Planning Commission Work Session
Agenda Item 2.c.

Agenda Item: **ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT – ZOTA #26-07 to amend Chapter 78 (ZONING), Article VII (Use Regulations), as deemed necessary and appropriate to update conformance with the Code of Virginia to permit mixed-use or residential projects by-right on land owned by a property tax-exempt religious organization or a 501 (c)(3) property tax-exempt nonprofit organization**

Meeting Date: October 5, 2026

Category: Public Hearings

Prepared by: David Stromberg, Zoning Administrator

Description:
This Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment is required to make the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance consistent with the Code of Virginia. Section 15.2-2288.9 of the Code of Virginia is a new section that mandates localities to allow mixed-use or residential projects by-right (locality cannot require a special exception or rezoning) on land that is owned by a property tax-exempt religious organization or a 501 (c)(3) property tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

A mixed-use or residential project must be allowed by-right if it meets the following key standards:

1. The property has been owned continuously by the tax-exempt religious organization or 501(c)(3) for five years.
2. At least 60 percent of the housing units are for affordable housing at 80 percent or less of the area median income for rental units and up to 120 percent of the area median income for for-sale units.
3. The affordability provisions are preserved for a minimum of 30 years.

A mixed-use or residential project allowed under these provisions is subject to town administrative review and must comply with state stormwater management requirements. The provisions of Section 15.2-2288.9 do not apply in industrially zoned districts. In Herndon, this includes the O&LI, Office and Light Industrial, zoning district.

Background/Timing Impact:
Section 15.2-2288.9 of the Code of Virginia was codified as a result of House Bill HB 1279 and Senate Bill SB 388 during the 2026 General Assembly session. The

provisions of this section of the Code of Virginia are effective starting January 1, 2027, until January 1, 2031. Final draft language is expected to be brought for a public hearing before the Town Council prior to January 1, 2027. The Town Council initiated this ZOTA at its August 25, 2026, regular meeting.

Fiscal Impact:
Any future fiscal impact on the Town is unknown and would depend on whether the proposed amendment is adopted and the extent to which the program is used during its period of effectiveness.

Legal Impact:
The proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment incorporates the mandatory provisions of Section 15.2-2288.9 of the Code of Virginia.

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:
Recommend approval of Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment ZOTA #26-07 to the Town Council.

Attachments:
1. ZOTA #26-07 DRAFT ORDINANCE
2. Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2288.9
3. Legal Ad