

January 26, 2000

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board
The Prince George's County District Council

VIA: Arie Stouten, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Catherine H. Wallace, Planner Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Special Exception Application No. 4356**

REQUEST: **Animal Hospital**

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL, with conditions**

NOTE:

This application is on the agenda for the Planning Board to decide whether or not to schedule a public hearing. If the Planning Board decides to hear the application, it will be placed on a future agenda.

Any person may request the Planning Board to schedule a public hearing. The request may be made in writing prior to the agenda date or in person on the agenda date. All requests must specify the reasons for the public hearing. All parties will be notified of the Planning Board's decision.

You are encouraged to become a person of record in this application. The request must be made in writing and sent to the Office of the Zoning Hearing Examiner at the address indicated above. Questions about becoming a person of record should be directed to the Hearing Examiner at 301-952-3644. All other questions should be directed to the Development Review Division at 301-952-3280.

FINDINGS:

1. Location and Field Inspection: The site is located on the north side of Annapolis Road (MD 450) between Glenn Dale Road (MD 953) and Glenn Dale Boulevard (MD 193). It measures just over an acre in size and is developed with a 1-story, 4,633-square-foot animal hospital and associated parking lot. Eight parking spaces are currently located in front of the building, within what is now the right-of-way for MD 450. An abandoned shed is located in the northeast corner of the site. The site is surrounded by the following uses:

North and West ● A partially wooded parcel of land in the R-R Zone.

South ● Across Annapolis Road, single-family, detached dwellings on half-acre lots in the Silverbrook Subdivision (R-R Zone).

West ● An unimproved and partially wooded 6.8-acre parcel proposed for 36 townhouses in the R-T Zone.

2. History: The property has been in the R-R Zone since zoning authority was extended into the Glenn Dale area. Approval for a special exception for an animal hospital on this site was originally obtained in 1983 (SE-3444). The site was retained in the R-R Zone during the 1993 Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Sectional Map Amendment (SMA).
- C. Request: The existing animal hospital is permitted by Special Exception No. 3444. (An addition to the hospital of about 1,760 square feet was also previously approved and is shown on both the SE-3444 and current site plans, as is the associated parking.) The land area of this special exception use has been affected by road widening of MD 450. Approximately 5,400 square feet of land has been lost to the road widening in front of the building, resulting in the loss of eight parking spaces. However, the applicant has gained about 5,680 square feet on the west side of the property through a conveyance from the State Highway Administration. Eight parking spaces will be relocated to the conveyed area.
4. Master Plan Recommendation: The Approved Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Master Plan (1993) shows the subject property in the proposed stream valley park for Lottsford Branch.
- E. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses: The staff accepts the applicant's neighborhood boundaries which are slightly different from the neighborhood identified in the prior special exception because of the construction of Glenn Dale Boulevard. The boundaries are:

North ● Daisy Lane

East ● Bell Station Road and Glenn Dale Boulevard (MD 193)

South ● Annapolis Road (MD 450)

West ● Glenn Dale Road (MD 953)
- F. Specific Special Exception Requirements: There are no specific requirements specified for this use.

G. Parking Regulations: An animal hospital requires 1 space for every 200 square feet of floor area, or 32 spaces for a 6,400-square-foot building. The proposed site plan shows 35 parking spaces including 2 van-sized spaces for the handicapped. (The Parking Regulations actually permit fewer spaces for the square footage devoted to boarding. This animal hospital is devoted solely to surgery and all pets staying overnight are hospitalized rather than boarded, thus the more stringent parking generation figure is used.) The previous special exception required approval of a Departure from Design Standards (No. 158) for a substandard two-way driveway. With the addition of land to the west that driveway will be widened to meet standard requirements, and all other design standards are met.

H. Landscape Manual Requirements: The applicant has submitted a landscape plan which shows conformance with the *Landscape Manual*. A commercial landscape strip is shown per Section 4.2, and interior planting is provided in accordance with Section 4.3. A bufferyard is not required along the adjoining undeveloped parkland. The 20-foot wide landscape buffer along the undeveloped R-T parcel to the east will be provided by that developer, based upon the record plant for Parcel A of Sinclair Woods. (See Section 4.7.) Technically speaking, conformance with the *Landscape Manual* is not required except for the additional parking spaces (Section 4.3) and the screening of the dumpster (Section 4.4). This is because no new square footage is proposed in this application. Section 4.7 supercedes the perimeter planting required by Section 4.3, so the landscape plan conforms to all relevant requirements except for the dumpster screening.

