

Hunting Creek Area Stakeholder Group Meeting

Thursday, May 31, 2007

Hunting Towers and City Hall Room 2000

6:30 p.m.

Introduction

The May 31, 2007 Hunting Creek Area Stakeholder Group Meeting commenced with a site visit to Hunting Towers. Ms. Ardith Campbell Dentzer, a Hunting Towers resident and member of the Hunting Creek Area Stakeholder Group, led fellow stakeholders, staff, and other interested parties on a tour of Hunting Towers. At the completion of the tour, the group returned to City Hall and Mr. John Komoroske, Vice Chair of the Planning Commission and the Hunting Creek Area Stakeholders Group Leader, introduced Ardith Campbell Dentzer and Maurice Barboza, both residents of Hunting Towers, to provide a brief presentation on the history of Hunting Towers.

History of Hunting Towers Presentation

Ms. Dentzer and Mr. Barboza described the history of the Hunting Towers site, including the structures, the landscaping, the residents, and many other elements which constitute the history of the site. The presentation is available on the City's website at:

http://alexandriava.gov/planningandzoning/pdf/huntingcreek_presentation_053107.pdf

Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review Work Session

After the Hunting Towers presentation, John Komoroske introduced Steve Milone, the Division Chief of Land Use Services in the Department of Planning and Zoning. Mr. Milone provided a summary of the work session held with the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review (BAR) on May 16, 2007. Mr. Milone indicated that the work session was held to provide the Board of Architectural Review a description of the project and to facilitate a discussion regarding process.

Mr. Milone described that in general, project proposals are heard by the Board of Architectural Review for conceptual approval of general site layout, height, mass, scale, and architectural design. The proposals are then heard by Planning Commission and City Council and upon approval, return to the Board of Architectural Review for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Hunting Terrace proposal is unique, as the proposal requires an act by City Council before conceptual approval from the Board can occur. Due to the uniqueness of this situation, staff has not determined the process that will be followed for the Hunting Terrace concept plan.

Mr. Milone indicated that IDI Group Companies and Department of Planning and Zoning staff each offered brief presentations on the proposed project. The presentation to the BAR by the Planning and Zoning staff is available on the City's website at:

http://alexandriava.gov/planningandzoning/pdf/huntingcreek_presentation_051607.pdf

Status of Hunting Terrace Concept Plans

Following the summary of the Board of Architectural Review work session, Mr. Komoroske introduced Jessica Ryan, a planner assigned to the Hunting Terrace development project, to provide a status on the Hunting Terrace concept plans. Miss Ryan indicated that two concept plans have been submitted by IDI Group Companies to date. The first concept plan, submitted in mid-March, proposed two five-story buildings on S Washington Street and two fourteen-story buildings on the western portion of the Hunting Terrace site. The second concept plan, submitted in late-May, proposed three buildings and complied with the fifty foot height requirement for this area of the City. While the first concept plan included an affordable housing proffer agreement, intended to preserve substantial workforce housing at Hunting Towers, this proffer agreement was not a component of the second concept plan.

Questions and Comments from Stakeholders and Participants:

Question: Does the second concept plan submitted by the applicant encompass the entire Hunting Terrace site?

Response: Yes.

Question: Does the second concept plan propose 50 foot buildings on just the front of the site or the whole site?

Response: The second concept plan proposes 50 foot buildings on the front and the rear portions of the site.

Question: Where is the application in the process?

Response: At this point, the application is still in the concept phase. The applicant is planning to submit a preliminary plan in the next few weeks. At that point the application will begin to move toward public hearing.

Question: When we discuss the second concept proposal, is the idea that the first proposal must be accepted or rejected? Please clarify the process for the two proposals.

Response: By submitting two proposals, the applicant has the benefit of getting comments on both plans. In the event that the first concept does not proceed, the second concept will be farther in the process and a potential delay may be avoided.

Question: Is the second concept available to the public?

Response: Yes, the concept is an official submission and is available to the public.

Question: What is the timeframe for approval of the concept plan? Has the clock started ticking for Planning Commission and City Council?

Response: The timeframe for approval has not begun, as the applicant has only submitted concept plans. When the applicant submits a preliminary plan, the process will begin to progress toward public hearing.

- Question:** Are the Hunting Towers units integrated in both the first and the second concept?
- Response:** No. The Hunting Towers site is only integrated in the first concept.
- Question:** Is the basic idea for the second concept to determine if City Council will allow additional height?
- Response:** The Council will have to determine whether or not to approve an amendment for an increase in height. The second concept plan is a means by which the applicant is seeking concurrent review of both concepts.
- Question:** Is it possible to consider a third option which includes the lower height but also includes affordable housing?
- Response:** The suggestion for such an option has been heard by the developer. It is the discretion of the developer to determine the characteristics of the plan for which he requests approval.
- Question:** From a process perspective, will the concept plans move through Planning Commission and City Council, or will preliminary plans be filed?
- Response:** Preliminary plans must be filed.
- Question:** What guarantee do we have that the Hunting Towers preservation will be a component of the first concept plan if the applicant does not own the Hunting Towers site?
- Response:** The applicant has offered a \$20 million guarantee and in the event that the Hunting Towers site is not purchased, \$20 million will be provided to the City for affordable housing.
- Question:** When the applicant submits the preliminary plan for the first concept, will the clock start ticking?
- Response:** There is no statutory timeline, but when the preliminary plan is submitted, the plan begins to move through the public hearing process.
- Comment:** The \$20 million being proposed should preserve a significant number of units.
- Question:** Rents have continued to increase in recent years. How can we ensure that these units will remain affordable and not be subject to significant rent increase?
- Response:** The City will be working with the applicant to establish a price limit for the affordable units. Deed restrictions or other mechanisms to ensure longer-term affordability for the rental and owner-occupied units will be considered by the City with the applicant.
- Question:** How will the purchase price of Hunting Towers affect the cost that will be charged to future residents? What will the cost be to renovate Hunting

Towers? What is the value of the air above Hunting Towers in exchange for the affordable housing? Will these kinds of numbers be provided?

Response: Not all the information about the applicant's finances are not available for public scrutiny. There are many complex questions here, many of which we do attempt to address during the project review process.

Question: For what period of time are typical units affordable? What is the mechanism for ensuring that the units remain affordable?

Response: In most cases, affordable units are required for a period of 15 to 20 years, occasionally as long as 30 years. The affordability is maintained through covenants which are recorded in the land records.

Comment: Please provide the topography of the site.

Response: There is an aerial photo of the site that includes topographic contour lines on the City's website. Copies of this aerial photo will also be available at the next Stakeholder meeting.

http://alexandriava.gov/planningandzoning/updates/maps_easements.pdf

Next Steps

The next Stakeholder Meeting will be held July 31, 2007 in Room 2000 of City Hall.

Attendees

Stakeholder Group

Members

John Komroske

Maurice Barboza

Ann Glennon

Holly Hemphill

Marguerite Lang

Ellen Pickering

H. Stewart Dunn

Nancy Carson

Ardith Dentzer

Sean McCabe

Caroline Faiella

James Hoben

Herb Cooper Levy

Maureen Dugan

Lewis Simon

Charles Benaugh

Dale Latiff

Julie Crenshaw Van

Fleet

Otis Johnson

Jim Lamb

R. Patente

Vickie Allen

Staff

Faroll Hamer

Rich Josephson

Kathleen Beeton

Steve Milone

Pat Mann

Jessica Ryan

Mildrilyn Davis

Helen McIlvaine

Shane Cochran

Melodie Baron

Other Participants

Guiseeppe Cecchi

Carlos Cecchi

Howard Middleton