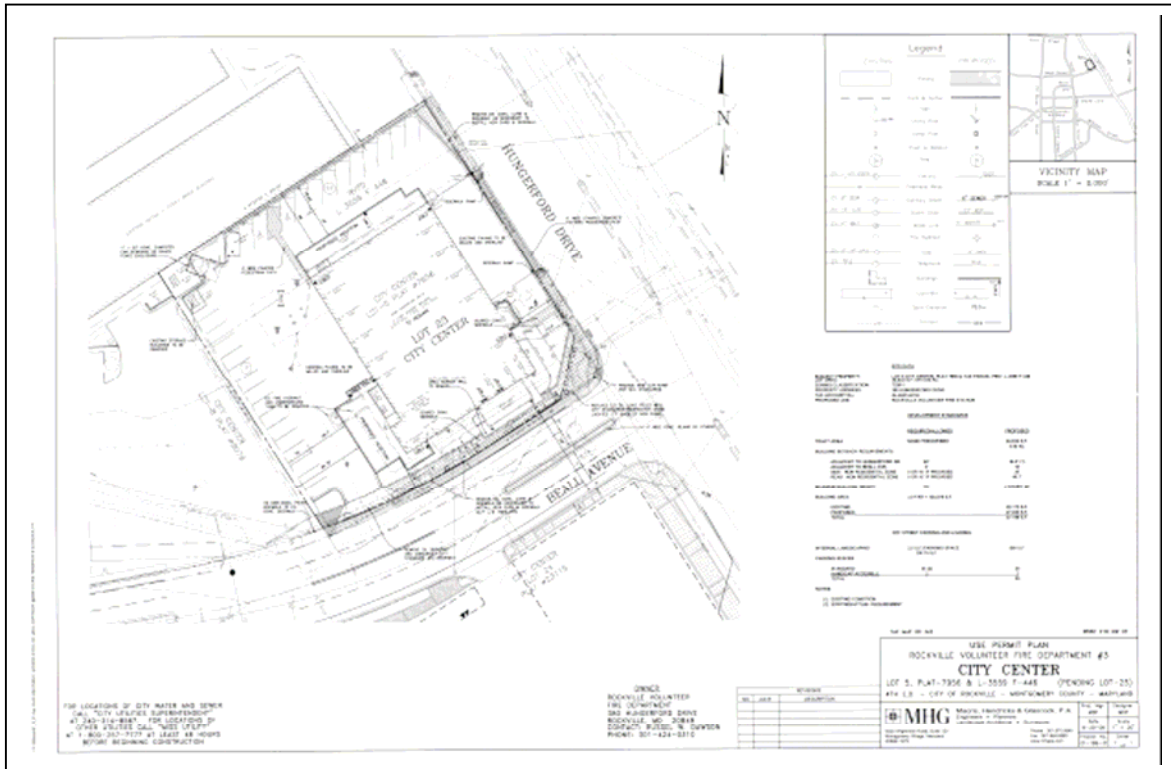
Site Use & Project Proposal

The applicant (Rockville Volunteer Fire Department, Station #3) plans to renovate, modernize, and expand the existing two-story (with a basement) 20,173 square foot station. Under the subject proposal, Rockville VFD plans the following building and site development related activities: 1) construction of two building additions, an addition on the rear southwest corner and a second addition on the north side of the existing station building; 2) construction of a clock and bell tower on the southern portion of the station building; 3) resurface, restripe, and reconfigure site surface parking facilities; 4) modification and upgrading of site vehicular entrances on both Beall Avenue and Hungerford Drive; 5) installation of new side walks along both site street frontages; 6) installation of new trees and plant materials (where feasible) and; 7) removal of the existing storage building located in the rear northwest corner of the site.

The construction of the two planned building additions will add an additional 27,023 square feet of building space onto the existing 20,173 square foot station. Once completed the building will contain a total 47,196 square feet. The proposed station renovation will be carried out in two distinct phases. Under the first phase, the station will remain open and in service during construction. The north side building addition will be constructed under phase one (1) of the

development project, in order to establish temporary quarters for the department. Under phase two, the station's current operations center, along with the other areas of that part of the building will be renovated. As per the information provided, it is expected that construction will be completed within 18 to 24 months of the initial startup date.

