



**Ward One Residents Association
3 Church Circle, PMB# 150
Annapolis, MD 21401**

Department of Planning & Zoning
145 Gorman Street, 3rd Floor
Annapolis, MD 21401
Jacquelyn M. Rouse, AICP – hand delivered
September 2, 2014

Re: Requested Special Exception SE-20130007 for Royal Farms

Dear Jacqui,

The above-referenced application seeks to claim delicatessen use in the Historic District by way of a special exception. After reviewing the revised floor plan we, the Board of the Ward One Residents Association restate our unanimous opposition to granting a special exception to Royal Farms or any convenience store that attempts to establish itself in the Historic District. Granting the special exception is in direct violation of the City Code– which clearly states that convenience stores are not permitted in this section of Annapolis. We find self-proclaimed metamorphosis from a convenience store into a delicatessen to be, at best, misrepresentative. Based on the following points, we do not believe that this application meets the standards of a delicatessen:

- The company’s own mission statement, available on their website, describes their ideal site criteria of 4,000 to 5,600 square feet (convenience store with gasoline). Nowhere in their mission statement is there a subset that elaborates on a different model from that of a convenience store.
- Mr. Hyatt’s letter of March 25, 2014 that compares the proposed Dock Street location to two other walk-up Royal Farms stores. He further stated that both of these stores have evolved into other types of stores, based on community need. We believe this is a clear indication of what will happen with the Dock Street store, should it be granted a special exception.
- Their classification as a convenience store specifically by the NACS (National Association of Convenience Stores), which they are a member, and NAICS (North America Industry Classification System) The NACS defines a convenience store as:
 - 1: Building size of less than 5,000 square feet;
 - 2: Convenient pedestrian access;
 - 3: Extended hours of operation;
 - 4: Offer of at least 500 stock keeping units;
 - 5: Product mix includes a significant selection of tobacco, beverages, snacks, candy, and grocery items
- Other definitions of Royal Farms, including Wikipedia (which defines the company as a convenience store) and numerous articles in publications ranging from The Baltimore Sun to Fierce Retail, a

publication devoted to retail establishments, which describe the stiff competition in the Baltimore area for local convenience stores such as Royal Farms from larger chains such as 7-Eleven and Wawa.

- The new floor plan that has a great amount of unused leasable floor space. This can easily be converted back to “convenience store” items in the future. This would put the burden on the City to monitor the type and amount of goods Royal Farms has in its store and set the stage for possible legal battles in order to enforce a change of use. We think this is an unrealistic and possibly expensive expectation.

In summary:

- Royal Farms is a Baltimore-based chain of 160+ convenience stores. Their business model, as per their mission statement, is that of a convenience store. The proposed Dock Street store would be the only store that would deviate from that established model. We believe this is unrealistic and unsustainable.
- We find the resubmitted floor plan irrelevant as Royal Farms is perceived and defined as a convenience store much as McDonald’s is perceived as a fast-food store. The public views them as a convenience store, not as a delicatessen. Further, the company has not definitively proven that such a “delicatessen” model exists or would be sustainable without reverting to the convenience store model (e.g. the College Park or Light Street locations).
- Granting this special exception would open the door to other businesses that are not allowed under the code. For example, how could the City then deny Wawa from opening a store in the Fawcett’s space, a space and location very conducive to a store of this type?
- Convenience stores have a higher rate of crime than other retail stores (This data is on record as public testimony at the June 3, public hearing) We are concerned about the implications of a convenience store in the Historic District and increased crime, particularly after recent incidents including the heroin overdose in the Market House restrooms.
- The proposed use is not consistent with the Annapolis Historic District as a unique destination as identified in the Ward One Sector Study and City Dock Master Plan.

Lastly, in a meeting last year with the Ward One Residents Association, a representative from Royal Farms stated that they want to be good neighbors and fill the needs of our community. We question this statement. By their protracted battle to establish a convenience store at a primary intersection in our Historic District, the first National Historic Landmark District in the nation, they have managed to keep the old Steven’s Hardware building an empty and decaying shell instead of the thriving commercial establishment we hope it will become.

We ask that you firmly deny this application and are happy to expand or provide our backup on any points provided specifically crime statistics and NACIS classification.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors, **Ward One Residents Association**

Eleanor Tierney – President	Peter Crilly
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