



Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan Implementation Advisory Group Meeting #3

City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning

Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Thursday, June 23, 2011

7:00PM - 9:00PM

Meeting Summary

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

Welcome & Meeting Goals

Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning (PZ)

Ms. Hamer welcomed meeting attendees and discussed the meeting agenda.

Status of Braddock Gateway Project

Gwen Wright, Division Chief, PZ

Mary Catherine Gibbs of Hart, Calley, Gibbs & Karp, PC

Ms. Wright provided an overview of the changes to the Braddock Gateway project since its 2008 Coordinated Development District (CDD) approval and Ms. Gibbs provided additional detail and answered questions from meeting attendees. The project was approved in 2008 but due to market forces was delayed. The applicant is now ready to proceed but requests changes to the approved CDD (CDD #2011-0002) and Special Use Permit for the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) (SUP #2011-0039) from the Planning Commission in July 2011. Since some of the requested changes to the approved CDD conditions were fairly substantive, such as the change of the phasing plan and construction of the associated infrastructure, the reduction for the residential parking spaces and the request to eliminate the Consumer Price Index (CPI) escalation for the affordable housing contribution, the applicant wanted some reassurance from the Planning Commission that their requests could be supported prior to completing the additional work required for a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) application.

If the CDD and TMP are approved at the July Planning Commission hearing, the applicant will pursue DSUP approval from the Planning Commission in September 2011. The applicant will subsequently need to acquire CDD, TMP, and DSUP approval from the City Council. Future phases will require a separate DSUP approval process.

Braddock Gateway Project Discussion:

- Changes to the application include:
 - Phasing (southernmost block will be built first) – *City staff supports*
 - Infrastructure phasing changes to be consistent with the change in building construction phasing – *City staff supports*
 - Parking ratio reduction from 1 space/dwelling unit to 0.9 spaces/dwelling unit – *City staff supports due to project's proximity and access to public transit*
 - Voluntary Affordable Housing contribution (\$5 million) not to be subject to annual CPI adjustments – *City staff does not support. City staff would like annual CPI adjustments to begin 5 years after this year's project approval*

- Next steps if the application is approved by City Council in September 2011:
 - Final site plan: 6-9 months for review and approval
 - Process of building permits: 3-4 months
 - Building demolition: Fall 2012
 - Construction: 2 years

STAFF UPDATE: On July 7, 2011 the Planning Commission recommended approval (4-0) of the proposed CDD #2011-0002 and TMP SUP #2011-0039. The Planning Commission supported the staff recommendations to revise the project as such:

1. Amend the Coordinated Development District #15 (CDD) phasing plan and implementation of the associated infrastructure;
2. Delay of the annual accrual of interest based upon the Consumer Price Index for the voluntary affordable housing contribution for a period of five years after the CDD approval;
3. Revise the parking requirements for the first phase of this development to a ratio of 0.9 spaces per residential dwelling unit;
4. Allow 40% of the requested visitor parking spaces to be located off-site on Landbay 5;
5. Replace the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) Special Use Permit (SUP) with a new TMP reflecting current City standards; and
6. Update/amend various conditions in the past approval to the City's current standards.

A link to the staff report presented to the Planning Commission may be found via the web address: <http://dockets.alexandriava.gov/icons/pz/pc/CY11/070711/di5.pdf>.

Retail Discussion

Moderator: Val Hawkins, President & CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
 Panelists: Christopher Campagna (commercial real estate broker), Tartan Properties and Chuck Langdon (commercial real estate broker), McEneaney Commercial

Mr. Hawkins and the panelists described challenges and opportunities for new retail in the Braddock Neighborhood. Mr. Campagna's office is located in Braddock and Mr. Langdon was the broker for the Monarch property in the past.

Retail Discussion:

- Many commercial and retail chains are exploring urban models (stores located in compact urban communities).
- It will be difficult to attract a grocery store in the neighborhood because there is not enough residential or office density to attract one. Once the neighborhood increases in population due to new development, a grocery store may be attracted to the neighborhood. However, there needs to be available space for such a large business to locate in the neighborhood; an anchor store will help bring other businesses.
- There are vacant retail storefronts in the Monarch because the property had a change in ownership. Prior to its sale, the broker had tenants poised to sign lease agreements (daycare, dry cleaners, women's dress shop, and dentist). However, the new owners didn't follow through with lease agreements with those businesses because they wish to recruit retailers that cater to single, childless renters in the residential portion of the development.
- It's difficult to attract new retail to Queen Street because of its location (not a lot of foot traffic) and its physical condition (storefronts need some improving). Queen Street business could benefit from coordinated marketing efforts and physical improvements.

- Advantages of Braddock neighborhood: competitive rents (mid \$30/sf), access and proximity to public transit (2 metro stations), foot traffic, unique area, proximity to King Street and waterfront, impending residential development projects (ex. Jaguar, Madison, the Asher).
- Disadvantages of Braddock neighborhood: lack of existing density (not enough existing residential or office development) to increase demand for new retail, lack of available retail and commercial space for lease, lack of a “main street” or commercial core of neighborhood, Route 1, less foot traffic than other commercial corridors, current vacancies at Monarch, lack of commercial synergism.
- Marketing opportunities: Joint marketing through the Marketing Fund – City offers funding for collaborative business marketing (ex. Boutique District in Old Town)
- AEDP recruits businesses to Alexandria. They provide prospective businesses with submarket profiles of neighborhoods that have available retail, office, commercial space. The submarket profile includes information related to available space, demographics, and market conditions. They are creating an online submarket profile for the Braddock Neighborhood.
- The Panelists suggest that the City could encourage more retail in the neighborhood by reassessing commercial properties to a lower value. This would decrease the property taxes due to the property owners and lower their operating expenses. However, subsidizing the rent of retailers is not a good option because it would attract and retain businesses that are not financially viable.

Discussion of Increased BIAG Participation

Steve Kaii-Ziegler, Division Chief, PZ

Mr. Kaii-Ziegler opened a discussion to identify opportunities for the BIAG to participate in developing a work program for the BIAG, identify how often to meet, identify future meeting agenda items, and address organizational issues such as replacement of members. The options included creating an executive subcommittee and/or selecting a chairperson and vice chairperson to address these issues. There were six BIAG members present for this discussion.

BIAG Participation Discussion:

- The BIAG members present did not express an interest in formally organizing themselves through the creation of an executive subcommittee or the selection of a chairperson or vice chairperson.
- There is general interest in discussing future meeting agenda items with staff at the end of each BIAG meeting.
- The members requested greater clarity of the purpose of the BIAG and the role of its members. For example, a question was raised as to whether or not the BIAG would “endorse” future development projects.
 - City staff responded:
 - BIAG is not intended to replace the role of existing civic associations or the existing community outreach process for development project review
 - BIAG’s role is advisory; not regulatory
 - City staff will provide information to the BIAG on all development projects while the project is in Concept Phase
 - The role of the BIAG is to advise the City on the prioritization of funds for community amenities

- The BIAG identified several possible future meeting agenda topics:
 - Timeline for developer contributions to the City
 - Pendleton Park (invite Roy Priest, ARHA, to discuss the project)
 - CIP funding allocation process as well as the legal options for carrying funds to future fiscal years (City Attorney Office staff/Office of Management and Budget staff)
 - Alexandria Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study relating to Corridor A (Department of Transportation and Environmental Services staff)
 - US Postal Service's redevelopment plans for 600A N. Henry and 610 N. Henry (invite representative from USPS to discuss)