Proposed Site Development Plan

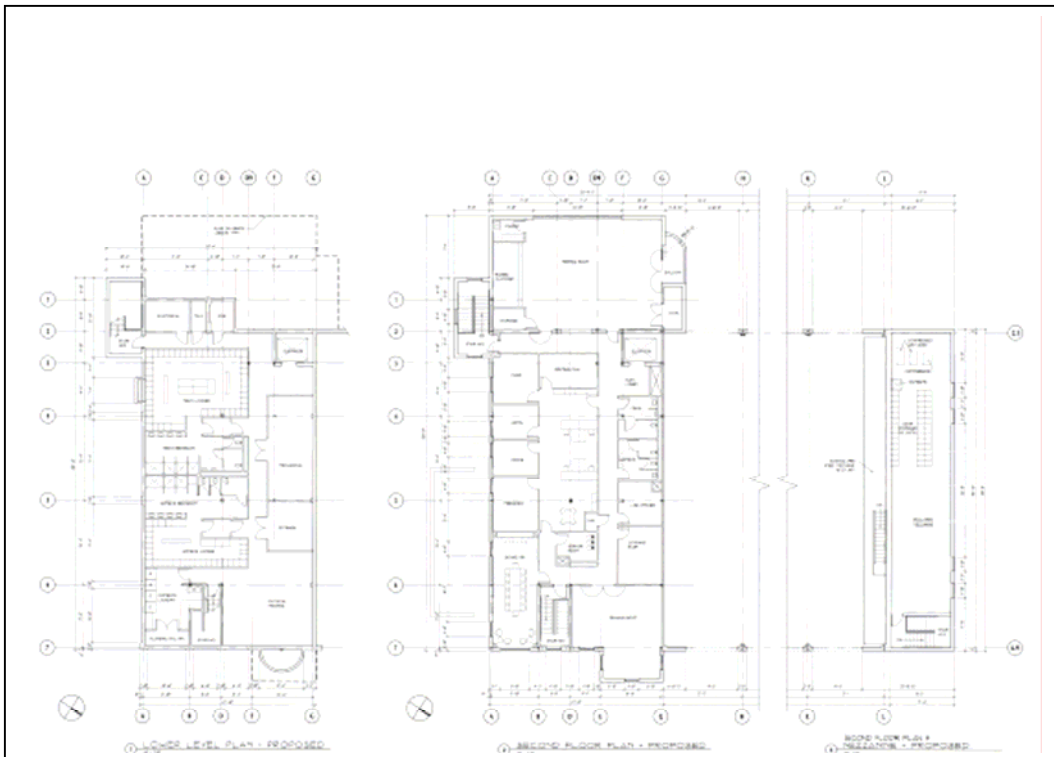
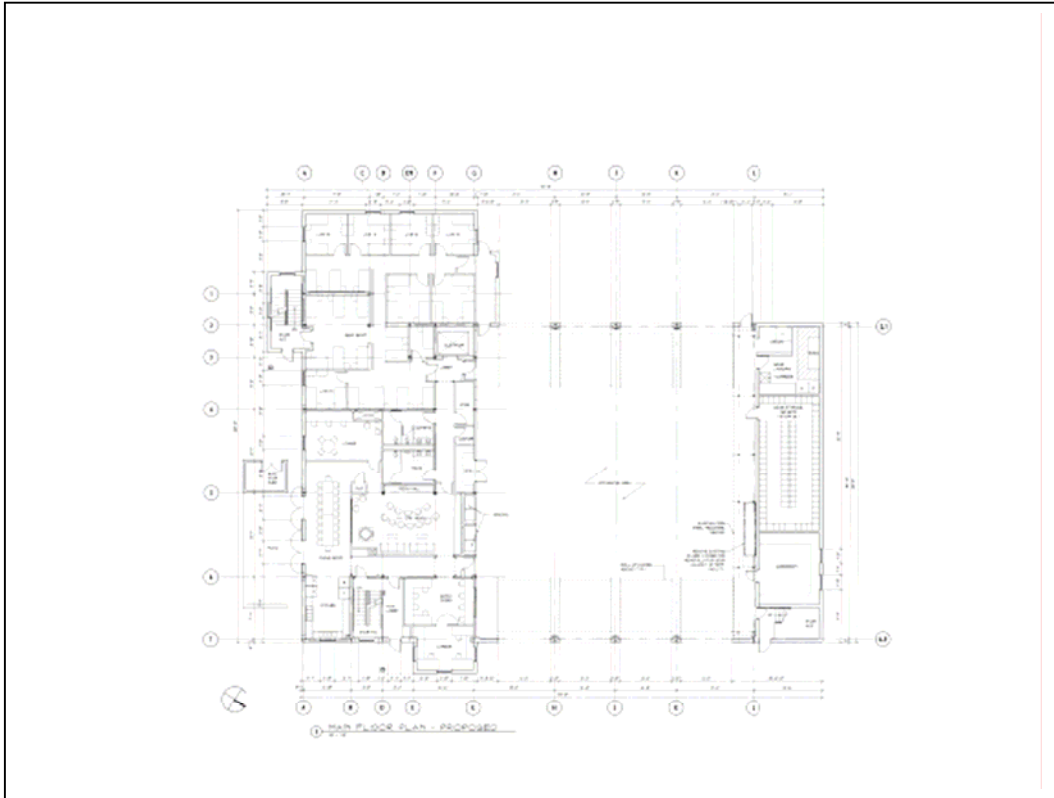


