

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Crystal Myers, AICP, Case Manager *CM*
Maxine Brown-Roberts, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: July 2, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21457 (1623 28th Street, N.W.) for a special exception to permit the continued use of a historic residential property by a nonprofit organization

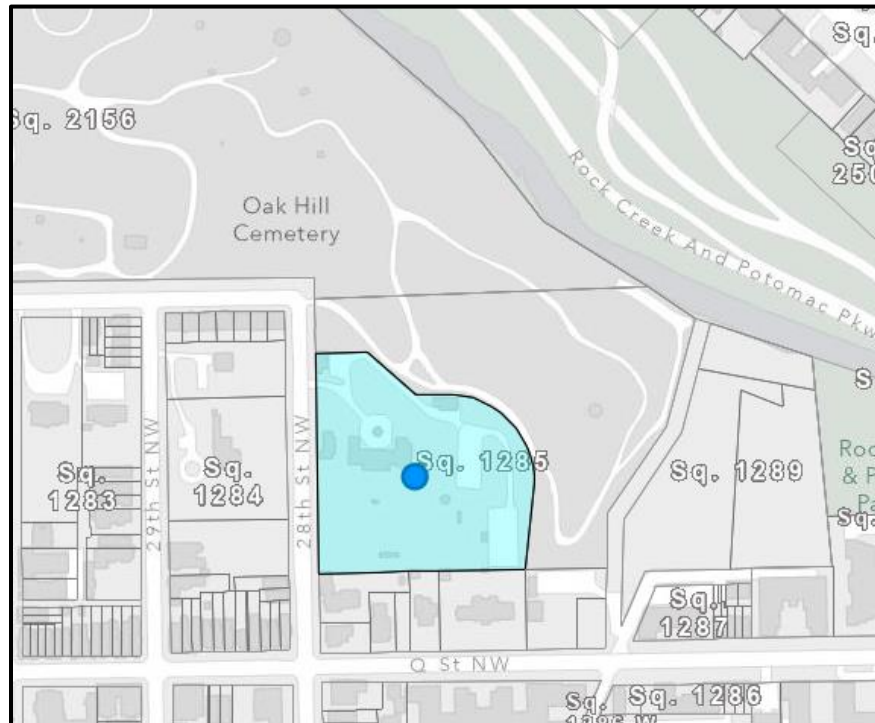
I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of special exception relief in Subtitle U § 203.1(o) to permit the continued use of a historic residential property by a nonprofit.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1623 28 th Street, N.W.
Applicant	S&R Foundation, Inc., t/a S&R Evermay
Legal Description	Square 1285, Lot 815
Ward, ANC	Ward 2; ANC 2E
Zone	R-1B/GT
Historic District	Georgetown
Lot Characteristics	Large, unusually shaped lot
Existing Development	Historic mansion and associated outbuildings
Previous Approvals	18315 and 18315-A
Adjacent Properties	North and East: Oak Hill Cemetery South: Single-family detached dwellings and an institutional use West: Across 28 th Street, single-family dwellings
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Single-family residential, institutional and cemetery uses
Proposed Development	Continuation of this nonprofit use at a historic residential property

SITE LOCATION



III. BACKGROUND

BZA Order No. 18315 granted approval in 2012 to S&R Foundation, a non-profit operation at Evermay for 5 years. In 2016, and prior to the expiration of the five-year term, the BZA renewed the approval in Order No. 18315-A, for a ten-year period. In July 2024 Evermay was conveyed to S&R Foundation, which is now seeking renewal of special exception to continue non-profit operations with some changes to their new direction.

IV. CHANGES TO CONDITIONS

The Applicant, S&R Evermay (Evermay) is requesting to renew their nonprofit use at this historic property. Evermay plans to continue hosting concerts, exhibits, and meetings but are also intending to have new residencies and public programs. The introduction of new programs has resulted in changes to several of the previous conditions. The following are the proposed areas of change.

Term Period

The non-residential use of Evermay was first approved for five years in 2012 in BZA Order 18313 and later in 2016 for a ten-year period in BZA Order 18313-A. The applicant is requesting a period of 25-years subject to any future transfer to a non-related entity prior to the term expiring.

Gardens and House Installations

Evermay is requesting to open the house and gardens by appointment for a maximum of four months annually. When open it will have these hours:

Monday through Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 pm;

Friday and Saturday: 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and
Sunday: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Maximum number of Events

Evermay is requesting an increase to the maximum number of events from 40 to 72 per year. Though this is an increase from the 2016 approval, it's less than the 93 approved in the original 2012 case. These events would not exceed the 200-person guest maximum that has remained unchanged since the original approval. The proposal is to have four sizes of events which would occur at various times per year for a total of 72 events per year as shown on the table below..

