THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

City Council Date: October 24, 2023

Subject: Conditional Zoning Request for 30 Buchanan Pl

Staff Resource(s): Stephanie Monson Dahl, Planning & Urban Design Director; Will Palmquist, AICP, Principal Planner

Action Requested: Adoption of an ordinance to conditionally zone all portions of the property located at 30 Buchanan Pl from Institutional (INST) to Institutional - Conditional Zone (INST-CZ).

Project Location and Contacts:

- The project site totals 8.25 acres located at 30 Buchanan Pl (PIN 9648-47-8566)
- Owner: City of Asheville

Summary of Petition:

Project Site

- The project area consists of 8.25 acres located at 30 Buchanan Pl and is identified in the Buncombe County land records as PIN 9648-47-8566.
- The site is the location of McCormick Field, a minor league baseball venue.
- Given the extent and value of the proposed renovations and additions at McCormick Field, the site is required to come into full site compliance.
- A number of these zoning requirements are infeasible to meet in both the field's current layout and the proposed additions to the stadium, mostly due to the geography of the site and physical constraints resulting from the siting of the existing stadium.
- The project is requesting a conditional zoning from Institutional to Institutional - Conditional Zone (INST-CZ).
- The conditional zoning is being proposed to provide technical modifications to zoning requirements under the Institutional zoning district.
- The site is designated "Parks / Open Space" on the city's Future Land Use (FLU) Map.
- A change in the FLU designation will not be required.

Overall Project Proposal

- The proposed work consists of an approximately $30-million renovation of McCormick Field, which includes a new clubhouse building at the southern side of the site along the right field line, an enhanced outdoor seating area at the northern side of the site along the left field line, and an expanded concourse and entrance area at the western side of the site.

Site Layout and Design

- There is no maximum building height in the Institutional district except in the transition area designated as a 100' buffer around residentially zoned areas where maximum building height is that prescribed in said residential district.
- Both the RM-8 district, located to the north of the site, and the RS-8 district, located to the south of the site, have maximum building heights of 40'.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for a maximum building height of 60'.
- Setback requirements in the Institutional district consist of a 15' front yard and 10' rear and side yards, as well as 7 ½' corner yards.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for required setbacks.
- Maximum impervious surface in the Institutional district is 80%. The proposed project would result in a total impervious area of 80%.

Landscaping and Open Space

- Landscape requirements apply, including street tree, parking lot, building impact, and property line buffers.
- The Institutional district requires a 30 foot-wide "Type B" landscape buffer where the subject

property is adjacent to RS-8-zoned property to the south and a 20 foot-wide "Type A" landscape buffer where the project site is adjacent to RM-8-zoned property to the north.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for required landscape buffers.
- The project site is classified as “suburban” under the Tree Canopy Preservation standards and has a classification of “Class C” with a tree canopy requirement of 15%. The existing tree canopy (2018) is approximately 32%. Compliance is proposed through preservation of existing tree canopy.
- Open Space is required at a rate of 50% of the site, or a rate of 20% of the site if the project meets the incentive requirements for enhanced stormwater.
- Retaining walls are proposed around the outfield walls at heights not to exceed 20’.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for the wall material and foreground landscaping materials for retaining walls.
    - To the maximum extent possible, the Project will incorporate attached vegetative screening onto 30% of the area of the proposed 20’-tall retaining wall that is located behind the outfield walls.

Access, Sidewalks and Parking

- Access to the site will be provided by an existing driveway and parking off of McCormick Pl, as well as drop-off and loading along Buchanan Ave.
- Sidewalks exist at a width of 5' along McCormick Pl.
- The Project will coordinate its design and construction with the greenway connector that is proposed along Buchanan Ave and Buchanan Pl.
- Based on the proposed number of seats (4,000), the minimum and maximum number of required parking spaces is 1,000/1,333 spaces. The project is providing 34 spaces on-site at the existing parking lot.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for required parking spaces.
    - The project is seeking a technical modification for parking located in the required setbacks.
- The project is proposing a Traffic Control & Parking Plan which is intended for all users of McCormick Field and Memorial Stadium to minimize negative impacts of a specific event on adjacent neighborhoods.

