

URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: **Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee**
SUBJECT: Minutes of June Meeting
DATE: September 21, 2016 (approved)

FINAL

The Urban Design Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, June 1 at 9:00am at City Hall. The following members were in attendance at the meeting:

- Stephen 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:

- Michael Swidrak P&Z

INTRODUCTION

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00am as the June meeting of UDAC.

OLD BUSINESS

A formal meeting in May was not held; however, the Committee Co-Chairs and staff met to discuss Committee procedures. No minutes were prepared for this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Old Town North: Small Area Plan.** MT gave an in-depth summary of the status of the update of the SAP for OTN including the 4 Phases of the Work Plan, the 4 Subcommittees, and a summary of the most recent meetings of the Advisory Group, Subcommittee Groups, and Community. Discussion followed on the following items and subjects:
 - The importance of the Economic Development aspects of the OTN SAP Update;
 - The importance of the initial visioning exercise/framework plan, the components of which have been reviewed by the 4 Subcommittees with additional study underway as needed through consultant assistance and through the Mini-Charrette in late June;
 - The importance of zoning, development review and the upcoming discussions on potential changes as the OTN SAP Update process continues;
 - Community attendance and participation /input at the meetings (beyond the original charrette); and
 - The importance of revising and updating the Urban Design Guidelines. MS mentioned that the guidelines are being reformatted into a more user-friendly document that has been clarified internally, and will be brought into conformance with current policies and plans, as appropriate. The process for augmenting guidelines through the OTN SAP Update will be a joint process between the City and community like all aspects of that planning process. DS said that the proposed update should include input from UDAC, and that the updated Guidelines should be presented to the committee for a formal review and vote.
- MT also mentioned the future meetings related to the SAP, which include an Advisory Group meeting on June 8th, and the next charrette, which will take place between June 23 and 25th.

Other New Business:

- **UDAC project update**
 - Staff (MS) presented a summary of projects that UDAC had reviewed over the past year: Robinson Terminal North, Towne Motel, Old Colony Inn, and Edens – ABC/Giant.
 - DS added during this discussion his concerns with the development review process as it has related to UDAC. DS based his concerns on a lack of notice UDAC received for three projects in the summer of 2015, community concerns with some of the projects, and that UDAC was compelled to write a letter of endorsement for only one of the four aforementioned projects (two others received a vote of endorsement for the concept or schematic design, and Edens received a vote of general “support” but not endorsement).
 - SK noted that in his capacity as an architect who submits permits and applications to the City, he can tell that staff is more cautious in how it has been handling the reviews of permits, in part to allay community concerns with the permitting process. DS indicated that although the permitting process is very important and that he is currently observing many improvements in the process, the Committee is only authorized to work within the development review process, and usually on more complex development projects requiring community input.
 - BM noted that staff needs to clarify the future of UDAC through the SAP update, and whether the Committee would possibly be “sunsetting” as part of the SAP adoption.
 - BM added that the idea of drafting a checklist for UDAC review (as practiced on other City design committees) would be helpful. SK seconded this sentiment, stating that better defined guidelines will help developers “stay on course.” BM also discussed that the exact role of UDAC in Old Town North development review needs to be outlined through the SAP process.
 - In relation to Robinson Terminal North, MT inquired about the status of the proposed outdoor performance space.
 - MS finished the discussion by mentioning UDAC-reviewed projects that are under construction (former Health Department, The Mill, and 700 N. Washington Street), and potential future projects for UDAC review (including Canal Center additions, the NRG site, the ARHA redevelopment sites and the WMATA Bus Barn).
- **Discussion of elections and member survey**
 - MS indicated that elections are being considered for September. DS indicated that nominations should be requested a month prior to any actual votes for election of officers.
 - MS noted that three members of UDAC may have to step down in the next year (DS, MT, BM) based on reaching their 10-year term limit before their next reappointment (based on Section 2-4-4 of the City Code). BM mentioned that there may possibly be a chance of a one-term extension for some Committee members, but MS will have to confirm the statute with the City Clerk and/or City Attorney’s office and report back to UDAC.
 - MS indicated that Staff has received the member survey. Most items did not have an overwhelming opinion from UDAC members, save the following:
 - DS indicated the current updated member opinion survey has one major unanimous finding – that formal letters of endorsement should be necessary for concept plans that are endorsed by the committee. MS stated that nothing about the requirement of an endorsement letter is mentioned in the Zoning Ordinance section relating to UDAC (Section 6-505 states that “comments and suggestions” from UDAC shall be included in staff reports), though UDAC may draft letters of endorsement as it sees fit. DS indicated it would be logical from many perspectives to continue the practice of drafting letters of endorsement.
 - In addition, there are also strong results on several other survey items.
- **List of projects reviewed by UDAC since its inception:**

- MS distributed a spreadsheet of projects that were reviewed by UDAC dating back to at least 1995.
 - BM and DS noted that it would be nice to see an updated spreadsheet that included projects that terminated in their concept phase, yet were reviewed by UDAC. Additionally, BM and DS would like to see additional column(s) that indicate whether the project was reviewed and voted upon by the committee, to see the actual UDAC vote for these projects if possible (i.e. if UDAC endorsement was unanimous, or had another outcome).
- **Meeting Adjourned at approximately 10:00 am.**