

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:**

Faroll Hamer, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees and making introductions including new staff member on the neighborhood planning team, Andrea Barlow. (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:

Gwen Menefee: Public Housing Advocate.

Harvey Gray: Person knowledgeable about Parker Gray history.

Salena Zellers: Braddock Neighborhood Resident.

Sylvia Sibrover: Northeast Citizens Association Representative.

Connie Ring: Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority Commissioner.

Leslie Zupan: Inner City Civic Association Representative.

John Komoroske: Planning Commissioner.

Janice Howard: At-Large Member.

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

Merrick Malone, At-Large Member.

Advisory Group absentees:

Kerry Beatty: Public Housing Resident.

John DuPree: At-Large Member.

Ms Hamer announced the approval of the Braddock Road Plan and summarized how the advisory group was selected, what its role is in the context of Resolution 830 and the Affordable Housing Initiatives Workgroup (AHIWG) and indicated that the desired outcome for the Advisory Group is to reach an agreement on the areas of disagreement.

**ADVISORY GROUP ACTIVITIES:**

Mary Means discussed some housekeeping items including announcing the date of the bus tour of other mixed-income housing sites on Saturday April 19 (a sign-up sheet was circulated to Advisory Group and public). It was suggested that it would be useful to have some resident input on the tour.

Ms. Means then set out the operating covenants for the Advisory Group, to include the objectives of the group, its role as advisory only, conduct at meetings and the importance of not mischaracterizing any comments made during the meetings.

Ms. Means summarized the resident outreach program for Braddock East and the James Bland process. She indicated that a series of meetings and focus groups with public housing residents were being organized. From this the needs and preferences of the residents will be identified and this will be reported back to the group at a future meeting. There is also a community meeting to discuss the Bland project on April 23, the day before the next Advisory Group meeting. She encouraged the group to attend that meeting and emphasized that would be the appropriate forum for detail comment on the Bland project, rather than at the Advisory Group meetings.

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

AJ Jackson of EYA then provided an update of the Bland project referring to a “bubble” diagram which identified different height zones and potential open space areas (see PowerPoint presentation). There was some discussion regarding the Bland process and the details of the proposal. The following questions/comments referring specifically to the Bland proposals were put forward by the Advisory Group.

*Q. Can we have building height information that compares to the heights of adjacent properties?*

*Q. The residents want to see green open spaces in each block.*

*Q. Why do we need parking reductions? There are parking problems now.*

*Q. What is the role of Advisory Group with regard to the Bland Project?*

*Q. There has been no public outreach for Bland. Many were not aware of the Hope VI meetings.*

It was announced that these and other questions on Bland would be best answered at the April 23 Community Meeting hosted by ARHA and EYA which relates specifically to the Bland project.

**THE BRADDOCK EAST PLANNING PROCESS**

David Dixon of Goody Clancy presented the planning process in relation to the role of the advisory group (see PowerPoint presentation). He first discussed the proposed Advisory Group meeting schedule and reviewed the topics that would be covered at future meetings. Mr. Dixon then described the Braddock East plan as a conceptual framework – the first stage of a longer redevelopment process. Subsequent steps in future years, beyond the current focus of this Advisory Group, would include the identification, design, approval and construction of specific redevelopment sites. Mr. Dixon then gave an overview of the factors that influence the redevelopment of public housing, including finding the right income mix among households, general guidelines for selecting replacement housing sites; the number of public housing units in surrounding jurisdictions; development density and how we will visualize it as projects move forward; and the reasons for developing mixed-income housing in the Braddock area.

**ADVISORY GROUP QUESTIONS/ COMMENT/ REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

*Q. Can we have some information on ARHA's preferences for housing design and management (e.g. it's attitude toward tall buildings with elevators)?*

R. This will be provided at a future meeting.

*C. With regard to slide 30 "Attention to design detail" and David Dixon's suggestion that sketch renditions could be included in the plan, it was suggested that this should be approached with caution as it might raise expectations about what the end product would look like.*

R. This was acknowledged but it was considered that some illustrative concepts would be necessary and helpful in conveying desired character.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS/ COMMENT:**

*Q: The Braddock Metro Plan doesn't satisfy the need for open space in the City. There needs to be recognition of available sources of financing for open space, i.e. City funds could be used to purchase ARHA property for open space. The City can well afford to pay for a public park. This plan should conceive the public open space then create the built form around it. Is there a City-wide open space plan? Reference was made to Barack Obama speech of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, regarding the need for open space in black communities.*

R. There is a Citywide Open Space Plan and the City Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities should be contacted with regard to the City-wide parks requirements.

*C. The black community is not getting a fair shake. We need community amenities and economic opportunities. Diversity of the community is essential.*

*C. The community will accept low density/low height development with an appropriate level of open space provision. The kind of density currently being proposed does not meet public expectations. Something along the lines shown on the plan on David Dixon's slide 4 (step#2) would be acceptable.*

R: The development shown on the slide has varying building heights up to 6 stories.

*Q/C. The proposed building height for Bland is 3/4 story. People are already living in 3/4 story projects. Most people need at least 4/5 bedroom units. How is this going to be accommodated? Based on what has been heard from residents, about 90% of people will want to come back to the neighborhood. Most people who live in low income housing are not there by choice and see it as a stepping stone to better things. In this regard, the community needs better schools, a recreation center (under construction) and a training center. The public housing community does not want to be run out of the City.*

*Q. What would be required in terms of density and height to keep all the public housing here and what percentage of market rate housing would be needed to sustain this?*

R. This will be addressed at future meetings.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Staff and the consultants will review the questions and requests for more information and respond to the Advisory Group at future meetings. There will be a bus tour for the Advisory Group and the public on April 19 to see several housing developments that could be good models for Braddock East. On-site discussions with residents of these developments will be arranged.

For the James Bland project:

- provide comparative the height information requested;
- explain open space and parking rationale and
- provide information on unit mix/bedroom capacity

For future Advisory Group meetings:

- Address key issues for the Bland project, what issues are still open for public discussion and on what timetable.
- Explain what the Advisory Groups is in terms of the Bland project.
- Address ARHA design and management parameters.
- Report back on the City's open space policy/plan and how it affects Braddock East.
- Address what it would take to replace all existing public housing on site in terms of density, height and market housing mix.
- Report back on focus groups and other community meetings.
- Address the options for improving community, recreational and training facilities for the community.