Once completed, the newly renovated and expanded station will feature the following building amenities:

- Basement Level** – a domestic laundry room, physical training area, men's and women's locker rooms, restrooms, miscellaneous storage space, and mechanical equipment room;
- Main Level** – kitchen, dining room, lounge, T.V./Day room, restrooms, sleeping quarters, command center/watch deck area, vehicle storage/parking bays that accommodate fire and rescue vehicles, gear storage area, gear laundry area, and a workroom; and
- Upper Level** - meeting room, staff offices, training room, rest rooms and storage space, and gear storage located within the enclosed mezzanine above the north side newly constructed building addition (See Illustrations I & II and Exhibits 5 & 6).

As noted, the site surface parking facilities will be resurfaced and restriped. At total of 30 surface parking spaces will be provided, which should be sufficient to accommodate the needs of station personnel, all working varying assignment shifts, i.e., fifteen (15) paid staffers working the day shift during the week, and twenty-five (25) staff members working evenings, nights, and weeks.

Illustrations I & II – Proposed Floor Plans



Since the filing of the subject use permit in August 2005, the applicant has attempted to address a number of issues and concerns raised by staff in its review of the subject proposal. The applicant affirms that the planned building expansion and renovation project is being funded entirely via private donations and fund raising events.

Applicable Sections of the Zoning Ordinance & Staff Assessment

In accordance with Section 25-193 of the Ordinance, a use permit shall be issued if the Planning Commission finds that the use proposed will not:

Adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed site use. The fire station is located in the center of the City, surrounded primarily by office and commercial land uses. As noted, the site has vehicular access onto Beall Avenue, a business district roadway and Hungerford Drive, a State and major (six lane divided) roadway. The site is served by public water and sewer services provided by the City of Rockville. The site's water and sewer, electric, gas, and other relevant utilities will likely require some upgrade and/or retrofit in order to serve the modernized and expanded fire station facility. The applicant's consultants have obtained approval of the projects storm water management concept plan and have affirmed it will comply with all of the City's Department of Public Works conditions of the plans approval; in order to accommodate stormwater runoff generated by the planned site redevelopment. At this initial stage in the land use and development review process there is no evidence the planned fire station expansion and renovation will overburden existing public utilities or other services within the site area.

