


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 TH FLOOR		
	SUBJECT	BMZA / 2706 Pulaski Highway		

TO

Mr. David Tanner, Executive Director
Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
417 East Fayette Street, 14th Floor

DATE: October 29, 2015

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received Nate Pretl's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of 2706 Pulaski Highway LLC, to use the entire premises as a community center. The Zoning Administrator has determined that a variance of off-street parking requirements is needed for approval. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on November 3, 2015.

SITE

2706 Pulaski Highway is located on the northwest corner of the intersection with Belnord Avenue. This property measures approximately 73'8" by 141'6" and is currently improved with a three-story detached commercial building covering the entire lot. This site is zoned B-2-2 and is located within the East Monument National Register Historic District.

ANALYSIS

Use: In this zoning district, multi-purpose neighborhood centers are a permitted use, and so are allowed (§6-306). In this case, the property was last authorized for use as a furniture store, which is also a permitted use in this B-2 Community Business District. The structure on this property was constructed in 1935 as a movie theatre, as reflected in the floor plans attached to the application.

Off-Street Parking: ... whenever the existing use of a structure is changed to a new use, off-street parking facilities must be provided, as required by this title, for that new use (§10-203.a). If the structure was lawfully erected before April 20, 1971, additional off-street parking facilities are mandatory only in the amount by which the requirements for the new use exceed those for the existing use (§10-203.b). The amount of off-street parking for a multi-purpose neighborhood center will be as required by the Board after considering written recommendation by the Department of Public Works (§10-405.22.iii). The plans attached to the application give the intended occupant of the premises as Casa de Maryland, an organization with a clientele composed primarily of persons recently arrived in Baltimore, most of whom do not have private vehicles and use public transportation when not walking to a destination. This location is well-served by public transportation giving access to downtown Baltimore and neighborhoods to its east, northeast, and southeast. The demand for off-street parking would thus derive from the needs of the staff and volunteers working at the proposed community center.

Off-Street Parking Variance: ... the Board may grant a variance to reduce by no more than 75% the number of off-street parking spaces otherwise required by the applicable regulation

(§15-208.b). In this case the reduction proposed is 100%, which is greater than the variable amount the Board ordinarily may authorize. However, the historic development pattern of this area does not provide the applicant opportunities to locate off-site off-street parking resources, and providing any on-site would require demolition of a portion of the existing 80-year-old structure, thus presenting a practical difficulty with compliance with the Zoning Code requirement for off-street parking.

Historic District: The property is located in a designated historic district, and so may be eligible for historic tax credits for restoration and renovation. The appellant is encouraged to contact the Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation before proceeding with any improvements which may be authorized as a result of this appeal.

TransForm Baltimore: This property would become part of the C-1 District (Proposed Zoning Map Area 7-D) in which community centers and cultural facilities would be permitted uses (Table 10-301). The community centers would have off-street parking requirements of 1 space per 10 persons of rated capacity, while cultural facilities would have requirements of 1 space per 4,000 square feet of floor area (Table 16-406A).

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends approval of this appeal.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: Nate Pretl, Appellant