

Meeting notes are recorded by City staff to provide a written summary of the Advisory Group discussion and comments from the public. They are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of events at the meeting.

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**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Mary Means introduced the format of the meeting as being an opportunity to hear from the group regarding the content of the draft plan. Attendees were welcomed and City and ARHA officials were recognized. (For full list of staff and consultant teams for the Braddock East and James Bland Redevelopment projects see notes of the first Advisory Group meeting on February 8, 2008).

Advisory Group attendance:

Harvey Gray: Person knowledgeable about Parker Gray history.

Janice Howard: At-Large Member.

Gwen Menefee: Public Housing Advocate.

Connie Ring: Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority Commissioner.

John Komoroske: Planning Commissioner.

Sylvia Sibrover: Northeast Citizens Association Representative.

Merrick Malone: At-Large Member.

Howard Katz: Developer with affordable/workforce housing development experience.

Leslie Zupan: Inner City Civic Association Representative.

Salena Zellers: Braddock Neighborhood Resident.

Advisory Group absentees:

John DuPree: At-Large Member.

Nakia Johnson: Public Housing Resident.

**JAMES BLAND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL USE PERMIT UPDATE:**

Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner, Department of Planning & Zoning, provided an update on the Bland DSUP process. This included the presentation of a model which advisory group members and the public were invited to view.

Advisory Group Questions/Comments

Q. How many stories are proposed on First Street?

R. Two and a half up to three and a half.

Q. Is there a proposal to move the open space more toward the center of the project?

R. Location is more flexible. The key issue is whether we can negotiate to make the park bigger.

Q. How many market rate and/or public housing units will be lost.

R. Only market rate units will be lost and it will be about 4 or 6 units.

Q. How will the value of the market rate units be calculated?

R. It will be a three-way negotiation between EYA, ARHA and the City.

C. If the City can afford to pay for townhomes for a park, why can it not afford to pay for off-siting more public housing units.

Q. What is the proportion of ARHA units in the multi-family?

R. It is 48% (there was some debate about the correct figure).

Q. Will this impact the marketability of the market-rate units?

C. Chatham Square is 35% public housing and Quaker Hill is 25% public housing. These are the only examples in Alexandria and both have been marketable and successful. It depends on circumstances and market conditions.

R. The developer needs to be sure that the market rate units will sell and they consider that it will be successful as currently proposed.

R. The marketable mix can go down for transit-orientated development due to its desirable location.

Q. Have EYA taken into account that Madden/Adkins/Ramsey are all going to be mixed income communities.

R. The developer looks at everything – other competitive projects in the neighborhood, how to make sure the development is attractive and competitive, and the desire of people to live in this area. Expecting better values in later phases of the development.

R. Bland is part of the wider neighborhood and there is a lot of development going on in the neighborhood that affects values. What is happening here is a mirror of what is happening in the community.

C. (from public - homeowner at Chatham Square) – Chatham Square is not working. Residents met with APD to resolve some of the problems – theft, vandalism, drug dealing, drug taking, domestic violence, public disturbances. Realtor told them that Public Housing across the street was going to redevelop. People cannot sell their homes.

R. Everywhere there is some rowdiness. Would like to see police reports.

C. (from public – homeowner on First Street) Mixed-income in multi-family is a problem. Public housing in high-rise does not work. The only place where public housing is in abundance is opposite First Street.

Q. Would more open space in the neighborhood help to solve some of the problems at Chatham Square?

C. (from public – homeowner on Columbus Street) Have been asking for a model for some time and hope the City will bring it out into the community.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT PLAN**

Andrea Barlow, Principal Planner, P & Z, and Ben Carlson and David Dixon from Goody Clancy provided an overview of the draft Plan, with specific reference to the plan recommendations. (See PowerPoint presentation).

Mary Means then facilitated a discussion with the Advisory Group, going through the recommendations one by one.

### **General comments:**

Social Services and the Charles Houston Rec Center will be a big asset to support mixed-income housing. Residents have to be prepared to work with ARHA to program activities, especially for older youths. Need to expand on the human services that are currently available. What is in Alexandria now is not adequate.

As a resident of Chatham Square, I have not experienced any of the problems identified by the homeowner. People cannot sell because the market is dead across the region. This is not unique to Chatham Square. Mixed-use has worked across the country and I cannot believe it will not work in Alexandria.

Report in general and the recommendations are very good. There are some inconsistencies with figures in the charts and text, which need to be remedied. The MOU requires that the Master Plan be prepared jointly and co-operatively between ARHA and the City and it will be going to ARHA Board as well as Planning Commission and City Council for approval.

### **Recommendation 1: The City Housing Master Plan should play a major role in identifying and safeguarding sites for replacement public housing units to support the redevelopment proposal in the Plan.**

C. Concept is good but without identifying how many numbers are coming off the BE sites and a timetable, the recommendation is meaningless.

R. The replacement sites will be for the consideration of ARHA and the City Council, in order to make sure it meets the criteria.

