

DRAFT

BRAC-133 Advisory Group Meeting July 20, 2011 Summary Minutes

1. Chairman Dexter called roll. The following members were present: David Dexter, Margaret Byess, Dick Somers, Gerry Chiaruttini, Don Buch, Geoffrey Goodale, Jim Turkel, Paul McMahon, Kai Reynolds, Connie McKenna, Kathy Burns, Nancy Jennings, Julie Edelson, Donna Fossum, John Komoroske, Mark Benedict, Stephanie Landrum, Rick Tedesco and Peter Carson. Absent was: Jerry Dawson. Elected officials and staff in attendance at the meeting were: Vice-Mayor Kerry Donley, Councilwoman Del Pepper, Bruce Johnson, Mark Jinks, James Banks, Adam Thiel, Blaine Corle, John North, Sharon Annear, Rich Baier, Ray Mui and Abi Lerner.

Citizens in attendance were: Dan Dose, Doris Gazin, Jim Brown, Carolyn Griglione, Shirley Downs, Deborah Paton, Joe Franklin, Jr., Pat Hilgard, Peggy Tadej, Jim Hurd, David Feld, Terry Kester, Ivy Sinaiko, Joseph Kogut, Norman Soloman, Dak Hardwick, Betsy Faga, Ronald Holder, Janet king, Annabelle Fischer, Christy Goodman, Lynn Bostain, Allen Tiedemann, Peggy Tiedemann, MJ Sanchez, Connie McKenna, Connie West, Louise Gooden, Alex Sinaiko, Tim Brown, Vera DePaulis, Carol James, Robert Reeves, Sam Ulm, Judy Cooper, Lauren Keenan, Mary Donohue, and Barry Wilson.

2. Dave Dexter asked for approval of the June meeting minutes. The minutes were approved without amendment. Comments were made by an unidentified person noting that the minutes do not include a list of citizens who were present or public comments. Chairman Dexter stated they would be included for this meeting and future meetings.
3. Robert Morris of FHWA presented an overview of the role of FHWA and of the progress to date on the Short and Mid-term Road Improvements project being administered and managed by FHWA. The NEPA process for this project has been determined to be a Categorical Exclusion (CE). The preliminary schedule is to complete 30% design in October of 2011; complete the NEPA process in November of 2011; distribute RFQ and RFP in December 2011; proposals due for submission January of 2012; projected completion of short term improvements in October of 2012 and mid-term improvements in December 2013. A draft memorandum of understanding has been prepared and is being circulated for comments among the parties (FHWA, VDOT, Army and City of Alexandria). A public meeting for the NEPA process is expected to be held in September 2011{9/7/11}. The FHWA presentation will be posted on the BRAC web page.

4. Robert Iosca of VDOT addressed the Advisory Group with respect to the Long-term Improvements. VDOT and FHWA have developed a purpose and needs statement for this project and defined three alternatives for preliminary consideration. These alternatives include no-build, an HOV/transit ramp providing full access to the third level Seminary Road bridge over I-395, and an HOV/Transit ramp to the third level of the Seminary road bridge, but with only a left turn onto Seminary Road. The NEPA process for this has been determined to be an Environmental Assessment (EA), to be done on an expedited schedule with completion projected for October 31, 2011. The purpose and needs statement has narrowly defined the project as a ramp for transit and HOV access to the Mark Center. The public hearing target date is December 15, 2011. The anticipated time frame for FHWA to make a determination on a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is April or May of 2012.

Amanda Baxter, of WR&A, the consulting firm VDOT has retained to do the NEPA work, commented that the scoping letters for review agencies are prepared and will be sent out next week. WR&A is anticipating the notice to proceed will be issued for them to commence the 30% design at any time.

Don Buch commented that materials for this discussion were not provided with sufficient lead time to the Advisory Group members that would allow them to come prepared to comment intelligently. Mr. Buch also questioned that there would be no public scoping meeting; that the EA could be done in 10 weeks; and, that the only alternative being considered is a ramp, and not any transit.

Dick Somers commented that both Seminary Heights and Seminary Park had previously gone on record as being opposed to any ramp design that would allow westbound ramp exit traffic onto Seminary Road to flow past Mark Center drive and reach the Seminary/Beauregard intersection.

Geoff Goodale asked when TES was made aware of the purpose and needs statement, and was the City asked to comment on the purpose and needs statement.

