

BRISTOL VIRGINIA PLANNING COMMISSION
Monday, April 1, 2019
Special Meeting
12:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:	MEMBERS ABSENT:	STAFF:	OTHERS:
Susan Long	Todd Buchanan	Sally Morgan	Representatives of Dharma Pharmaceuticals LLC
Michael Pollard	Kevin Wingard	Amy Thompson	
Bart Long		Randall Eads	
Jordan Pennington			

A called meeting of the Bristol Virginia Planning Commission was held at **12 Noon** on Monday, April 1, 2019 in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 300 Lee Street.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Pennington called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

II. Consideration of Special Exception Applications #03-2019 and #04-2019 for 500 Gate City Highway (for forwarding to City Council for joint public hearing)

Ms. Morgan prefaced the presentation about these applications with some comments about the definition of a Special Exception and the process involved. She also briefly summarized the history of developments regarding the former Bristol mall property owned by, Par Ventures Inc., including the approval of the application from Dharma Pharmaceuticals from the VA Board of Pharmacy for a pharmaceutical processing and retail operation, and the announcement of proposed plans for a Resort and Casino at the Bristol Mall.

Ms. Morgan reported that Par Ventures, Inc., the property owner of 500 Gate City Highway, submitted applications for a Special Exception for pharmaceutical processing operations to be located in one of either two adjoining locations. The proposed locations are zoned B-3 which by Bristol Virginia City Code only allows very limited manufacturing. The proposed business includes a retail pharmacy which would be a permitted use in B-3; however the processing operation will employ more than five operators and will not be “incidental to the retail business.”

Ms. Morgan stated the proposed pharmaceutical processing activity will be the production of cannabidiol or THC-A oil from the on-site cultivation of cannabis plants through an extraction process, as authorized pursuant to Code of VA Title 54.1, Chapter 34, Article 4.2.

a. SE 04-2019 – Tax Map No. 22-1-5 and 414-A-11 (Property Owner – Par Ventures Inc. / Applicant – Dharma Pharmaceuticals LLC).

Ms. Morgan stated the project will entail the conversion of the former retail space once occupied by the J. C. Penny and Eckerd Drug Store into areas for the following: retail pharmacy, offices, security control, plant growing area, extraction, and testing. Phase 1 of the project will utilize approximately one acre of the existing parking lot area to be fenced and secured and only accessed by employees, approved customers, and for deliveries. Ms. Morgan stated the first phase of the project anticipates approximately 30 employees with potential to grow to 125-150 employees.

Ms. Morgan advised that there have been no previous Planning Commission actions related to this request.

b. SE 03-2019 – Tax Map No. 22-1-15A (Property Owner – Par Ventures Inc.)

Ms. Morgan stated the project will entail the construction of a building with dimensions of 80 feet by 135 feet with three levels (basement, first floor, and second floor) for a total square footage of 32,400. The building will be a metal, pre-fabricated structure with wainscoting, windows, and awnings. A 30-space parking lot will be on-site for customers and employees with additional parking across the private entrance drive on the mall tract and the customer entrance will be from the on-site parking lot. Ms. Morgan stated that approximately 3,600 s.f. of the building space on the first floor will be the retail pharmacy area and administrative offices, while the remainder of the building will be used for security functions, grow area, extraction, and testing.

Ms. Morgan stated that following the evaluation of both applications, city staff finds that the proposed use would not necessarily negatively impact the surrounding area, but the staff does have serious concerns about the compatibility of proposed used for the former mall property and conditions may need to be specified for the facility if the special exception is granted. Ms. Morgan recommended forwarding the application to City Council for a joint public hearing.

Mr. Pollard expressed concerns about the building design on the 1 acre adjoining site (SE 03-2014) matching the surrounding buildings. He also asked if there were any existing offices surrounding the proposed one acre lot, specifically to the west where the property is zoned Office-Institutional. Ms. Morgan stated that there is a parking lot on the rehabilitation hospital property owned by Ballad Health that borders the subject property.

Mr. Long made a motion to forward the applications to the City Council for a joint public hearing on April 23, 2019. Motion was seconded by Mr. Pollard and carried by the following votes:

Ayes: B. Long, S. Long, Pennington and Pollard

III. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:16 pm.

Sally H. Morgan
City Planner