

Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) Redevelopment Work Group

October 19, 2023

Meeting Summary

Participants

Work Group Members

Justin M. Wilson, Mayor, City of Alexandria

Willie Bailey, Vice Chair, ARHA Board of Commissioners

Stephen Koenig, Planning Commission

City of Alexandria/Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) Staff

James Parajon, City Manager, City of Alexandria

Nancy Williams, Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Helen S. McIlvaine, Director, Office of Housing

Eric Keeler, Deputy Director, Office of Housing (via phone)

Christina Zechman Brown, City Attorney's Office

Kim Cadena, Office of Housing

Catherine Miliaras, Department of Planning and Zoning

Merrick Malone, Commissioner, ARHA Board of Commissioners

Nicole Wickliffe, Deputy Director, ARHA

Thomas Jones, ARHA

Wanda Sherrod, ARHA

David Cortiella, ARHA (via phone)

Welcome & Introductions, September 21 Meeting Summary Approval

Mayor Justin Wilson convened the meeting.

Stephen Koenig moved to approve the summary of the September 21, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Willie Bailey the meeting summary was approved.

Update Regarding ARHA Staff, Board, and Organizational Transition

Nicole Wickliffe said Anitra Androh was the new Chair of the ARHA Board of Commissioners and Willie Bailey is the Vice Chair. Merrick Malone (in attendance) will become acting CEO effective November 1, 2023 when Keith Pettigrew departs for the DC Housing Authority. Malone confirmed that he will resign as a Commissioner before then.

Samuel Madden Homes Redevelopment Project

David Cortiella provided an update that the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) approved a certificate of appropriateness for the Samuel Madden redevelopment project. Mr. Cortiella said the Final Site Plans have been submitted for review. He said the North building has issued a Request for Qualifications for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Investors for the equity part of project funding, and the South building is currently seeking investors. The language for the Section 106 historic mitigation Memorandum of Agreement has been approved by the City and ARHA with a mid-November timeline for signing by all the consulting parties. Mr. Cortiella said relocation of residents is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2024 with the financial closing in June or July. The relocation process is expected to take three to four months and new residents will no longer be placed in Madden after February 2024. Mr. Malone said that he would like to escalate the speed of relocation efforts because it is easier to relocate tenants earlier, but he needed more information first. Helen McIlvaine asked if ARHA had Tenant Protection Vouchers for the current Samuel Madden residents, which Mr. Malone confirmed. Mr. Cortiella also said that the Mayor might be asked to provide a letter of support for ARHA's request to the Governor for additional bonding cap to finance Madden. More information regarding the request and ARHA's financing plan for the project will be presented at the November 30 Work Group meeting.

Ladrey Senior Highrise Development Project

Thomas Jones said that the Completeness 2 Plans for the Ladrey project were submitted to Planning & Zoning on October 19. He also said that the Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee had approved the design of the building. ARHA would like the project to be on both the Planning Commission and City Council dockets in January 2024. Wanda Sherrod said that a hybrid community meeting will take place November 8 at ARHA headquarters.

Ms. Sherrod stated that ongoing resident engagement conversations are proceeding very well and that the next meeting is October 26. Ms. Sherrod said the usual turnout at resident meetings is 60-65 people. During the October meeting, the residents will be asked to provide feedback on desired amenities. She said the timeframe on the amenity vote was so that feedback could be provided before the end of the year to the architects. She said that residents would be provided a holiday meal in November and a gift in December.

Mr. Jones said the relocation plan was finished and relocation is scheduled to start in Fall 2024. The relocation process is expected to take nine to twelve months. Mr. Jones stated that all 170 residents have been contacted and the December resident meeting will have ARHA's relocation consultant, Housing to Home, present. Ms. Sherrod said that interpreters were present at all meetings with residents, including new residents. Mayor Wilson asked what relocation options the residents will have. Mr. Jones states that by law residents must be offered three options, including the choice to move to a unit offered by ARHA or its development partner, to move to a unit located by Housing to Home, or to find a unit of their own choosing. He said some residents want to stay with their families, but the units their families currently live in must be qualified by ARHA and a voucher used to pay the rent. Mr. Jones said that Housing to Home is trying to cluster residents to maintain existing networks. Ms. McIlvaine said that the City has asked ARHA to brief the Department of Community and Human Services regarding services to be provided during relocation. Mayor Wilson sought confirmation that the relocation would begin in fall 2024 and continue through 2025. Mr. Jones confirmed this and stated that, given the timing

of the tax credit application in the spring, the project will likely go to financial closing in the second quarter of 2025.