Abi Lerner responded that the City received the purpose and needs statement about one week before the Advisory Group meeting. City staff was asked not to distribute copies of the draft purpose and needs statement prior to the meeting. City Staff was asked to provide copies for the Advisory Group meeting by VDOT a few days prior to the meeting along with the schedules.

David Dexter queried what the study area included.

Amanda Baxter responded it was the Seminary Road Interchange proper.

Robert Iosca expanded on that saying that the study area for transportation included King to Duke and the study area for the environmental issues was the narrower area.

Nancy Jennings commented that the Seminary Hill Association has been opposed to a ramp at Seminary and I-395 since 2009 and continues to be opposed to adding another lane of traffic to an already failing interchange.

Geoff Goodale made a motion that the Advisory Group request that City Council convene a meeting of all concerned parties to allow the right questions to be asked. The motion was seconded by Kathy Burns. Mr. Goodale went on to say that with City Council in recess, there is some concern with this being done in a timely fashion.

Rich Baier commented on the history of how we got to Alternative F, saying that it originated with the Advisory Group and staff and advancement of this alternative was endorsed by City Council.

David Dexter commented that the Advisory Group had looked at alternatives A through E and rejected most of them because of impacts on the Winkler Preserve, and the others because they simply didn't work. That is how we got to Alternatives F&G.

Donna Fossum said that we would be talking about waiting a month or longer to convene such a meeting.

David Dexter said he believed a meeting could take place within the next two weeks. He asked Rich Baier if such a meeting could be arranged, and Mr. Baier responded that it could.

The motion was withdrawn.

An unidentified person raised the question of whether or not the public would be able to participate in this meeting.

David Dexter said he conceived the meeting to include TES, VDOT, FHWA, and Advisory Group representatives, and the public could be present to observe.

Dick Somers stated that the previous position of the Advisory Group on this project should be reviewed.

Don Buch commented that during the last EA (draft EA for BRAC-133, submitted to the City for comment in the summer of 2008), Fairfax County had 85 comments and the City had zero. He also said the City needs to be sure and read this one, and involve the community so there would be appropriate comments made.

5. Alton Cheaves of WHS then gave a brief update on the shuttle services WHS has arranged to serve the BRAC personnel coming to the Mark Center. He said that the

agreement with WMATA to provide 10-15 minutes service from the Pentagon was 95% done. The agreement for DASH to provide express ten minute service during peak periods from the King Street Metro Station is in place. WHS has made arrangements for shuttle services from both West Falls Church and Franconia-Springfield using their private contractors. All four of these routes will be in place and operating on August 8, 2011. All are fully funded by DoD for BRAC employees. A Ballston route may be added later depending on demand and available funding.

Ray Mui of DASH added that AT2X route will operate as the express service from King Street to the Mark Center with a kick off ceremony to be held September 22 at 2:45 PM at the BRAC Transportation Center.

6. Paul McMahon of WHS gave a short briefing on the current move in plans for the BRAC facility. Mr. McMahon said that they are still operating on the statutory completion date of September 15, 2011. The current plan is to begin move-in on August 9, and to have approximately 2,300 people in between that date and September 15. Another 2,500 would move in from September 15 to December 31, 2011. The balance (1,609) would be moved in over the next year with everyone in by the end of December 2012.
7. Chris Gaspar of Congressman Moran's office gave a briefing on the status of the legislation affecting the BRAC -133 Mark Center project and the 1,000 parking space limitation. The parking space provision has been removed from the legislation before the Senate. Gwen Sigda of Senator Webb's Office commented that Senator Webb has looked at this and will continue to push for reinstatement of that language.

Dick Somers commented that without an opening delay or parking cap, peak traffic at Seminary/Beauregard and Seminary/Mark Center Drive intersections, can be expected to reach failing levels of service.

8. Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager provided a briefing on the Cost-Benefit Analysis produced by City of Alexandria staff on the Mark Center site selection. This document was delivered to the Advisory Group the previous week. It is narrowly focused on the economic and a fiscal cost related to the BRAC facility coming to the Mark Center, and does not attempt to address the quality of life issues or the question of whether or not the project should happen as that is a fait accompli. Staff used generally accepted economic development and planning principles. The document assumes short, mid- and long term road improvements are completed and reasonably mitigate the traffic impacts. Costs associated with impacts on local services are discussed. Local funds for GRIP are being provided; Fire and Rescue services will be impacted, but there are also existing needs not generated by BRAC; there will be impacts on schools in terms of student transportation; and, a loss of property tax revenues.