No. of Guests	Maximum No. of Non-Profit Events Annually
1-50	12
1-100	40
1-150	12
1-200	8
Total	72

Increase in Maximum Number of Employees

The request includes increasing the staff level from 9 to 10.

Hours of Operation for Nonprofit Office

Proposed new hours of operation

Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Occasionally the office will operate in the evenings and on weekends when necessary.

Current Approval

Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; and

Saturday and Sunday (occasionally), 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation for Non-profit events

Proposed new hours of operation

Monday through Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.;

Friday and Saturday: 11 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., (All events to be held inside after 10 p.m.)

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Currently, events are not permitted between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. These new hours of operation include this period because the Applicant would like to attract people who prefer attending events right after work.

Current Approval

Fellows Meetings

Monday through Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Concerts:

Monday through Thursday: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Friday and Saturday: 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and

Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Exhibitions:

Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and

Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Civic/Fundraising:

Monday through Thursday: 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.;

Friday and Saturday: 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Nonprofit Special Exception (U § 203.1 (o))

Use of Existing Residential Buildings and the Land on which they are located by a Nonprofit Organization for the Purposes of the Nonprofit Organization:

- (1) If the building is listed in the District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites or, if the building is located within a district, site, area, or place listed on the District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites;***

The building was built in the early 1800s and is a historic landmark. It is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, the National Register of Historic Places and is within the Georgetown Historic District.

- (2) If the gross floor area of the building in question, not including other buildings on the lot, is ten thousand square feet (10,000 sq. ft.) or greater;***

The gross floor area of the main building is 10,110 square feet. and it has a 5,182 square foot cellar space. Also on the property are a 2,285 square foot Gate House and the former domestic quarters, which is 1,252 square feet.

- (3) The use of existing residential buildings and land by a nonprofit organization shall not adversely affect the use of the neighboring properties;***

S&R Evermay, should not adversely impact the use of the neighboring properties. The property has a large land area and there is a substantial buffer of land between the main building and the adjacent residential properties to the south that has minimized any impact due to noise or privacy. Evermay has operated on the property for the past 15 years and the Applicant states that they are unaware of any complaints from neighboring properties. The Applicant is not requesting to increase the 200-person maximum number of guests that have been permitted on the property since the original approval in 2012.

This proposal includes a small increase in the maximum number of employees from 9 to 10 which should have minimal to no impact on the use of neighboring properties. All staff will park on the property.

Most activities on the property would take place on Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm

Events would be permitted as follows:

- Monday through Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.;
- Friday and Saturday: 11 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., (All events to be held inside after 10 p.m.)
- Sunday: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

These proposed hours are similar to the previously approved hours of operation but Evermay is now requesting to hold events between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Previously, this timeframe was prohibited. This period would allow the Applicant to attract people who prefer attending events right after work. Both DDOT and ANC 2E agree with this change.

S&R Evermay intends to increase its availability for public and private events, and it will continue to maintain strict operational controls. It also has a policy prohibiting rentals for weddings or other social-party events, which helps minimize potential impacts on adjacent neighbors.

(4) The amount and arrangement of parking spaces shall be adequate and located to minimize traffic impact on the adjacent neighborhood;

The amount and location of parking spaces on-site should be adequate to not result in negative traffic impacts on the adjacent neighborhood. The site has 107 parking spaces on-site. This is approximately the same number of spaces that were approved in both the previous case and in the original case. Since the maximum number of attendees, 200 people, is not being increased in this request the proposed parking should still be adequate. Furthermore, the Applicant reports parking on the site has not been a problem. Over the past 15 years a valet parking process has been used for events with over 50 persons, and visitors are encouraged not to park on neighborhood streets. Additionally, an increasing number of visitors have been using rideshare, which reduces the demand for parking. Groups that use multi-passenger vehicles are required to use vans that can easily enter the site.

(5) No goods, chattel, wares, or merchandise shall be commercially created, exchanged, or sold in the residential buildings or on the Subtitle U-13 land by a nonprofit organization, except for the sale of publications, materials, or other items related to the purposes of the nonprofit organization; and

In the past, some S&R Foundation award winners sold their CDs during concerts. If there are any items sold in the future, such as selling publications they would only occur if related to Evermay's purpose.

