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Meeting Minutes

Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group

November 13, 2013, 7:00 PM

Gold Room 1, Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St.

Members Present: **Chair** – Linda Ries, Vice-Chair –, Sharon Annear, Rich Brune, Ripley Forbes, Janice Magnuson, Bob Moir, Ryan Sloan, Ellen Stanton, Frances Terrell, Adrienne Washington, Chuck Ziegler

City Staff Present: Fran Bromberg, Susan Cumbey, Laura Durham, Lance Mallamo,

Consultants: Jim Klein and Elisabeth Lardner (Lardner/Klein Consultants)

Public: J. Glenn Eugster, 4022 Ellicott St., Alexandria, VA 22304

Call to Order: the meeting was brought to order by Linda Ries, Chairman. A quorum was present.

Appointment of Secretary: Sharon Annear was appointed Secretary for this meeting.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 9, 2013 meeting were approved by unanimous voice vote. The minutes will appear on the Advisory Group web site.

Comments from the public in attendance: The chair recognized and welcomed comments from J. Glenn Eugster, neighbor and Co-Chair of the Fort Ward History Work Group. Mr. Eugster referenced the City Council's enabling resolution (copy attached) which charged the Advisory Group with hearing from the public, community involvement, and acting as liaisons with neighborhoods and interested parties. He asked when there would be opportunities for public input. The Chair explained that no date has been set yet for a public hearing. The consultants' draft report will be presented to the Advisory Committee in January and they will review it and then set meeting(s) to hear from the public. Then the Advisory Group will work through various pieces. Mr. Eugster asked if the Advisory Group's term had been extended and was told it had been extended by City Council for an additional; year. The Chair said that will assure time for community participation. Laura Durham was recognized by the Chair and explained that there would be one large public meeting with the Consultants present and an additional daytime Open House for people who could not attend the initial meeting and then additional public hearings with various city boards and commissions. Sharon Annear advised Mr. Eugster that she was appointed to the Advisory Group seat recommended by Seminary Hill and was happy to meet with Seminary Hill neighbors and any citizens of Alexandria if requested. .

Lardner/Klein Presentation: Representative, Jim Klein, provided an over view of their work completed to date. He then recapped past presentations on Themes and Storyline and Existing and Proposed Interpretive Elements and provided responses to Advisory Group comments from the previous meeting.

Mr. Klein continued with detailed information on Park Recreation, Facilities, Character and Landscape Design, including a proposed trail network with path route and features and proposed interpretive elements, including “We’re Still Here.” with references to Alexandria Parks and Open Space Concept Plan and ADA accessibility. He reviewed the Ft. Ward Park facilities, including the amphitheater, restrooms, the dog exercise area, picnic shelters and picnic areas, the playground’s existing site and other possible location options, the current loop road pedestrian path, a possible pedestrian soft-path trail, and parking and vehicular access. Special note was made of the need for the playground and parts of the amphitheater to meet ADA requirements. Mr. Mallamo noted that the Museum parking lot was located on the site of the Fort’s barracks which might one day be restored. The need for a tour bus drop-off area and possible locations for same were discussed along with improved management of woodlands and ways to link nearby sports facilities with the Park.

It was agreed that the consultant would look further at parking options as one of his suggestions would impact the site of the historic barracks and might also compromise future expansion of the museum. He was also requested to provide costs for his various new playground options as well as the cost of rehabilitating the exist playground.

In response to a member’s expressed concern for financing some of the suggested changes, Mr. Klein said that he would provide information on finding funding opportunities in his final report. The Management Plan won’t have a interpretive scrip, but will give us techniques and provide ideas of where to get the money to finance them.

Other highlights of his discussion included the following: The School House Lane is very critical. The Education Building “is not a food place.” Some uses of the amphitheater are a possible revenue source.

A copy of the Lardner/Klein Power Point is included as an Attachment.

Next Steps: The Advisory Committee will receive and review the Draft Management Plan at it’s January Meeting.

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting

The Chair suggested the Advisory Committee meet on December 11 at 7:00 pm in the Library of Minnie Howard School. To review and discuss the ideas presented to date.

The Chair recognized Adrienne Washington, who expressed her concern about the Fort Ward History Report, commissioned by OHA, and the public presentation that staff scheduled for November 16, 2013. Ms. Washington stated that the descendant family members had not been given an opportunity to review or have input to the report. She

explained that the Descendant's Society, Fort Ward History Work Group, and the Seminary Civic Association also had not been give an opportunity to review and have input and this was contrary to the spirit of collaboration with the community that is the City's goal. The descendant group would like the City to delay release of the report until they have had adequate opportunity to review and comment on it.

Mr. Mallamo explained that the report is an archival document and the information it contained had been retrieved from Court House public records and was not an oral history. He indicated that the City would provide the report to the descendants for review prior to rescheduling the public presentation.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Annear, Secretary