

CA17-0005 Public Hearing

Ordinance 23-171- Chapter 23- Zoning,
Article 5, Division 9, 10, 11- Off-Street
Parking, Loading and Stacking

May 17, 2017

Planning Commission

Proposed Amendments

- The impetus for ongoing review and update efforts within the Zoning Ordinance is driven by Vision Strategy A.5 of the 2013 Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan. This is a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item.

Proposed Amendments

- No. 23-171: Chapter 23- Zoning, Article 5, Division 9, 10, 11- Off-Street Parking, Loading and Stacking.

Common Amendments

- Clarify vague references such as “the board” or “the design standards”;
- Correct Planning Director references to apply to Zoning Administrator;
- Capitalization referencing County permits, forms, position titles for consistency with ongoing cleanup effort;
- Update code to reflect related amendments approved elsewhere;
- Renumber, alphabetize for formatting.

Division 9- Off-Street Parking

- Sec. 23-5.9.1, Applicability- clarify “P district” reference and update zoning references acknowledging Mixed Use (MU) modifications;
- Sec. 23-5.9.2, General provisions- remove stacking space dimensions and parking lot lighting requirements as misplaced in (i) and (j);
- Expand parking lot lighting hours by an hour prior to business open and after close;
- Remove complicated parking area requirements for residential subdivisions in Sec. 23-5.9.2(r);

Subsection 23-5.9.2(r)

- After review, Subsection 23-5.9.2(r) proposed to be removed from the ordinance;
- Parking Subsection (r) was added to the Zoning Ordinance in 2007 to address overcrowding;
- Overcrowding complaints received by the Zoning Enforcement staff have declined since the real estate crash of 2007 and 2008;
- The ordinance addresses a possible symptom of overcrowding;
- Subsection (r) is very restrictive in limiting the usable area of an owner's property for parking;

Subsection 23-5.9.2(r)

- The Zoning office does not believe Subsection (r) has been cited in cases of overcrowding since its adoption in 2007;
- As a result, the Subsection has not had value as initially intended;
- Subsection (r) could have use as an enforcement tool if the County were to receive a complaint about a lot filled with vehicles in the front yard of a home;
- Subsection (r) could result in the unintended consequence of driving excess parked vehicles into the cul-de-sac and street side parking which could generate other travel way complaints;

Subsection 23-5.9.2(r)

- The County is without the authority to pass an ordinance regulating parking on secondary roads unless further authority is granted by the General Assembly.
- The County does not have the authority to enforce either parking or inoperative vehicles on them;
- Subsection (r) for onsite parking would require specific complaints in order to investigate and generate enforcement actions;
- Constant monitoring and enforcement of residential lots under 20,000 square feet throughout the County is otherwise impractical considering limited enforcement resources;
- Amendment will not remove protections against inoperable vehicles or untagged vehicles on lots located elsewhere in Sec. 12-20, Sec. 12-21 Motor Vehicles and Traffic.

Division 9- Off-Street Parking

- Add minimum parking standards for a number of unique existing or newly added uses where no standard presently exists;
- Amend (reduce, alter, or increase) minimum parking requirements as proposed;
- Revise, relocate, remove parking spaces table notes as proposed;
- Sec. 23-5.9.4, Parking Geometrics Standards- relocated geometrics standards from Design Standards Manual Article 5.

Division 10- Off-Street Loading

- Sec. 23-5.10.1, Applicability- clarify and update zoning references acknowledging Mixed Use (MU) modifications;
- Sec. 23-5.10.2, General provisions- remove lighting requirements in (g) identified as misplaced and unnecessary;
- Add life, health, safety amendment to avoid conflict between loading spaces and traffic circulation;
- Sec. 23-5.10.4, Off-street loading- Add Industrial/ Flex to Industry Type I,II, III requirements and Public Schools with Private Schools.

Fire Lanes

- State Code and the Spotsylvania County Design Standards Manual set up the framework for required fire lanes.
- Building fronts with main public access points are the favored locations for fire lane placements;
- Building or shopping center sides and rears often have minimal points of access if any, and rear doors are typically reserved for private access or locked;
- Convenience of access for life, health, and safety outweighs convenience of access for loading and unloading, customer pick-ups;

Fire Lanes

- County FIREM staff point to fire hose access as well as height limitations with ladders if need be.
- In FIREM's experience, many private shopping centers prefer fire lanes across their frontages to prevent vehicle loading and stacking across their frontage;
- Simply, shifting loading areas away from the immediate building front avoids front door blockage or chaos;
- Many private developments do not want to devote resources to "policing" their front doors and the County lacks resources to monitor each and every site to assure loading areas along building fronts would flow properly.

Division 11- Off-Street Stacking

- Sec. 23-5.11.2, General provisions, remove lighting requirements in (7) identified as misplaced and unnecessary;
- Add life, health, safety amendment to avoid conflict between loading spaces and traffic circulation;
- Sec. 23-5.11.3, Minimum required space, amend carwash stacking requirement to apply to all principle carwash facilities;
- Add specific stacking requirement for fuel pumps and private/public schools;
- Relocate “all other uses” standard to table.

Recommendation

- Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve CA17-0005: Ordinance No 23-171- Off Street Parking, Stacking and Loading.