C. Need more details about what the Housing Plan is.

### **Recommendation 2: The ARHA Strategic Plan should consider ways to restore ARHA's ability to provide human and social services to its residents and providing preparedness training for returning residents to the new mixed-income communities.**

C. Traditionally, it has been a mix between City and ARHA, but ARHA's ability to provide these services has been limited by funding.

C. Replace "restore" with "enhance".

**Recommendation 3: Any replacement housing units that may be needed in connection with the redevelopment of the public housing sites must be made available in accordance with Resolution 830.**

Some people in the community do not agree with Resolution 830.

**Recommendation 4: The City and ARHA should work to ensure that the process of securing sites for replacement public housing and the process of relocating residents should address the following criteria:**

- **Priority to residents who may wish to remain in their community.**
  - **Proximity to comparable transit, services, jobs, amenities, quality schools.**
  - **Maintain a critical mass at each development to both preserve public housing residents' community ties and allow for the most financially feasible maintenance structure for ARHA.**
- C. The numbers have changed through the course of the discussion.
- R. It is based on the numbers needed to provide a sense of community and enable efficient management of the property.
- R. Will discuss in the text reasons why it may be smaller or larger.
- **Ensure public housing units are integrated into the community both visually and physically.**
  - **Provide for ARHA ownership.**
- C. Confused about what "provide for ARHA ownership" means. Should it be maintain ownership?
- C. There should be more options to get scattered sites.
- R. The City is interested in looking at alternative solutions.
- C. This will be a hard sell to ARHA.
- **New housing sites must meet HUD's approval requirements.**
  - **Consider impacts on overall neighborhood's income mix, urban design character, amenities, etc.**
  - **Ensure appropriate timing and phasing to coincide with the phasing of the proposed public housing redevelopment.**
  - **Avoid multiple moves for families and households (no more than 1 move)**
- C. Change "avoid" to "minimize" and remove clause in parenthesis.
- **Avoid moves that will result in children changing schools during the school year.**
- C. Change "avoid" to "minimize" in ninth bullet.
- **Human and social services will be needed to support public housing residents in moving from an exclusively low-income to a mixed-income environment.**

**Recommendation 5: Redevelopment of public housing should recognize the diversity of the population. Such considerations are:**

- **A variety of housing size and types that meets a wide range of needs and aspirations.**
- **A range of accessible active and passive open space that meets the needs of the community, especially young children, and complements existing and proposed facilities in the neighborhood.**

- **Access to supportive social services that encourage and increase the financial independence of public housing residents.**
  - **Easily accessible space for community interaction, job training and other social programs.**
  - **A variety of architectural and building types, with no obvious distinction between housing for different income levels.**
  - **Careful management of facilities and grounds, with homeowner and tenant associations that are attentive and sensitive to the needs of all its residents.**
- C. Change “careful management” to “high quality & experienced management”
- **A Community Association or similar group that includes property-owners and ARHA residents to ensure that public housing residents have a voice in the new community.**

**Recommendation 6: The City and ARHA should investigate the formation of financing and development partnerships to tap into the multiple sources of funds available for the redevelopment of public housing. This should be addressed in the ARHA Strategic Plan.**

C. Change “should” to “must”.

C. The ARHA Strategic Plan deals with ARHA’s side of the commitment. Where is the City’s commitment?

**Recommendation 7: All new development in the plan area will:**

- **Provide appropriate transitions in scale and massing;**
- **Include architectural variety reflecting neighborhood tradition;**
- **Create green edges along streets;**
- **Contribute to walkable streets; and**
- **Incorporate underground parking.**

C. Agreement.

**Recommendation 8: To achieve the urban design goals set out in this Plan, the ARHA-owned properties within the Braddock East Plan should be designated as individual Coordinated Development Districts and be subject to the CDD guidelines set out in Chapter**

C. Clarification that Ramsey will not be a CDD.

C. Agreement.

**Recommendation 9: The following recommendations are made with regard to the appropriate land uses for each site within the Braddock East Mater Plan Boundary:**

- **All sites should include a mix of public housing and market-rate housing, and where possible an element of affordable and/or workforce housing.**

- **Neighborhood-serving retail would be appropriate for the ground floor of the Samuel Madden blocks, to compliment existing and proposed retail, with the possible inclusion of a grocery store in these blocks.**
- **Neighborhood-serving retail should be considered for the ground floor of the Andrew Adkins block along Madison Street.**
- **The western half of Adkins, adjacent to the Metro site, and/or the northern Samuel Madden block should be considered as possible office uses, to help to balance the overall mix of uses within the plan area.**
- **A hotel use would be appropriate for that part of the Adkins block that is currently occupied by the single-family properties between Adkins and West Street.**

C. OK – but need more than “an element” of affordable housing.

**Recommendation 10: A variety of open spaces should be provided to meet the needs of the new residents of the proposed mixed-income communities. These open spaces should complement the programmed activities at the new Charles Houston Recreation Center.**

C. Change to read “the needs of the residents of the new mixed-income community”.

**Recommendation 11: The exterior facades of public and/or affordable housing should be designed to be indistinguishable from the market rate housing.**

C. OK but repeats previous recommendation.

**Recommendation 12: The public housing units should be integrated throughout the new development, and not concentrated in any one location.**

C. OK, but a bit nebulous with regard to the on-site mix of units.

**Recommendation 13: The following recommendations are made with regard to the design goals for each site within the Braddock East Master Plan Boundary:**

C. It should be remembered that according to the City Charter, a Master Plan deals with the “general character”. It is not a detailed planning function.