As noted the site is a corner property, with frontage on two public roadways/streets. The site's Beall Avenue entrance is approximately 160 feet from the intersection at Hungerford and the Hungerford site entrance is approximately 80 feet west of the intersection at Beall Avenue. A median break in Hungerford allows emergency response vehicles to respond to calls via exiting the site in both north and south directions. An existing dedicated traffic light will remain in place on Hungerford Drive throughout the construction phase, as well as when the development is completed, to stop vehicular traffic during emergency responses. The applicant's traffic consultant affirms has found that vehicular circulation around the site will remain substantially as it currently exists.

In addition to new sidewalks being installed along both site street frontages, the curb along Beall Avenue will be relocated to allow for the installation of a bike lane. While the applicant has proposed to widen the sidewalk along Hungerford Drive, at varying points, to allow for bike access, the proposed widening is not uniform and is less than the minimum 8-foot width that is being recommended by staff. Staff has asked that the applicant provide an eight (8) foot wide sidewalk and a six (6) foot wide planting strip along the entire length of the site's Hungerford Drive street frontage (less the driveway entrance area). The applicant expresses safety concerns with staff's request to promote additional pedestrian and bicycle access around the facility, specifically along the Hungerford Drive side of the site. Rockville VFD representatives note that the largest emergency response vehicles exit the building directly onto Hungerford Drive. Thus,

the applicant has stated that “promoting more inviting and slower paced access by pedestrians and bikers may lead to increasingly dangerous conditions.” Staff believes that this safety concern can be mitigated via installation of additional signage that alerts bikers and pedestrians to exiting emergency vehicles in that area of the site.

The station has existed at the subject location for well over 40 plus years and staff has found no evidence the facility has been or will be detrimental to abutting land uses or adverse to the health and safety of persons residing in the neighborhood in which it is located. The proposal to expand and modernize the facility will insure that the station continues to be a viable life safety institutional member of the community and that the character of the neighborhood will not be altered.

Aerial View of Rockville VFD



Be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood. Once completed, the newly renovated fire station is expected to operate much as it has over the past years, i.e., hours of operation, level and quality of emergency services

provided, staffing levels, etc. As noted, the station operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since the project will be implemented in two distinct phases, staff would suggest that the applicant provide a detailed phasing plan, which includes construction staging and how the station would continue to operate in conjunction with on-going site construction activity that is slated to last for nearly two (2) years.

Although the newly renovated/expanded station will be approximately 27,023 square feet larger than the existing 20,173 square foot station (i.e., a total size of 47,196 sq.ft.), the character of the site area in which the facility is located will not be substantively altered or changed. As a condition of the use permit's approval, the applicant is requested to work with staff to insure that new sidewalks and other related site frontage improvements are consistent and compatible with those being constructed in the general area of the Town Square project. To the extent possible, the applicant is also working with the City Forester's office to install new trees and plantings on the subject site.

Rockville VFD's proposal to renovate and modernize the existing station and other site improvements are intended to insure that the station continues to provide the vital life safety services to the community it has since its inception. Said improvements make certain that the station's physical character is consistent with and reflective of the City's newly developing town center. The applicant affirms that due to the age of the facility and lack of alternative site area properties, where a new larger facility could be constructed, the existing station facility must be expanded and renovated in order to continue to provide the level of services required for the community in which it is located. According to the information provided, staff would also agree that an expanded and modernized station facility is and will be needed within the subject site area to insure that the level of emergency services provided by this facility be maintained and enhance to safeguard the health and safety of persons working and living within the community.

Constitute a violation of any provision of the Zoning Ordinance or other applicable laws.

According to the City records, the fire station was constructed in 1965 and has been operational since that time. The applicant's proposal to modernize and expand the existing fire station is not adverse to applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance or the Master Plan. The Plan's land use designation of the site is for "mixed use preferred office" usage, which is consistent with the existing TC-3 zoning of the subject site.

