# URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: **Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee**

SUBJECT: Minutes of January Meeting

DATE: 27 April 2015

FINAL

The Urban Design Advisory Committee met on Thursday, January 23 at 9:00am at City Hall. The following members were in attendance at the meeting:

Steve Kulinski
Marie McKenney Tavernini
Roger Waud
Bruce Machanic, co-chair
Daniel Straub, co-chair

The following Staff, representatives for the Applicants, and citizen representatives were also in attendance:

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|---|---|
| Tom Canfield | P&Z |
| Maya Contreras | P&Z |
| Susan Eddy | P&Z |
| Dirk Geratz | P&Z |
| Nancy Williams | P&Z |
| Devon Perkins | Hickok Cole Architects |
| Yuri Blazar | City Interests |
| Alisa Bren | Edens |
| Krista Dilaconi | Edens |
| Cathy Puskar | Attorney at Law |

## INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00am as the quarterly meeting of UDAC. The purpose of the meeting was 1) to review the final conceptual design for the proposed 500 / 501 North Union (RTN) project, 2) receive an introduction by the new planning/design team associated with the Giant/ABC site, and 3) receive an update of the status of the SAP for OTN.

## OLD BUSINESS: PROJECT PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

- **500-501 North Union Street (The Robinson Terminal North site).** This project was previously presented at the April, July and December, 2014 meetings of UDAC. At the conclusion of the December meeting the committee voted on the following elements of the project:
  - the Site Plan is progressing in the right direction **(unanimous "yes" vote)**
  - the design of the West Building meets the Waterfront Plan guideline "to encourage modern design inspired by historic precedent…" as a result, the architectural design of the West Building is progressing in the right direction subject to a final resolution of the western elevation of this building **(unanimous "yes" vote)**
  - the conceptual design for the East Building should be modern in direction (vs. style) in order to respond to this unique site, conditions, and context **(unanimous "yes" vote).**

  This presentation was intended to update the committee on the progress of the conceptual architectural design of the West Building, East Building and the Pavilion along with the progress in incorporating historical and cultural elements into the overall site plan for the project. The Applicant proposed that the development is intended to generate an authentic and elegant sense of place at this site thereby defining it as the northern 'cap' of the Waterfront Small Area Plan. The Applicant also explained the detail site issues associated with the property, i.e. FEMA regulations and grading issues, access and loading issues, and historical importance of West Point. In response to previous comments, the following changes have been made to the proposal:
  - West Building. The west elevation of the West Building has been revised to include varied massing at the north residential tower and the roof, an enhanced cornice at floor 5, enhanced brick articulation, and the location of additional windows.

- East Building. The East Building was completely re-designed to respect the historic character of the community to the south and west (Old and Historic District), and the more modern heritage of Old Town North. The resulting design concept responds to multiple contexts.
- Pavilion. The Pavilion was completely re-designed to respond to the unique characteristics and context associated with this site on the Potomac River and its importance as a gateway to the City and Alexandria's formal waterfront.

The committee was favorably impressed with the progress of the design and requested a formal package of the presentation for review. After receiving the package, the committee unanimously indicated their intent to endorse the conceptual design of the building and architectural components of this project subject to a formal vote at its next quarterly meeting. However, the committee expects to receive a future presentation on the open space, landscape design and historical/cultural aspects of the project when they are finalized.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Giant/ABC Site.** Edens is the new owner/developer of this site and requested an introductory meeting to present their approach to enriching communities through design, engagement, and retail experiences. The Applicant introduced the team and explained their experience in urban place-making. They also indicated that they are eager to bring their experience to this site. A walking tour with the community has been scheduled for May 2, and a bus tour to visit their other successful projects in the region is scheduled for May 28. The Applicant also indicated that they will entertain any comments and/or recommendations from the community concerning the project.

- **OTN Small Area Plan Update.** The Neighborhood Planning Staff gave the committee an update on the current status of the work program for the update of the SAP. Staff is currently waiting for formal approval on the program and budget by Council, and is starting to organize the background/research tasks. Staff expects that community advisory groups for the effort will probably be established in the Summer. The formal public interface and community planning outreach/involvement tasks will probably commence in the Fall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:30am.

Please notify the author of any additions, deletions or mistakes in this report.