**James Bland**

- **Building heights of 30-40 feet are recommended along First Street and Columbus Street, rising to 40-50 feet toward the center of the site and up to 50 feet along Patrick Street.**

- **Open space should be located on each block and there should be a minimum of one centralized and consolidated public open space.**
- **Alfred Street should be added to the list of “walking streets” established in the BMNP, where priority is given to the pedestrian.**

C. Too High opposite First Street.

C. Too High behind Columbus Street.

R. Need to consider economic viability. If you tinker significantly with the plan, it will not be viable.

C. Agree, but also need to be respectful of surrounding community.

#### **Samuel Madden.**

- **An open space/focal point at the apex of Samuel Madden at First Street, designed as an attractive entrance at this gateway to the City and neighborhood.**
- **The northern portion of any future building should highlight this gateway location with a memorable form, shape and/or materials.**
- **Building heights up to 60-70 feet are recommended for the northern block of Samuel Madden, with 30-40 foot shoulders.**
- **Building heights up to 50-60 feet are recommended for the southern block of Samuel Madden, with 40-50 foot shoulders.**
- **Any retail edges along sidewalks should be transparent, include entrances, and otherwise contribute to the pedestrian realm.**

C. Too high in the upper corner, opposite First Street. These properties are not 30 feet as shown on the plan.

#### **Andrew Adkins.**

- **building heights up to 70 feet with 30-foot shoulders are recommended along the “walking streets” of Wythe, West and Madison.**
- **The continuation of Payne Street axis through the Andrew Adkins site is recommended to reconnect the street grid.**
- **Building heights of up to 50-70 feet with a 30-40 feet shoulder are recommended for the western half of Adkins is**
- **Building heights of up to 40-50 feet with a 30-40 feet shoulder are recommended for the eastern half of the Adkins.**

C. The proposed Payne Street connection is a bridge to nowhere, not a reconnection. It may make sense when it comes forward for redevelopment and it may not.

Can it just be designated as a pedestrian route?

R. It is in the Braddock Metro Plan. It provides a safer environment with more eyes on the street.

C. Heights up to 70 feet are not in agreement. This was not the outcome of the community charrette where all groups agreed on a 50-foot maximum.

R. This has been increased following internal discussion to reflect proximity to the metro, relationship with the Metro site proposals and to allow more flexibility. It is not proposed that the whole block would be 70 feet but allows for some variation in height. In addition, the reference in the plan at page 29 to the heights of the surrounding properties is not accurate.

R. Many things will interact. We do not know what will be the best plan until we start preparing it. The higher value the land has increases the purchasing power for buying alternative sites in the City.

**Ramsey Homes.**

- **This site should be rehabilitated as part of the overall redevelopment program for the area, with some potential for infill, or be redeveloped with townhomes or townhouse scale buildings.**

C. Agreement.

**Recommendation 14: The City's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is to coordinate with ARHA and other appropriate City agencies regarding the programming of the Charles Houston Recreation Center to ensure that the interests of the public housing residents are equitably represented.**

C. Agreement.

**Recommendation 15: The City's Department of Human Services is to coordinate with ARHA to ensure that public housing residents are made fully aware of all the existing City social services that are available.**

C. Agreement.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS/ COMMENT:**

C. Concerned about open space. At an ARHA Board meeting, there was discussion of an issue with the use of the play area at Chatham Square. The HOA was insisting on children not using the common areas. Need open space that is open to all, in all directions. The proposed consolidated space in the middle of Bland will not address this. Kids need a public park. Do not understand why BEAG is not running with this.

R. More concerned with providing for affordable housing needs.

R. Concerns of market rate residents at Chatham Square are that the public housing residents from across the street were coming to play in the neighborhood.

R. What do you trade it off for?

C. Trade it off for height

R. The issue at Chatham Square got resolved. It did not turn out that way.

R. This idea of pen space is on land owned by ARHA, which is land held in trust for, low-income housing. The housing comes first.

**NEXT STEPS:**

The next BEAG meeting is on September 16- location tbd. At that meeting, we will highlight the further changes to the plan and introduce the CDD guidelines. There is a Planning Commission worksession on Sept 4 and a Joint Worksession of City Council. ARHA, Planning Commission, and the Parker-Gray BAR on Sept 10.

Please provide any additional comments on the draft plan by Wednesday Sept 10.

Staff and the consultants will review the comments made and will make further changes to the draft plan for the next meeting.

Future meetings:

Planning Commission Work Session, Sept 4

Joint Worksession, Sept 10

BEAG Meeting 8 and community meeting, Sept 16

Planning Commission Meeting, October 7

BEAG Meeting 9, Oct 16

City Council Meeting, Oct 18