(6) Any additions to the building or any major modifications to the exterior of the building or to the site shall require approval of the Board of Zoning Adjustment after review and recommendation by the Historic Preservation Review Board with comments about any possible detrimental consequences that the proposed addition or modification may have on the architectural or historical significance of the building or site or district in which the building is located.

This request does not include any building additions or major modifications to the exterior of the building or to the site. The Applicant reports that there are no plans for future construction on the site except for possible landscape structures.

Proposed Conditions

Below are the Applicant's draft conditions. OP supports all but the last sentence in condition 4b and 4c.

Conditions

1. This approval shall be for a term of **TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS**, beginning on the final date of this order for so long as the non-profit does not violate the conditions set forth herein and/or transfer ownership of the property to a non-related entity, at which point the special exception shall be terminated.
2. The subject property shall not be used as a rental venue for social or other events.
3. A maximum of ten nonprofit employees may work on-site.
4. The hours of operation shall be:
 - a. Nonprofit Offices:
Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with hours extended daily and on the weekends as required for the non-profit's use.
 - b. Non-profit events at Evermay:
Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.: with all events to be held inside after 10 p.m.; and
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
~~Staff will use best efforts to ensure all guests depart the subject property by the daily closing time.~~
 - c. House and Garden Exhibitions:
Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 pm;
Friday and Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
~~Staff will use best efforts to ensure all guests depart the subject property by the daily closing time~~
 - d. Valet and other staff, including cooks, caterers and janitors associated with non-profit events shall leave the subject property within one hour after the conclusion of the event., subject to condition 4e.
 - e. Noisy vendor breakdowns and loading shall occur before 10:00 p.m., or shall take place on the following business day between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Trucks associated with noisy vendor breakdown and loading shall depart the subject property before 10:00 p.m.
5. The maximum number of events per year will be as follow:

Type of Event	Number of Guests (per event)	Duration/Max number of events
Solutions Residency	1-12 annually	30-60 days per participant
Garden and House Exhibitions	Maximum of 50 tickets per hour	Up to 4 months per year

S&R Evermay Events (includes Concerts, non-profit meetings per S&R Evermay's mission and civic/fundraising Events)	Up to 50	12
	Events up to 100	40
	Events up to 150	12
	Events up to 200	8
Total		72

6. The Applicant shall minimize traffic and noise impacts by employing the following measures:
 - a. The Applicant shall inform all vendors to park on-site in advance of arrival at Evermay.
 - b. The Applicant shall inform guests on all event invitations and tickets to refrain from using on-street parking and use on-site valet (subject to 6.c.) and/or alternative transportation methods.
 - c. The Applicant shall direct on-site parking for any event with fifty (50) or fewer guests. For any event with more than fifty guests, the applicant shall provide onsite valet parking.
 - d. Valet parking providers shall be instructed in advance to unload, load and park all vehicles on-site.
 - e. Nonprofit employees shall park on-site.
 - f. Passenger vans used in connection with an event shall be no larger than approximately twenty feet in length. Vehicles used in connection with an event shall load, unload, park and wait on-site, not on the street
 - g. Identify a Transportation Coordinator who is a point of contact with the ANC 2E, DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement. The coordinator will provide and make available transportation alternatives to employees and guests.
7. No amplified music shall be permitted on the outside grounds of the subject property.
8. The Applicant shall establish a neighborhood liaison to address concerns and provide information about events and activities to property owners within 200-feet of Evermay.
9. The Applicant shall maintain a website to include a neighbors' section to provide notice of upcoming scheduled events.

General Special Exception (Subtitle X §900)

Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

The proposal would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations. Subtitle U § 203.1(o) of the Zoning Regulations is intended to provide for the operation of nonprofit organizations within large historic structures, as proposed by the subject application. This proposal would allow the Applicant to continue operating their nonprofit use at this location

Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The continued use of the subject property for nonprofit use, pursuant to the proposed conditions, should not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. The subject property is large, approximately 3.5 acres in size, and abuts a cemetery to the north and east. Dumbarton House, a non-residential use, is operated as a museum and institutional use and abuts approximately one-half of the southern lot line and a public street abuts the property to the east. Hours of operation for the various types of events proposed, provision of all parking and loading on-site and a requirement that there be no outdoor amplified music all serve to ensure that the use would continue to not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

At Exhibit 20 DDOT submitted [a report](#) stating they have no objection to the request. There are no other District agency comments in the record.

VII. ANC COMMENTS

ANC 2E submitted a [report in support](#).

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Currently, there are no comments in the record from other community members.