
STAFF COMMENTS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: April 2, 2008

SITE PLAN: **SDP-08-001**

TITLE: Lot 3, Quince Orchard Crescent

REQUEST: Waiver to Allow Review of A Schematic
Development Plan Containing Less Than The
Minimum 100,000 Square Feet Of Office/Retail
Development

ADDRESS: 902 Wind River Lane

ZONE: MXD, Mixed Use Development

APPLICANT: William Aiken, on Behalf of Soka Gakkai
International - USA

STAFF PERSON: Eliza Voigt, Planner

Enclosures:

Exhibit # 1: Waiver request letter

Exhibit # 2: Site Location Map

STAFF COMMENTS

The applicant has submitted a schematic development plan application to establish a religious facility in an existing office building located at 902 Wind River Lane. The site has two existing buildings, each 25,000 square feet, consisting of office or office/medical uses. The lot has frontage on Wind River Lane to the north and Quince Orchard Road to the south. Twin Lakes Drive is to the east of the site.

The applicant is requesting a change in use from the existing office to a religious facility use. They will occupy a 2,558 square foot space of which 1,000 square feet will be an assembly room with seating capacity of 80-90 people. The required parking will increase with this usage change. There will be no other changes to the site. Religious facilities are a permitted use in the MXD (Mixed Use Development) zone.

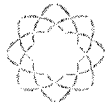
The property, as part of a larger 212 acre site, was originally annexed into the City in September 1982. It was originally zoned I-3 (Industrial Office Park). The site plan (S-805 Lot 3 Quince Orchard Crescent) received final approval in May 1988. In 1993, the site was rezoned MXD by Ordinance 0- 22-93 based on the fact that there had been a substantial change of the condition and/or character of the neighborhood to justify the rezoning. Because the development previously existed prior to the rezoning, and no changes from office use have occurred since this time, a schematic development plan was never developed. In order to change the use, in this case from office to religious facility, a schematic development plan must be established and approved.

Section 24- 160D of the City Code permits the Mayor and City Council to review and approve a schematic development plan in the in the MXD zone. However, Section 24-160D.9(b)(2)states that unless a prior waiver is obtained from the City Planning Commission, a schematic development plan shall contain at a minimum at least 200 dwelling units and/or 100,000 square feet of proposed retail/office development or a comparable equivalent mix of such development. Staff believes the waiver is appropriate as the site is part of a larger area also zoned MXD and no changes to the existing improvements are proposed.

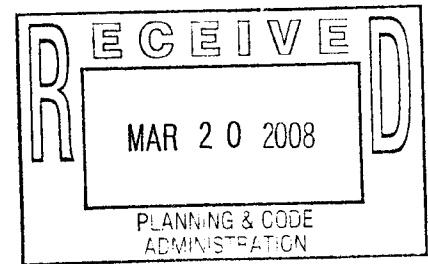
With this waiver, per Section 24-160D.9 (b) (3), the City Council and City Planning Commission shall conduct a public hearing on the application.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a motion to approve the waiver request per Section 24-160D.9 of the Zoning Ordinance.



Soka Gakkai International - USA
Office of Public Affairs



March 18, 2008

Mr. John Bauer, Chairman
City of Gaithersburg Planning Commission
31 South Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Re: Soka Gakkai International – USA
902 Wind River Lane, Suite 206

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I hereby request approval of a waiver to allow review of a Schematic Development Plan containing less than the minimum one hundred thousand (100,000) square feet of office/retail development. The waiver request would allow review of our application to establish a schematic development Plan so that we can operate a church/house of worship at the above site. This is a change of use from the existing office space use.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter. Please feel free to contact this office should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

William Aiken
Director of Public Affairs

