

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 / 4501 Curtis Avenue		

TO

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

DATE: April 20, 2012

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received Vincente Bevivino's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application to use a portion of the premises as a recyclable materials recovery facility manufacturing organic compost, with outdoor storage of incoming carbonaceous materials and outgoing finished product (compost for farming use). We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on May 1, 2012.

SITE

4501 Curtis Avenue is located on the east side of the street, from Locust Street on its northern end to Benhill Avenue on its southern end. This property measures approximately 2,275' by 520' and is currently improved with a group of two-story commercial and industrial buildings, the largest of which measures approximately 1,650' by 80' and contains numerous bays for different industrial and commercial uses. This site is zoned M-3 and is located within the Maritime Industrial Zone Overlay District.

ANALYSIS

Conditional Use: In this zoning district, recyclable materials recovery facilities, with outdoor storage of materials – but only if the facility is effectively screened by a durable fence or landscaping, are a conditional use, requiring approval by the Board (§7-407). In this location, the proposed outdoor storage of materials would occur on a 55,000 square feet area that is between the 1,650' long industrial building and a large rail yard servicing the Curtis Bay area coal piers to its east. As a result, fencing would only be required for the purpose of separating this storage area from the other industrial logistical support open-air area parts of the property lying between the principal building and the railroad right-of-way. The proposed use would occupy approximately 54,000 square feet of the building initially (out of approximately 132,000 square feet in the building) and if commercially successful would occupy approximately 140,000 square feet of the building. The outdoor storage area would remain approximately 55,000 square feet throughout operation of the proposed facility.

Maritime Industrial Zone Overlay District (MIZOD): This property is located in the Curtis Bay Industrial Area portion of the MIZOD. The Department of Planning has reviewed the proposed use of the property and determined that it is consistent with the intent of the MIZOD to protect and encourage continuing industrial use of Baltimore's historic waterfront areas.

Comprehensive Planning: Staff note that the placement of the outdoor storage area is behind the long building on the east side of Curtis Avenue, and thus it will not be visible to the Curtis Bay residential area on the west side of Curtis Avenue. The applicant has met with the Community of Curtis Bay Association, which voted to support this proposal.

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Office of Sustainability: This application has been reviewed and there are no objections to the applicant's proposed plan for use of the property and for the proposed operation of the recyclable materials recovery facility. The compost manufactured at this location would be of great benefit to Baltimore's efforts to develop urban farming, as it would be locally produced and readily accessible to urban gardeners and urban farmers. The Office of Sustainability supports approval of this proposed use of this property.

Land Use and Urban Design: The outdoor storage of materials should be limited to not more than six months at a time for both incoming recyclable materials and outgoing compost material that are stored in the open. The applicant has consulted with Office of Sustainability staff about using "hoop houses" to be erected at the rear or east side of the building to provide coverage of materials being stored outdoors, to minimize their exposure to rains and any resultant run-off. The applicant has committed to a first-in, first-out policy with regard to processing incoming material and to exporting compost. This would limit chances for the materials stored outdoors to become either a nuisance or a potential hazard.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends approval of the appeal, subject to the condition that materials stored outdoors be placed only in the area to the east of the existing building to be used by the applicant, and be stored outdoors for not more than six months continuously if not covered and for not more than one year continuously if stored in "hoop houses" or similar temporary structures.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: Vincente Bevivino, Appellant