Possible benefits include increased demand for office space due to spin off, or “contractor tail”; retail and hotel service demand; multiplier effect of dollars expended by BRAC personnel; potential future increases in property values that generate parallel increases in tax revenues; and jobs creation.

The report concludes that overall, the economic impact will be positive in the long term, assuming the road improvements are made and paid for by VDOT and DoD.

David Dexter noted that the open space issue wasn’t addressed. Mark Jinks responded that the \$14 million estimate for the open space loss was a high-end number, and open space was considered a quality of life issue. The expectation was that open space would be addressed in the Beaugard Corridor process.

Don Buch asked who the City perceived to be the customer for this report, and had the City considered asking the customer what they expected it would include?

Mark Jinks responded that the citizens were the customers. The report was the product of staff from several departments; a draft of the report was not sent out for public comment prior to being finalized.

Don Buch commented that City staff should have involved residents in deciding what to include in the cost benefit analysis. This is not what the public expected, and that if you choose to omit a \$100 million expense, that has a rather significant impact on whether the analysis pencils out positive as opposed to negative.

Kathy Burns said the cost benefit analysis should be a starting point to a process, not the end point of discussions for major issues the City faces.

9. Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager then addressed the Advisory Group on Incident Management Planning by saying the City recognizes the importance of the issue and has picked up the pace in preparing plans. Alexandria operates under the City Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for responses to large scale public emergencies such as those due to terrorist acts or natural disasters, and has developed specific plans for key support functions such as Emergency Management, Alert and Warning, Fire Fighting, Mass Health Care, Emergency Medical Services, Hazardous Materials, Energy and Water Supply, Technical Rescue, Transportation, Law Enforcement, Public Information, Resource Management, Life Safety and Damage Assessment, Administration and Finance, Volunteer and Donation Management , Mass Fatality Management, and Debris Management. The City operates within the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). These

provide universal frameworks for organizing and managing systems and responses to virtually every type of emergency situation, and the City trains and exercises these plans and systems on an ongoing basis. Response plans are in place for large scale public emergencies and incidents, but are not unique to this facility. Should a major incident affecting the surrounding community occur, the City would handle it using the framework that has been established.

Mr. Johnson went on to respond to some direct questions that had been raised by Don Buch in another venue:

1) *What is the communication system? How will people know?*

The city has various methods in place that will be employed, depending upon circumstances, such as:

- Emergency Alert Systems (Commercial Television and Radio)
- Telephone Emergency Notification System
- Print and Electronic Media (E-News, Facebook, Twitter, Cable TV)
- Public Text Emergency Notification System
- Health Department “Blast Fax”
- Alert and warning releases to television, radio and newspapers
- Public Safety Radio Network

2) *What are people expected to do?*

There are materials for advance distribution to people providing instructions on preparations they can make in advance of incidents. Exactly what actions people should take will depend largely on the specific nature of the incident itself.

3) *Who do we look to for direction?*

The City Manager has the authority to issue emergency declarations as the Director of Emergency management, and assumes operational control over all emergency management functions within the City. On-site incident commander would directly manage response assets at the WHS facility for occurrences there. Again, we operate under the NIMS and ICS frameworks.

4) *Will certain buildings be on lockdown? Will people be expected to get into their vehicles and leave the area?*

The decision whether to shelter in place or evacuate will be made according to the specific type of threat and circumstances at the time.

5) *Are parents to go to schools and the Winkler Preserve to pick up their children?*

Again, the decision will be made according to the specific threat and circumstances at the time.

Blaine Corle of the Alexandria Police Department then spoke, providing an overview of the efforts APD has engaged in to coordinate their responses with the Pentagon Force Protection Agency and VA State Police.

Adam Thiel, Alexandria Fire Chief, then spoke about the efforts his department has made to coordinate plans and responses with the DoD. Chief Thiel said the AFD manages large scale responses on a daily basis and he is confident they can continue this within the constraints of resource limitations. Chief Thiel introduced Lt. Mike Wimer, who has been assigned to facilitate and coordinate the preparation of plans and procedures for responses at the WHS facility. His efforts will be funded through grants from the DoD Office of Economic Adjustment. Lt. Wimer said he felt that good progress had been made recently to develop the necessary relationships to enable coordinated response. Chairman David Dexter announced that the next meeting of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group would be on September 21, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM