

# GLEBE PARK REDEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

June 13, 2007

## Meeting Summary

### **Stakeholders present:**

Jim Hoben, Housing Action  
Martin Frankel, Chiralagua/Arlandria Coop  
Mike Caison, Alexandria Housing Advisory Committee  
Johan Broekhuysen, Lenox Place Homeowner Association  
Paul Cox, Arlandria Civic Association  
Barbara Brenman, North Ridge Civic Association  
Wilma Probst, Brighton Square  
Andy Duncan, Warwick Village Citizen Association

### also present were:

Nathan Brown  
Catherine Humphries Brown, co-chair, Hume Springs Civic Association  
Bonnie Baxley, Community Lodgings Inc. (CLI)  
Amy Slack, Del Ray Civic Association, Land Use  
Kevin Beekman, Arlandria Civic Association  
Julio A. Magana, Arlandria/Chiralagua Coop  
Kathleen Henry, Arlandria/Chiralagua Coop  
Juana Campos Vega, ACHC  
Melissa Garcia, Lenox Place  
Ed Ablard, EOC  
Sean Kumar, Lenox Place HOA Board  
Bonnie Baxley, Community Lodgings  
Jonathan Rak, McGuire Woods  
Brian Allen Jackson, EYA

**Barbara Ross** began the meeting recapping the work that had been done in April, including explanations of the EYA proposed redevelopment plans for the three Glebe Park sites, and discussions from ARHA, EYA and Housing regarding HUD issues, development economics, and affordable housing generally in Alexandria. With the disappointing results of the tax credit competition, we called a hiatus in order for ARHA and the City to regroup and see how that fact affected the Glebe Park proposals. While the issues regarding the poor condition of the Glebe Park buildings has not changed, the timing for moving forward has.

The next round of tax credit applications are due in February 2008. If development applications are decided in late fall 2007, and then applications can be made with City support, instead of with only the conditional support that occurred this past round. If those applications were successful, construction would have to take place within two years, and would likely start next summer.

Because of the different timing, we are able to spend more time with the community discussing what it believes to be the critical issues with the proposed Glebe Park redevelopment. We would like to hear community suggestions for development options for the Glebe Park sites, even

though city staff may not support them, including alternatives to the current EYA proposals. At the end of the discussion, later this summer, each Stakeholder Group will be asked to give its opinion and recommendation about what should happen on the Glebe Park sites.

Two meetings are scheduled for July: July 11 and 23. We will then break for August and reconvene in September, if appropriate.

**Mildrilyn Davis** updated the group about City discussions, final tax credit scores have been published, and Glebe Park was not successful. Without tax credit financing, it is hard to fund the projects. In order to avoid the threat of HUD foreclosure, the City is looking to relieve some pressure by considering a \$5.7 million loan to ARHA. It will be a bridge loan if James Bland redevelopment goes forward soon; a long term loan if Bland redevelopment does not proceed. City Council will consider the potential loan at its June 26 meeting.

In addition, the Affordable Housing Work Group, which includes Councilmen Krupicka and Gaines, are going to be looking at all Resolution 830 affordable units citywide, analyzing their potential for rehabilitation or potential redevelopment, and coming up with a funding strategy. Because the federal government has cut back on funding for local housing, ARHA no longer receives the same funding from HUD it used to receive. This long term strategic plan ideally would look at Glebe Park. However, the citywide Strategic Plan process will take at least two years and there are too many unoccupiable units at Glebe Park (90 out of 152 units) to not act now on redevelopment there. Some of the James Bland blocks may also proceed prior to the conclusion of the Strategic Plan. City staff is just beginning to look at the details about how this Strategic Plan will proceed; we hope a specific time line will be developed later this fall.

In response to questions, Ms. Davis affirmed that whatever recommendations this group comes up with for Glebe Park will occur before the Strategic Plan is finished, and possibly before it even starts. She also clarified that there are now 20 unoccupied Glebe Park units of the 40 Resolution 830 units there.