Technical Modifications

- The project is seeking technical modifications to development standards through the conditional zoning process including:
    - Maximum building height of 60’ where height is otherwise limited to 40’ within the 100-foot transition area from adjacent residential zoning districts.
    - Elimination of required building setbacks.
    - No landscape buffers as required adjacent to residential zoning districts:
        - Approximately 300 linear feet of 30 foot-wide “Type B” landscape buffer along southern side of site.
        - Approximately 175 linear feet of 20 foot-wide “Type A” landscape buffer along northern side of site.
    - Reduction of minimum required parking spaces to 34 spaces provided on-site, where a minimum of 1,000 spaces is required.
    - Parking spaces located within the required front yard setback where they are otherwise prohibited.
    - No landscape screening or material requirements for interior-facing retaining walls.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Other Plans:

Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan (2018)

- The proposed development supports a number of goals in the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan, including:

    - **Promote Access to Well-Maintained Parks and Open Space for All** - by dedicating adequate resources to meet the maintenance demands of existing parks, including sufficient capital and operational funding consistent with best management practices and community standards for high level of service (p. 213).
    - **Enhance and Celebrate Asheville's Unique Places and Destinations** - by continuing to create accessible urban places throughout the city and ensure that downtown services, amenities, and resources are designed to serve residents as well as visitors (p. 291).
- The proposed development is compatible with the Future Land Use designations of "Parks and Open Space", which is proposed, in part, that it "includes a wide variety of different park facilities, active and passive open space, and greenways. Parks and open space are a community need and new parks, including park maintenance, will be required to serve areas of the community in an equitable fashion" (p. 346).

Compatibility Analysis:
- The proposed project is compatible with the surrounding land uses,including:
    - Memorial Stadium and Mountain Side Park, located directly east of the project site.
    - The commercial uses located through Asheville's South Slope, located to the west of the project site.
    - The surrounding residential neighborhoods located to the north and south of the project site.

Council Goal(s):
- This project is most closely aligned with the council goal of *A Well-Planned and Livable Community*.

Committee(s):
- Technical Review Committee (TRC) - October 16, 2023 - approved with conditions.
- Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) - October 18, 2023 - approved with the following conditions (Vote 6:0): 1) That Condition #7 be revised to state that the project will adhere to the Traffic Control & Parking Plan; 2) That the Project will coordinate its design and construction with the greenway connector that is proposed along Buchanan Ave and Buchanan Pl; and, 3) To the maximum extent possible, the Project will incorporate attached vegetative screening onto 30% of the area of the proposed 20'-tall retaining wall that is located behind the outfield walls.

Staff Recommendation:
- Staff recommends approval of this rezoning request based on the reasons stated above.

Suggested Motion to Approve:
- I move to approve the conditional zoning request for the property located at 30 Buchanan Pl from Institutional (INST) to Institutional - Conditional Zone (INST-CZ) and find that the request is reasonable, is in the public interest, is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and meets the development needs of the community in that the request: 1) dedicates adequate resources to meet the maintenance demands of existing parks, including sufficient capital and operational funding consistent with best management practices and community standards for high level of service; and, 2) continues to create accessible urban places throughout the city and ensure that downtown services, amenities, and resources are designed to serve residents as well as visitors.

Attachment(s)
(1) Exhibit A - Existing Zoning Map
(2) Exhibit A1 - Proposed Zoning Map
(3) Exhibit B - Aerial Imagery Map
(4) Exhibit C - Existing Future Land Use Map

(5) Exhibit D - Site Plans & Building Elevations
(6) Exhibit E - Project Conditions
(7) Ordinance
(8) PZC Recommendation
(9) PZC Draft Action Minutes (10/18/23)
(10) TRC Report & Comments
(11) Traffic Control & Parking Plan