

Draft Summary Meeting Minutes
BRAC-133 Advisory Group
September 21, 2011

1. Roll call by Chairman Goodale. Members present included: Owen Curtis, Dick Somers, Don Buch, Donna Fossum, Geoff Goodale, Judy Cooper, Jim Turkel, John Komoroske, Julie Edelson, Kathy Burns, Mark Benedict, Peter Carson, Nancy Jennings, Ed Fruit, Ron Sturman, and Stephanie Landrum. Members absent included: Gerry Chiaruttini, Jerry Dawson, Kai Reynolds, and Rick Tedesco.

Elected officials in attendance include Vice-Mayor Kerry Donley, Councilwoman Del Pepper and Councilman Paul Smedberg. Staff present included: Bruce Johnson, Mark Jinks, Jim Banks, Abi Lerner, David Grover, Pat Mann, Ray Mui, John Lynch, Jack Van Dopp, Sharon Annear, Adam Thiel, and Peggy Tadej. Other in attendance who signed in included: Jim Brown, Doris Gazin, Converse West, Carol James, Shirley Downs, Judy Cooper, Dak Hardwick, Ronald Holder, