Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT

Thomas J. Stosur
Director

February 6, 2014

REQUEST: City Council Bill 13-0300/ Zoning – Conditional Use Second-hand Store – 2007-2009 West Pratt Street

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a second-hand store on the property known as 2007-2009 West Pratt Street, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER(S): Councilmember Welch, at the request of BNM Thrift Store, c/o Donna Brown

OWNER: Badra Subhi

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This property, located on the south side of Pratt Street approximately 15' west of its intersection with Payson Street, measures approximately 60' by 80' and is currently improved with a three-story attached commercial building covering the entire lot. The street level of this 11,880 square foot building is currently vacant. The site is zoned B-3-2 and is located in the Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan area.

General Area: The property is located near the middle of a long-established commercial strip which runs along both sides of Pratt Street between Frederick Avenue and Fulton Avenue. Typical commercial properties are a mix of mid-to-late 19th Century structures with some newer structures included. Behind these commercial structures lining Pratt Street, residential neighborhoods developed in the late 19th Century are made up of single-family attached housing with some other uses such as schools and churches included.

HISTORY

There is no previous legislative history concerning this property only. It is included in the Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan area.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, Live Goal 1, Objective 2: Strategically redevelop vacant properties throughout the City. The Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) recommends improving the physical infrastructure of the community. As one of its goals, the SNAP also recommends improving the appearance of main corridors (residential/ commercial) of which West Pratt Street is one. The previous use of this commercial property was a retail sales shop for clothing and shoes; the proposed use would support diversity of commercial use in this section of Pratt Street.

ANALYSIS

In the Zoning Code, §1-186.1 defines "second-hand store" as "a place of business of a person who engages in the business of buying for resale, trade, or transfer used or previously owned property or merchandise, including carvings, clothes, ceramics, furniture, glass, household items, jewelry, paintings, rugs, sculptures, silverware, and other moveable personal property, but excluding motor vehicles, records, tapes, compact discs, and books." BNM Thrift Store proposes to use this property for second-hand sales of clothing, household furniture and appliances, and related merchandise. City Council Bill 13-0300 is legislation required according to the Zoning Code §6-409, which lists second-hand stores as a conditional use for which an ordinance is required in a B-3 District.

Conditional Use – Required findings: In accordance with §16-304 of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, the Planning Commission must base its recommendation to the City Council to approve a conditional use on these considerations required by Title 14 {"Conditional Uses"} of the Zoning Code:

1. the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, and operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, security, general welfare, or morals;
2. the use is not in any way precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
3. the authorization is not otherwise in any way contrary to the public interest; and
4. the authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this article (§14-204).

Planning staff, having reviewed the proposed conditional use in relation to these criteria, have determined that the proposed second-hand store at 2007-2009 West Pratt Street meets these requirements for approval by ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, and recommends that the Planning Commission find accordingly in favor of this bill.

Staff notified the Carrollton Ridge Community Association, Communities Organized to Improve Life (COIL), Operation Reach out Southwest (OROSW), West Baltimore Coalition, Badra Subhi, and Councilmember Welch of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director