



Prince William supervisors approve Potomac Shores

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By Jill Palermo, InsideNoVa.com

Potomac Shores – the massive new residential and commercial development planned for Woodbridge’s Cherry Hill Peninsula – received unanimous approval from the Prince William County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Supervisors slightly amended the rezoning application to address concerns about traffic raised by Dumfries officials, and to emphasize the importance of keeping the area’s riverfront shoreline accessible to the public.

Supervisor Maureen Caddigan, R-Potomac, announced the recent changes to Potomac Shores’ rezoning and special-use applications during a final public hearing on the development. Several area residents took the podium to praise SunCal, Potomac Shores’ California-based developer, for its extensive efforts to involve and inform area residents and community groups about its plans for peninsula.

Among other things, the nearly 2,000-acre development is planned to include an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus golf course, a five-star resort hotel, a waterfront retail town center and a Virginia Express Railway station, which is still under negotiation with freight carrier CSX but is hoped to be under construction by 2017.

Attorney Mike Lubeley, who represented SunCal at the hearing, detailed the extensive list of proffers the developer has promised for Potomac Shores, including full construction costs for a VRE station with 550 parking spaces and various road improvements, including a new intersection at Va. 234 and U.S. 1.

SunCal has also set aside about 131 acres for one elementary and one middle school, a site

for a police substation and a public library, and has promised to build 12 athletic fields and an extensive network of sidewalks and trails. The trails would run along the peninsula's scenic Potomac River bluffs and connect to the larger Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

The board's approval gave SunCal the green light for the nearly 4,000 residential units – a mix of single-family homes, townhomes and multi-family apartments and condominiums – it has planned for the development, as well as about 3.6 million square feet of commercial and office space proposed for the town center and an adjacent pond-centered office park.

Some of that office space has been offered to the U.S. General Services Administration for the new FBI headquarters but could easily accommodate another government agency if the FBI selects a different location, Lubeley said.

The rezoning and special-use permits are amendments to plans that were already in place when an earlier project – Harbor Station – sought to develop the area about 10 years ago. That developer, McLean-based Kettler, abandoned the project during the recession, and SunCal acquired the land out of receivership in 2011 for about \$55 million.

Former Supervisor Hilda Barg, whom Caddigan recruited to help oversee the new development plans, offered her enthusiastic support for Potomac Shores. She said SunCal “came to the rescue” to offer a solution for the peninsula that has languished for nearly three decades amid various failed plans and false starts.

Barg said SunCal has already paid all back taxes on the property, finished a half-completed brick entryway, provided extensive new landscaping and is completing the golf course, which Kettler started but left unfinished.

“They have been going nonstop and I can personally say I witness [this] because I check on them every day,” Barg said. “And they are building homes that will raise the real estate value of not just the surrounding homes but ... the entire area up and down Route 1.”

Before offering a motion to approve the new zoning application, Caddigan announced recent changes to the proffer statement addressing Dumfries officials' concerns about traffic. The statement promises to include Dumfries officials in ongoing discussions and engineering plans for a quadrant intersection planned for U.S. 1 and Va. 234 and a pledge of \$250,000 to pay for traffic lights or other adjustments Dumfries officials deem necessary.

Dumfries Town Manager Daniel Taber said Wednesday he will be talking with county staff later this week to get clarification on exactly what the changes entail.

Regarding the proposed trails, and whether the waterfront area will remain open to the public, Caddigan said the agreement contains new language to “emphasize the importance of having the trail as far east,” or as close to the waterfront, as possible. Caddigan said the change will be relayed to the hotel developer, which has not yet been identified.

Caddigan also noted that she voted against the plan to develop Cherry Hill back in 2001,

when it was being developed as Harbor Station, but has come to see the project as an overwhelmingly positive addition to the U.S. 1 corridor.

“Tonight, we have a developer that will set the stage for what I believe will be a premiere development,” Caddigan said.