

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
 Prince George's County Planning Department
 Development Review Division
 301-952-3530



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DEPARTURE FROM THE NUMBER OF PARKING AND/OR LOADING SPACES# 277

Application	General Data
Project Name Chesapeake Lawn & Home, Ltd.	Date Accepted 11/1/01
	Planning Board Action Limit N/A
	Tax Map & Grid 058 F-3
Location Northeast corner of Arbor Street and 59 th Avenue, known as 5900 Arbor Street.	Plan Acreage 0.14
	Zone C-M
	Dwelling Units N/A
Applicant Chesapeake Lawn & Home, Ltd. 5900 Arbor Street Hyattsville, Maryland 20781 ATTN: Tim Thornton	Square Footage N/A
	Planning Area 69
	Council District 05
	Municipality None
	200-Scale Base Map 203NE5

Purpose of Application		Notice Dates	
DPLS 277 - Departure of two off-street parking spaces, 27-568.		Adjoining Property Owners (CB-15-1998)	4/29/02
		Previous Parties of Record (CB-13-1997)	N/A
		Sign(s) Posted on Site	4/19/02
		Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners	N/A
Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Catherine H. Wallace	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

May 1, 2002

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:

TO: The Prince Georges County Planning Board

VIA: Arie Stouten, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Catherine H. Wallace, Planner Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Departure from Parking and Loading Standards Application No. 277**

REQUEST: **Departure of two of the five parking spaces required for a contractor's office**

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL; with conditions**

NOTE:

The Planning Board has scheduled this application for a public hearing on the agenda date indicated above. The Planning Board also encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record in this application. Requests to become a person of record should be made in writing and addressed to the Development Review Division at the address indicated above. Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

FINDINGS:

- A. Location and Field Inspection: The subject site is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Arbor Street and 59th Avenue in the Tuxedo area just south of the Town of Cheverly. The property consists of two lots totaling .14 acre in size, and is developed with a single-story contractor's office and warehouse.
- B. History: The subject property has been in the C-M Zone since prior to the 1994 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment. There have been no previous applications filed for this property.
- C. Master Plan Recommendation: The *1994 Master Plan for Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity (Planning Area 69)* recommends service-commercial uses for the subject property.
- D. Request: The proposed site plan shows a total of three parking spaces; five are required. Two of the parking spaces are shown inside the building, the third space is to the rear of the building. Access to each space is indicated to be from 59th Avenue. The site plan does not make clear the existence of doorways to the building or the height of the doorways. A departure of two parking spaces is requested.

A variance from Section 27-462(b) was initially requested for the location of the chain link fence, which is located three feet from the rear property line. A 25-foot setback is required for all buildings and structures, including fences over six feet in height. The fence is six feet in height, plus an additional two feet of barbed wire. The applicant has decided to remove the barbed wire, thereby reducing the height to six feet. A letter withdrawing the request for a variance was received on April 24, 2002.

- E. Surrounding Uses: The property is surrounded by the following uses:

North - Single-family detached residences in the R-55 Zone

East, South, and West - Service-commercial and light-industrial uses in the C-S-C and C-M Zones

- F. Design Requirements:

- 1. Parking and Loading Areas: The proposed parking spaces meet the requirements of the Part 11 for dimensions; however, access to the public street must also meet the design standards. The roll-up doors which provide access to two parking spaces must be dimensioned and shown on the site plan. The dimensions of the gate providing access to the loading space must be a minimum of 15 feet wide and must be shown on the plan. The site should also indicate that there is a depressed curb in front of the loading space and that the concrete pad in front of the interior spaces is at the same grade as the street.
- 2. Number of Required Spaces: A landscaping contractor's office requires one parking space per 500 square feet of space; five spaces are required for the 2,012-square-foot building.

3. Landscape Manual: The site is exempt from all requirements of the *Landscape Manual* because: (1) The proposal does not increase the gross floor area; (2) it does not increase the intensity of the use; and (3) the parking and loading facilities predate 1970.
4. Zoning Standards: Section 27-462(b) requires a 25-foot setback from residentially zoned land for all structures in a commercial zone. Because the chain link fence is over six feet in height, the Zoning Ordinance defines it as a structure. However, the applicant has agreed to removing the barbed wire section of the fence, bringing the height back to six feet. The site plan must be revised to show a six-foot high fence.

G. Required Findings: Departure from Parking and Loading Standards

Section 27-588(b)(8) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

1. The purposes of Section 27-550 will be served by the applicant's request.

(a) The purposes of this Part are:

- (1) To require (in connection with each building constructed and each new use established) off-street automobile parking lots and loading areas sufficient to serve the parking and loading needs of all persons associated with the buildings and uses;**
- (2) To aid in relieving traffic congestion on streets by reducing the use of public streets for parking and loading and reducing the number of access points;**
- (3) To protect the residential character of residential areas; and**
- (4) To provide parking and loading areas which are convenient and increase the amenities in the Regional District.**

The applicant maintains, and staff concurs, that the above purposes will be met. This business is operated in such a way that the employees arrive in company vehicles (four) and that the three parking spaces and one loading space is used to load supplies onto the vehicles and go to the job site. Clients do not visit the site. The three parking spaces and one loading space are therefore sufficient to serve the needs of the site without relying on public streets for parking and without affecting nearby residential streets.