Ms. Davis also spoke regarding one potential option: slowing the process down, as had been suggested in Lenox Place emails or not doing anything right now. While the City continues to look at affordable housing options and policies on a continual basis, and is about to undertake a citywide Strategic Plan for ARHA properties, it would not be advisable to put the Glebe Park development on hold. The buildings are in terrible shape, and the longer redevelopment is delayed, the more units will be vacated, and boarded up. It is very bad for the neighborhood to have these deteriorated buildings, in terms of potential crime, maintenance, and property values. There are also costs in maintaining the buildings for a longer time that would not be necessary if we move ahead quickly. Finally, and most importantly, there are people in the buildings in what are substandard housing units, and they deserve to have reasonable housing. The City has a commitment to affordable housing and replacing these units is part of that. And it is important to keep ahead of the schedule for tax credit financing, in order to make any redevelopment happen.

**Barbara Ross** asked that the group feel free to discuss alternatives to the proposed developments on the Glebe Park sites, as that is the main topic on tonight's agenda.

**Jeffrey Farner, Chief Development Planner, Planning and Zoning**, started the discussion by talking about planning and zoning issues with redevelopment of Glebe Park, likening the analysis to the same one that would occur with other sites throughout the City, and taking into consideration such issues as zoning, fire access, open space, parking, flood plain, etc.

Several group members, including Andy Duncan and Johan Broekhuysen, raised concerns about Glebe Park being pursued before the citywide ARHA Strategic Plan is finished. Mr. Farner pointed to the current group process as an appropriate venue for the community concerns and goals to be raised.

As to development issues, Mr. Farner stressed that, in his experience city wide, the single most critical development issue boils down to parking: If you cannot park it, you cannot built it. And parking is expensive, with the following approximate costs:

surface parking: \$2,500/ per space

structured parking (above grade building): \$20,000/ per space

underground garage: \$30,000 – 35,000/ per space (this price will be increased when other issues are present such as underground water table).

In Glebe Park, the challenges include economics to the City. For example, in looking theoretically at an all market rate development on Old Dominion, staff found that the development would require a subsidy of \$5-9 million. Chatham Square, in contrast, was considered a reasonable economic project to the City because, given the high land values in Old Town, the market rate units were able to subsidize the affordable units.

What the City team would like to know is what issues are of interest to the community for the Glebe Park redevelopment project.

**Paul Cox** stated that one of the main issues for him is whether the development will be actively managed. Even if management is not directly on site, will it be close enough to respond quickly so that the buildings do not become dilapidated. The community does not want to lose the Res. 830 units either. If we could get Chatham Square with mixed incomes, we would be happy. Better transit options are important for the neighborhood, and access to jobs. A 20 minute commute to a job is difficult for lower income residents. The public transportation in this neighborhood is not adequate.

**Jim Hoben** described “smart” housing as safe, mixed income, accessible, reasonably priced and transit-oriented.

**Paul Cox** stated that the census data for this neighborhood shows that job growth is flat. The Arlandria Plan from 2003 is great, but it was not fully enacted. Also, parking issues should be addressed.

**Andy Duncan** expressed the desire for mixed income, and the hope that the City not miss an opportunity for workforce housing, which is so important for diversity in the City, at Glebe Park.

**Jim Hoben** also suggested that the mix at Glebe Park be changed to include more workforce housing.

**Kathleen Henry** described an alternative which would allow Arlandria/Chirilagua Housing Cooperative (ACHC) to purchase the ARHA Old Dominion site, and consolidate it with adjacent ACHA land in order to facilitate the redevelopment of ACHC buildings, a goal that ACHC is thinking about. ACHC now includes 282 units, and it would be its desire to replace all of its units, and provide full parking. 130 units are now set aside for low income, including 60 units which are for very low income. (*Option #1*)

**Johan Broekhuysen** stated that the community would want ACHC to include all the required parking on site.

**J. Farner** explained that one of the challenges with existing residential buildings in Arlandria is that many are built at higher densities than now allowed by current zoning and would need to meet current zoning standards when redeveloping. There are tradeoffs, especially when trying to ensure that new buildings are compatible with existing neighborhood character.

**Jim Hoben** stressed the need for density in order to achieve affordable housing and is of the opinion that higher densities can be made to blend into the neighborhood.