The use permit is submitted in accordance with Section 25-193 of the Ordinance. The applicant is currently working with the City Forester to obtain final approval of the project's forest conservation and landscape plans. Staff does note, that the plan as submitted does not fully comply with the City's Bikeway Master Plan, which calls for a "shared use path" of 10 feet in width or a minimum of 8 feet in width, be provided along the site's Hungerford Drive frontage.

As per the Bikeway Master Plan, standards for connectivity of bicycle facilities consist of ensuring the availability of bicycle facilities on respective site frontages as identified in the Bicycle Master Plan.

Hence, as previously noted, the applicant has provided a sidewalk six (6) feet in width, along the curb of the roadway. The applicant has expressed safety concerns with the added introduction of pedestrian and bikers around the station facility, specifically along the site's Hungerford Drive street frontage.

With the exception of the above noted issue, staff finds that the development proposal as submitted, complies with all known and applicable requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance and/or other applicable development standards and regulations.

Based on all of the noted factors, staff finds reasonable justification to recommend Use Permit USE2005-00694 be approved subject to the conditions referenced on pages one thru three of this staff report.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Notification cards were sent to 550 property owners within the subject site area, informing them of the application request and pending Planning Commission meeting. A list of addresses is contained in the project's application file for public review and inspection.

List of attachments:

- Attachment "A" – Outline Transportation Report
- Attachment "B" – Letter From Mo. County Fire Chief
- Attachment "C" – SWM Concept Approval Letter
- Exhibit "1" – Proposed Site Development Plan
- Exhibit "2 & 3" – Proposed Landscape Plan
- Exhibit "4" – Vehicle Movement
- Exhibits "5 & 6" – Proposed Building Floor Plans
- Exhibit "7 & 8" – Proposed Building Elevation Drawings



USE

APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION: ROCKVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT #3

Application is hereby made with the Planning Commission of Rockville for approval of a USE Permit for the property described below:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE	PROPERTY ADDRESS		
	NUMBER, STREET & ZIP	380 HUNGERFORD DRIVE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850	
	SUBDIVISION	LOT	BLOCK
	CITY CENTER	5	-
ZONING	TAX ACCOUNT NO.	PROPERTY SIZE (In square feet)	
TCM-1	00155130	40,032	
APPLICANT*	NAME	MAILING ADDRESS - NUMBER, STREET, CITY, STATE, ZIP	PHONE / FAX / E-MAIL
	FIRST	P.O. Box 1547	
	LAST	Rockville, MD 20849-1547	
PROPERTY OWNER	FIRST	P.O. Box 1547	
	LAST	Rockville, MD 20849-1547	
	COMPANY	BIGNELL WATKINS HASSER	
ARCHITECT Registration #	LAST	FIRST	
	2661 RIVA ROAD, SUITE 1030, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401		
ENGINEER/ OTHER Registration #	COMPANY	MACRIS HENDRICKS & GLASCOCK, P.A.	
	LAST	FIRST	
9220 WIGHTMAN ROAD, MONTGOMERY VILLAGE, MD			
GENERAL INFORMATION			
TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA	RETAIL GFA	MAX. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PER SHIFT	
27,023 47,196		19	
OFFICE GFA	SERVICE INDUSTRIAL GFA	IF RESIDENTIAL, NUMBER OF UNITS	
		____ MF ____ TH ____ SFD	
NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES REQUIRED BY ORDINANCE	NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES PROVIDED	WATER AND SEWER DEMAND	
		____ mgd ____ mgd	

* A letter of authorization from the owner must be submitted if this application is filed by anyone other than the owner.

Description of what this use permit is for: BUILDING ADDITION TO EXISTING FIRE DEPT.

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make this application, that the application is complete and correct and that I have read and understand all procedures for filing this permit.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLANNING DIVISION	
Application #:	<u>USP 2005-00694</u>
Staff Reviewer:	<u>ODC</u>
Target Planning Commission Review Date:	<u>12-20-06</u>

Signature of Applicant 

Received by:	<u>TWT</u>
Date:	<u>8/3/05</u>
Total fee: \$	<u>1500</u>