

BRAC Advisory Group Meeting

May 13, 2009

7pm – 9pm

Patrick Henry Recreation Center

Roll Call –

Present:

Sean Wachutka, Program Manager, BRAC 133 Integrated Program Office

Mr. Travis Edwards, Public Affairs BRAC Outreach Chief

John Komoroske, Planning Commission

Jayne Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission

Jerry Dawson, Duke Reality

Geoffrey Goodale – Vice Chair, Brookville-Seminary Valley

Julie Edelson , Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen

Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria

Ron Sturman, Seminary Heights

Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association

Dave Cavanaugh, Seminary Ridge

Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West

Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill

Kathy Burns, West End Business Association

Not Present:

Jim Turkel, Chief, Belvoir Integration Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Colonel Moffatt, Fort Belvoir Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation and BRAC

Dr. Gueverra, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Kai Reynolds, JBG

City Staff:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Ravi Raut, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Pat Escher, Department of Planning and Zoning

A. Draft - Advisory Group Letter to City Council

The group discussed the letter at length – the following issues were raised:

1. VDOT has received a traffic study which reaches different conclusions than the previous study. This study did not include Seminary Road west of the Beauregard and Seminary intersection, nor south and north of the intersection on Beauregard Street. Duke and the Army are reviewing this study and initially disagree with of the some of the conclusions. The group wants to have VDOT at the table to discuss all the proposed

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transportation improvements. VDOT study should be placed on the P&Z web page.

2. The VDOT traffic study concluded that an Interchange Justification Study should be performed. This study can take up to 10 months or more to be completed. After completion of the report, the improvements would have to be designed, then VDOT would have to find funding – timing is critical.
3. Get VDOT to the table and maybe improvements can be done quicker.
4. Road Improvements: Road improvements should be delayed until there is a more comprehensive look at the area. There is a need look at the area comprehensively from a traffic, transit and pedestrian perspectives. It should be looked at regionally, streets within a mile and/or up to a 5 mile radius of the Mark Center. Concerns were raised about Seminary Road west of the Beauregard/Seminary intersection and on Beauregard Street north and south of the interchange. Conversely, improvements need to be in place prior to the BRAC facility opening. There needs to be sensitivity to the timing of these improvements – the absolute latest construction can start is Spring of 2010.
5. Traffic impacts have changed dramatically from 2004 due to the potential HOT Lanes, the potential BRT, the potential inline station at the I-395 and Seminary Road interchange, the potential of direct access ramp to the Mark Center site, the transit center at the Mark Center and the ad hoc transit center at Southern Towers. All of these conditions need to be reviewed comprehensively and may impact the design of the road improvements.
6. In 2004, Council required a traffic study for Beauregard and Seminary – the study did not provide significant solutions and the long term recommendation were not feasibility such as making the intersection grade separated.
7. The project is different from 2004 because it now is a Federal project.
8. Duke contends that it is the same project as it generally conform the uses and size that was approved in 2004.
9. Some members of the group did not agree with the tone or the content of the letter and it was agreed upon that Geoffrey Goodale would provide a revised letter for the group for review and comment.
10. Need to have letter completed as the Council and Congress will be recessed in the July and August.
11. Free parking is an issue.

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12. The north parking garage will have 50 visitor spaces. The parking garages are for Department of Defense employees only.
13. The Army has selected a consultant to create a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the development - the consultant still needs to be formally approved by the Army. The draft TMP should be completed in the fall.
14. The Army still has to go back to the National Capitol Planning Commission for final approval.
15. Discussion about the September 20011 deadline and if there is a way to have that timeline extended. The group believes that laws can be amended – it was clarified that the BRAC law applies to all the base closures in the US – not just at the Mark Center – changing the law would require an act of Congress – the group and citizens strongly recommend contacting their elected officials to try to change the deadline.
16. The group wanted to know if the process in Alexandria is similar to the interaction in other areas within the region. The Army responded that Alexandria has more public participation and areas like Anne Arundel County don't have advisory groups.
17. This effort needs to be collaborative, including all participants.

B. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Update

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager, spoke about the Freedom of Information Act and how it relates to the use of email. It was determined that the Advisory Group can email the group as a whole as long as the emails are not considered conversational, meaning there is not fluid stream of texting over an abbreviated time frame and the emails are dispersing information/comment. The general public can email the group as a whole.

C. The meeting was open to the general public for comment. Their comments are included above.

D. Adjourn