**Johan Broekhuysen** described an exercise his neighborhood performed of looking at the condos and townhouses city wide that are for sale. The idea would be to find individual units throughout the City for purchase in order to satisfy Resolution 830 for Glebe Park. That way, more density in Arlandria would not be necessary. He thought that there were sufficient individual units citywide in the \$250,000-\$350,000 range to make this a reasonable option, given the development costs. Johan agreed to provide the information the HOA collected. (*Option 2*)

**A.J. Jackson, EYA**, stated that the development costs are approximately \$250,000 per unit, but that does not take into consideration approximately \$115-120,000 per unit available as subsidy through the tax credit financing program. You cannot use tax credits to purchase individual units scattered throughout the City. An applicant needs at least 30 units in the same market area (as defined by the State) to receive tax credits and cover the costs of construction.

**Mike Caison** asked whether it is actually feasible to scatter the units across the City in the way suggested.

**Connie Lennox, ARHA staff**, stated that when the ARHA units are too scattered, they are more difficult to manage.

**Jim Hoben** responded that there is a downside of concentrating low income residents, but also to scattering too widely because social services may be difficult to access or target for residents.

**A.J. Jackson**, stated that ARHA has earlier asked EYA to look around the City for individual units and EYA would bring that information to the next meeting.

**Jeff Farner** spoke about two types of densities: horizontal and vertical density. If we put all townhouses on Old Dominion site, you cannot achieve many lots because of the need for individual lots and for parking access. This is horizontal access. If we add height, and build all condominiums, there is no way to park it reasonably. This is vertical density.

**Johan Broekhuysen** asked about the possibility of consolidating the crescent block in order to have more land to work with and more room to make more density work. (*Option 3*)

**Jim Hoben** expressed the thought that while neighborhoods typically want to ensure sufficient open space areas on the site of new development, in this neighborhood there are large, excellent open space resources close by, especially Four Mile Run Park. This fact should make adding density more acceptable.

**Bonnie Baxley** confirmed that open space as part of a development is not a critical issue for the Community Lodgings residents.

**Jeff Farner** spoke about the general development options for the Old Dominion site:

townhouses

condominiums

or high rise (50-60' tall with underground parking), which would be neither compatible with the neighborhood nor economically feasible.

Chatham Square has a 2.33 FAR. Current RB zoning is limited to a .75 FAR.

**Amy Slack** asked whether providers other than ARHA can be considered for Resolution 830 units. She and Connie Ringdebated the interpretation of the resolution on this point.

**Andy Duncan** asked whether there is precedent for the City subsidizing the construction of projects like this.

**Mildrilyn Davis, Director of Housing**, responded that the City had helped purchase ARHA replacement units at Park Place and had funded short term loans for construction, such as at Chatham Square, in the past.

**Johan Broekhuysen** expressed concern for developing any site with 100% public housing units, because it sets up the residents for failure again. He suggested that we look at a greater mix of market rate units for Old Dominion.

**A. J. Jackson, EYA**, showed a conceptual plan, different from others the group has seen, with 18 total townhouses, 12 at market rate prices, and 6 affordable, for Old Dominion. (*Option 4*)

**Mike Caison** spoke in support of higher numbers of affordable, public units. ARHA controls this site, and is serving folks in need. Therefore, to reduce the numbers of public units is a loss.

**Bonnie Baxley** pointed out that using existing affordable housing for replacement ARHA 830 units would result in a net loss of affordable housing to the City.

**Ed Ablard, Equal Opportunity Commission**, described a federal funding program for Veterans housing where 65% subsidies are available, and suggested a serious look at the program for Glebe Park. (*Option 5*)

**Andy Duncan** suggested we look at some different mix that increases the public units to more than 6, and less than 100%, that may increase density, but includes a greater mix, for sustainable development. (*Option 6*)

**Jim Hoben?** suggested that we also look at increasing density by increasing height on the site and just see if it is feasible. (*Option 7*)

**Kathleen Henry** raised the issue of raw sewage in the street gutters after a mild rain storm.

**Barbara Ross**, in closing the meeting, noted that the entire discussion was focused on alternatives for development of the Old Dominion site. Did that mean the Stakeholders were comfortable with moving ahead with the proposals for West Glebe (44 ARHA units) and Old Dominion (West) (24 rehabbed units)?

**Wilma Probst** was the only speaker who responded. She noted that the West Glebe site is the farthest from shopping and the good transportation on Mount Vernon Avenue. Because of the distance, parking at the West Glebe site is critical.