

<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of <b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #20-0497 / CONDITIONAL USE PARKING LOT – A Portion of the Property known as 201 REEDBIRD AVENUE		

DATE:

**TO**

The Honorable President and  
 Members of the City Council  
 City Hall, Room 400  
 100 North Holliday Street

March 27, 2020

At its regular meeting of March 26, 2020, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #20-0497, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of parking lot on a portion of the property known as 201 Reedbird Avenue (Block 7612L, Lot 001A), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #20-0497, and adopted the following resolution, eight members being present (eight in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its Departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #20-0497 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

- cc: Mr. Nicholas Blendy, Mayor's Office  
 Mr. Matthew Stegman, Mayor's Office  
 Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
 The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC  
 Mr. Derek Baumgardner, BMZA  
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
 Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
 Mr. Liam Davis, DOT  
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services  
 Mr. Dominic McAilly, Council Services  
 Mr. Adam Boarman, Dept. of Recreation & Parks





Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

March 26, 2020

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #19-0497/ Zoning – Conditional Use Parking Lot – A Portion of the Property known as 201 Reedbird Avenue

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a parking lot on a portion of the property known as 201 Reedbird Avenue (Block 7612L, Lot 001A), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; and providing for a special effective date.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONERS:** The Administration (Department of Recreation and Parks)

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

**Site Conditions:** This site is on the western shore of the Patapsco River estuary, south of the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. Although the site was open marshland and water before World War II, after then it became a City dump receiving residue from the Cherry Hill Municipal Incinerator and from private sector haulers, resulting in accumulation of hazardous waste. In the 1970s the dump was closed and environmental remediation followed, resulting in capping of the site with "clean" soil. Because of this history, no substantial construction is currently possible on this site. The capped site has been repurposed as a large public park that is an important part of the new Green Network for Baltimore. The site is in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, but the extent of past landfilling has elevated it above the floodplain.

**General Area:** Across Reedbird Avenue, which follows the original shoreline of the Patapsco River, is the historic Cherry Hill community. North of the site, across Potee and Hanover Streets, is the campus of Harbor Hospital (formerly South Baltimore General Hospital), part of which is also on landfill. On the opposite eastern shore of the Patapsco River is additional park land separated from the Brooklyn community by the Harbor Tunnel Throughway (I-895).

#### **HISTORY**

The site was rezoned from Residential (R-6) to OS (Open Space) during the comprehensive rezoning that became effective on June 5, 2017.

## CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed action is supportive of LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, the City of Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan, Play Goal 2: Improve Nightlife, Entertainment, and Recreation Experiences for Residents and Visitors, Objective 3: Improve Local Participation in Recreational Activities. The proposed off-street parking area would serve new multi-purpose athletic fields and the new Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center in Reedbird Park. The geographic location of this park makes it a centrally-located recreation place for residents of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County who live near to it.

## ANALYSIS

Background: The Department of Recreation and Parks is in the process of further developing recreational options at Reedbird Park. To augment an existing outdoor swimming pool and small recreation building, a new fitness and wellness center, improved basketball courts, and two large open fields for athletics are to be created. To serve some patrons of these new facilities, DRP is proposing to construct a parking lot for approximately 100 cars (including spaces for handicapped-accessible transportation) on the western portion of the central part of the park.

Conditional Use: Per §5-406 {"Approval standards"} of Article 32 – Zoning:

(a) *Limited criteria for denying*

Neither the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, nor the City Council, as the case may be, may approve a conditional use unless, after public notice and hearing and on consideration of the standards required by this subtitle, it finds that:

- (1) the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- (2) the use would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (3) the authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- (4) the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.

In conferring with staff of the Department of Recreation and Parks, Planning staff have determined that the proposed parking lot would not be detrimental to or endanger public health, safety, or welfare. The plans for the proposed parking lot have been reviewed and were approved with comments by the Site Plan Review Committee on September 25, 2019; a final plan is pending. There is no Urban Renewal Plan covering the area where this site is located. The authorization would not be contrary to the public interest, as it would be part of an array of on-site physical changes designed to encourage greater and more varied use of the park. As such, the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code.

Below is the staff's review of §5-406(b) {"Required considerations"} of Article 32 – Zoning:

(b) *Required considerations.*

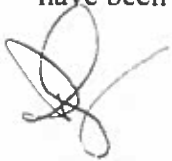
As a further guide to its decision on the facts of each case, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals must consider the following, where appropriate:

- (1) the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures;
- (2) the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;
- (3) the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development;
- (4) the proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering;

- (5) accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles;
- (6) accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity;
- (7) the type and location of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities that have been or will be provided;
- (8) the preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures;
- (9) the character of the neighborhood;
- (10) the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan;
- (11) the provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (12) all applicable standards and requirements of this Code;
- (13) the intent and purpose of this Code; and
- (14) any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

Staff finds that the proposed parking lot is appropriate for the site, given the other improvements being planned in Reedbird Park that would be served by the parking facility. Given its specific location, the parking lot area is not readily usable for recreation buildings or other large structures. The spaces between the proposed parking area and Reedbird Avenue are being landscaped in ways that are complementary to other initiatives to enhance the Cherry Hill area. While there is no Urban Renewal Plan covering this site, the use of this portion of 201 Reedbird Avenue for a parking lot has been approved by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission. Given these mitigations, there are no anticipated adverse impacts on utilities, neighborhoods, community organizations, or cultural landmarks in the parking lot's vicinity.

Notifications: The Cherry Hill Community Coalition, Cherry Hill Eagles Foundation, Inc., Greater Baybrook Alliance, Westport Neighborhood Association, and the Honorable Edward Reisinger, Councilmember representing the 10<sup>th</sup> Council District in which this site is located, have been notified of this action.



**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**