It is noted that additional parking is provided to the rear of the building. Although this brings the parking somewhat closer to the adjoining residentially zoned land, a bufferyard will be provided on the R-T Zoned property as required by the *Landscape Manual*.

I. Zone Standards: The site plan indicates that the plan meets or exceeds the requirements for yards, setbacks and lot coverage in the R-R Zone.

J. Sign Regulations: The site plan indicates that the existing free-standing sign will be relocated. Presumably this will occur when the entrance is reconstructed. The staff was unable to locate the new location of the sign. The new sign location must be shown on the site plan in accordance with the location requirements of Section 27-616 of the Zoning Ordinance.

11. Required Findings:

Section 27-317(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that a special exception may be approved if:

(1) The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of this Subtitle.

The purposes of the Zoning Ordinance are best summarized by the first general purpose: **To protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the County;** and the fourth purpose: **to guide the orderly growth and development of the County, while recognizing the needs of agriculture, housing, industry and business.** This application provides for the continuation of medical services for pets and other animals while allowing for the planned widening of MD 450 and improving the internal circulation of the site. All of these purposes conform to the general purposes of the Zoning Ordinance.

- (2) **The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle.**

The proposed plans are in conformance with, or exceed, all applicable requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, such as the R-R Zone requirements, parking regulations and landscaping requirements. The proposed changes will also improve the current internal circulation on the site by widening the internal driveway to meet standard requirements.

- (3) **The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Map Plan, the General Plan.**

As noted previously, the Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Master Plan shows the property within the proposed stream valley park for Lottsford Branch. The applicant notes that the proposed parking lot will extend 20.84 feet further into the proposed stream valley park than the existing improvements, and that the only improvement the Parks Department proposes for this area is a trail that is to be constructed along the opposite side of Lottsford Branch from the subject site. The Community Planning Division staff found no master plan concerns due to the small size of the encroachment and the continuation of the existing use. (See July 28, 1999, memorandum from Paul Fields.) Department of Parks and Recreation staff noted that the site is located at the edge of the stream valley park and will have no impacts upon the park. (See August 3, 1999, memorandum from Ray Palfrey.)

- (4) **The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area.**

The proposed special exception is required due to the additional land area intended to allow for the relocation of eight parking spaces. It will also permit the addition of nine parking spaces to the rear of the hospital building. It will have no effect on traffic generated by the site or other transportation issues, other than to improve internal circulation and facilitate the widening of MD 450. (See July 20, 1999, memorandum from Tom Masog, Transportation Planning Division.) The hours of operation will remain the same as before: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for daytime hours and 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. for nighttime hours. It should be noted that animals brought to this facility are in need of surgery. After surgery they are generally sedated. Therefore, the noise that often accompanies healthier animals is not an issue here. Furthermore, there are no outdoor runs which could contribute to noise.

- (5) **The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood.**

As noted above, the proposed parking space relocation will have minimal impacts on the adjoining proposed parkland. The addition of nine parking spaces to the rear of the site will have the effect of adding some activities closer to the proposed adjoining townhouses and appear to require the removal of some existing vegetation between the two sites. However, as previously noted, the development of the townhouse properties will require the planting of a 20-foot-wide bufferyard on the R-T-zoned site. Furthermore, the applicant provides ample parking for the proposed use and most of the activity on the site, particularly in the evening hours, will occur on the western side of the property.

- (6) **The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Tree Conservation Plan.**

This property is exempt from the Woodland Conservation Ordinance and there are no other environmental impacts, per the comments of the Natural Resources staff on July 14, 1999.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed special exception represents an appropriate response to the situation created by the need to widen Annapolis Road. The proposed relocation of parking spaces on land acquired from the State Highway Administration in exchange for land required for the widening will allow the applicant to meet parking needs and improve internal circulation, without significant impacts to the adjoining proposed park property. The applicant also proposes to add to parking spaces to the rear of the site and relocate an existing dumpster there. This should be accompanied by additional screening as noted above. Based on the evidence in the record, the staff recommends that this application be APPROVED, subject to the following site plan revisions:

1. The freestanding sign relocation shall be shown on the site plan in accordance with the requirements of Section 27-616.
2. A screening detail for the proposed dumpster shall be shown on the *Landscape Manual*.