Mr. Malone reiterated his feelings about potentially speeding up the relocation timeline, pointing out that with interest rate uncertainty, time is of the essence. Ms. McIlvaine inquired whether extended stay hotels could be utilized as temporary housing. Nicole Wickliffe said she would check that option, but that solution might require a waiver from HUD. Both Ms. Wickliffe and Mr. Malone want to widen the options available to them.

Additional Development Planning Updates

David Cortiella stated that the Chatham Square investors sent him a transfer agreement for the property on October 19 and that he is waiting on the sizing of the deal to decide on whether ARHA will ask HUD for a Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion or a RAD blend. He said that the RAD conversions for Old Dominion and James Blend were paused because of the need for letters granting them tax abatements.

Status of Tax Abatement Requests

Mayor Wilson asked for a status update on ARHA's tax abatement applications. Christina Brown said the City requested more information from ARHA to determine whether a tax abatement is appropriate. Mr. Malone asked if the city wants proof of ownership. He said that because it is a subsidy swap, it is unclear to him why new proof is needed. Ms. Brown said proof is needed that ARHA or a subsidiary owns the property, which the City does not currently have. She said flow charts of the ownership structure have been provided, but not the necessary organizational documents. Mayor Wilson asked what the city currently has on file regarding ownership of the properties, to which Ms. Brown responded that there are no actual records or signed documents, only drafts. Mr. Malone requested a checklist of necessary items for ARHA to provide. Ms. Brown responded such a checklist does not exist due to the variety of unique situations that can arise. Mr. Malone again requested that the City tell him what ARHA needed to provide. Mayor Wilson asked if it is partnership documentation that is needed, and Ms. Brown stated that concrete documentation is needed, not the opinions of ARHA's attorneys. Ms. McIlvaine said that she received a rough list of necessary documents in a copy of letter that was sent to Keith Pettigrew. Mayor Wilson requested that this be re-sent to ARHA. Mr. Cortiella said that the letter in question was regarding the Samuel Madden tax abatement request and not Old Dominion or James Bland. He also asked that ARHA's lawyers give a symposium on taxes to the Work Group to explain that all deals have different financial structures and require different forms of organization. The mayor asks if complying with the City's pending request for information would accomplish the same.

Ms. Brown stated that ARHA inquired about how to become tax exempt to which she responded that the City does not tell applicants how to structure their organizations, but that ARHA must create an organizational structure and assert why it would qualify for an exemption. Mr. Cortiella stated that organizational documents cannot be provided because ARHA does not yet have equity partners. The mayor tasked them with figuring out the abatements for James Bland and Old Dominion to serve as models for Samuel Madden.

Premier Housing Update and Revised Schedule

Ms. McIlvaine said that the City had presented its list of requirements for Premier Housing in a memo to the Work Group last month, and then discussed changes the ARHA Board proposed. Mr. Malone stated that development activities will be confined to Alexandria, while other activities may be outside the city. Ms. Brown asked if ARHA's housing mission will still be conducted only in the city and if property management or other activities would take place outside the city. Mayor Wilson requested clarity on what activities will be in the city. Mr. Malone said that ARHA's edits to the list and location of activities were done by Anitra Androh as ARHA Board Chair. Mayor Wilson again requested clarity on these activities. Mayor Wilson added that if the articles of incorporation were to change, then the entity must come back to City Council for approval of the change. Mr. Malone said that the 90-day notice period of a change currently required in the memo would be too long, and Mayor Wilson inquired about the need for haste. Ms. Wickliffe stated that HUD at times needed administrative changes made at an expedited pace. Mayor Wilson said that regardless of how quickly HUD needed a document, any changes in the articles of incorporation would need time to be docketed for City Council review. Mr. Malone inquired about the law that governs the creation of the Premier Housing entity and Ms. Brown clarified that under the City Charter as well as the Code of Virginia, entities created by ARHA are required to be approved by City Council. Mayor Wilson asked whether what has been done recently regarding the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is similar, and Ms. Brown stated that IDA's have a list of laws governing their creation and structure but that those are different from the current situation. Mayor Wilson asked for a scheduling update and Ms. McIlvaine replied that, given the group's resolution of key terms, approval of the creation of the Premier Housing entity is on track for a November City Council meeting.

Other Business

Ms. McIlvaine introduced Kim Cadena from the Office of Housing as the new staff liaison. Nicole Wickliffe announced that ARHA now has a new CFO. Ms. McIlvaine reminded the Work Group that the November meeting was rescheduled and will be on November 30.

Mayor Wilson adjourned the meeting.