The issue has been raised that the applicant's proposal to use company vehicles to transport employees to the site is unrealistic. (See November 29, 2001, memorandum from Tom Masog, Transportation Planning Section.) Mr. Masog notes, for example, that office staff would not, in all likelihood, use a company vehicle to get to work. This is a reasonable assumption; however, the applicant is providing three of the required five spaces on the site. With the assumption that there will be some carpooling and use of company vehicles and the availability of mass transit, the actual impact of the two-space departure on the public streets is negligible.

2. **The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.**

The applicant has provided the maximum number of spaces possible on the site; therefore, the requested departure is the minimum necessary.

3. **The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use, given its nature at this location, or alleviate circumstances which are prevalent in older areas of the County which were predominantly developed prior to November 29, 1949.**

This area of the county was originally subdivided and designed prior to 1949.

4. **All methods for calculating the number of spaces required have either been used or found to be impractical.**

There are no other methods of calculation which would reduce the required number of parking spaces.

5. **Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.**

Because of the nature of the business, the number of parking spaces will be sufficient to handle the parking needs on site, and the needs of adjacent residential areas will not be affected.

- (B) **In making its findings, the Planning Board shall give consideration to the following:**

1. **The parking and loading conditions within the general vicinity of the subject property, including numbers and locations of available on- and off-street spaces within 500 feet of the subject property.**

As noted by the applicant, the immediately surrounding uses include single-family dwellings, a public park and recreation center, a variety of service- commercial and light-industrial uses, and an early childhood development center. With the exception of several residences, most of these uses have off-street parking facilities.

2. **The recommendations of an area master plan, or County or local revitalization plan, regarding the subject property and its general vicinity.**

As noted in the January 10, 2002, memorandum from Teri Bond, Community Planning Division:

■This service-commercial area along Arbor Street is an older commercial area that has been identified as in need of enhancement and is currently the

subject of special study by the Planning Department. Many of the properties such as this one are very small and constrained, and are adjacent to single-family homes. •

The master plan included a number of guidelines for commercial areas that are pertinent to this site:

- Commercial areas should be buffered from surrounding streets and uses, where appropriate, by means of curbs, islands, landscaping, fencing, back-up development and the siting of structures.
- Innovative site design and/or ample landscaping should be used within and around renewed commercial areas to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the areas and to break up the otherwise monotonous barren look of parking areas.
- Adequate off-street loading and unloading space should be provided and located where public ways will not be blocked.

Ms. Bond concludes that the requested departure does not raise any Master Plan issues. We concur. Although the applicant is encouraged to provide whatever landscaping is feasible on the site, this application is for a departure from the required number of parking spaces and the application has addressed the required findings. The master plan guidelines discuss the need for off-street loading, which the applicant provides. The requested departure is for two parking spaces.

3. The recommendations of a municipality (within which the property lies) regarding the departure.

The subject property is not located in a municipality.

4. Public parking facilities which are proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.

The Prince George's County FY 2000-2005 Approved Capital Budget indicates that there are no public parking facilities proposed in the area

(C) In making its findings, the Planning Board may give consideration to the following:

1. Public transportation available in the area.

The applicant notes that the subject property is located on Metrobus Routes F-1 and F-2 and within two blocks of the Metrobus F-8 Route as well as the F-12 Ardwick Industrial Shuttle Line. The Cheverly Metro Station is located approximately one-quarter mile from the subject property. This information indicates that the area is reasonably well served for public transportation.

2. Any alternative design solutions to off-street facilities which might yield additional spaces.

There are no feasible design alternatives that would yield additional parking spaces.

3. The specific nature of the use (including hours of operation if it is a business) and the nature and hours of operation of other (business) uses within 500 feet of the subject property.

The applicant's statement of justification lists the businesses within 500 feet of the subject property and their hours of operation, where posted. The information given and the nature of the businesses listed indicate that they operate at typical times and one should not assume an increase in parking capacity based on atypical hours of operation.

4. In the R-30, R-30C, R-18, R-18C, R-10A, R-10 and R-H Zones, where development of multifamily dwellings is proposed, whether the applicant proposes and demonstrates that the percentage of dwelling units accessible to the physically handicapped and aged will be increased over the minimum number of units required by Subtitle 4 of the Prince George's County Code.

Not applicable.

CONCLUSION:

This application has addressed the required findings for a departure from parking spaces, and the requested departure will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood. We, therefore, recommend APPROVAL of the requested departure, subject to the following site plan revisions:

- The height of the chain link fence shall be dimensioned as six feet.
- The location and dimensions of the doors providing access to the interior parking spaces shall be indicated on the site plan.
- The gate providing access to the loading space shall be dimensioned as a minimum of 15 feet in width.
- A depressed curb shall be shown providing access to the loading space.
- Site plan notes shall indicate that the concrete pad in front of the interior parking spaces is at grade with the public street.