Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT

Thomas J. Stosur
Director

January 23, 2013

REQUEST: City Council Bill #14-0307/Urban Renewal – Madison Park South - Amendment
For the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Madison Park South to add a waiver to the Housing Commissioner for provisions of the Plan; making the provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with amendment to add the following language to the bill directly following the proposed waiver provision under D. new subsection 6:

> "Upon receipt of a waiver request, the Commissioner shall provide written notice and a copy of the waiver request to the Mount Royal Improvement Association, the Madison Park Improvement Association and the Eutaw Place Improvement Association or their successor organizations. These organizations shall have three weeks from the date of notice to provide their comments on the waiver request to the Commissioner before a waiver may be issued."

STAFF: Alexandra Hoffman

PETITIONER: Councilman William Cole (Eleventh District) on behalf of Memorial Apartments Corporation/Somerset Development Company, LLC

OWNER(S): Multiple

SITE AREA

Site Conditions: The Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan area includes portions of the Bolton Hill and Madison Park neighborhoods within the central planning district. Although the request would impact the entire Urban Renewal Plan area, the applicant is the owner and developer of Lot 10. Much of the Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan is located within a local historic district (Bolton Hill and Upton's Marble Hill) and therefore has additional design oversight through the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) review for both the renovation of existing buildings and new construction.

HISTORY

The Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan was approved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore via Ordinance No. 912 on July 3, 1961. It was last amended via Ordinance No. 891, approved June 13, 1975 (Amendment #5).

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Proposed Amendment: The existing Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan includes many provisions that are outdated and restrict development that would otherwise be permitted under the CHAP guidelines. For Lot 10 of the Urban Renewal Plan (the development site of the Petitioner), these restrictions include prohibitions on the following:

- Light commercial uses as permitted in the Zoning Code for apartment building of 50 units or more
- Market rate apartments
- Lot coverage in excess of 30%
- Parking in excess of 0.7 spaces per unit
- Certain site design requirements, including parking setbacks from all Rights-of-Way including alley streets

Rather than proceeding with a site-specific Urban Renewal Plan amendment, the Department of Planning recommended that the Petitioner introduce a general waiver provision. Due to the age of the Madison Park Urban Renewal Plan, many of the Plan's provisions are no longer applicable or pertinent to redevelopment in the Plan area. Therefore, the proposed amendment allows additional flexibility for Urban Renewal Plan issues in the future, both in conjunction with the Petitioner's proposed redevelopment of Lot 10 as well as other potential developments within the Plan area (such as the implementation of the Central West Baltimore Choice Neighborhoods HUD Planning Grant, etc.). Waiver provisions to the requirements of Urban Renewal Plans are common, so this bill will bring this Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan in line with language typically found in other Urban Renewal Plans.

After meeting with the Mount Royal Improvement Association's Zoning Committee, all parties agreed to support an addition to the proposed amendment that would create a public notice requirement in the event that a request for the proposed waiver is received by the Housing Commissioner. The proposed addition would require that the Housing Commissioner provide written notice and a copy of the waiver request to the Mount Royal Improvement Association, the Madison Park Improvement Association and the Eutaw Place Improvement Association or their successor organizations and provide them three weeks to provide their comments on the waiver request to the Commissioner before a waiver is issued.

Petitioner Request: As referenced above, this amendment was introduced as the request of the Petitioner Somerset Development Company in conjunction with their proposed redevelopment of the Memorial Apartments at 301 McMechen Street. The proposed redevelopment is phased as follows:

1. Immediate plans to renovate the existing senior building on the site, and
2. Future plans to construct a new apartment building on a portion of the site at the southeast corner of the intersection of McMechen Street and Eutaw Place.

Although these Urban Renewal Plan issues are generally not anticipated until the second phase, the financing of the first phase is predicated on an appraisal of the site including the development potential of phase two. Therefore, in order for the financing for phase one to close the Urban Renewal Plan issues for phase two need to be addressed. CCB 14-0307, as amended per staff

recommendation, provides the flexibility for phase two of the redevelopment plan to proceed per the owner's intention. Phase one was reviewed and approved by CHAP on August 26, 2013.

Community Notification: The Mount Royal Improvement Association, the Madison Park Improvement Association, the Eutaw Place Improvement Association and the Midtown Community Benefits District have been notified of the requested action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director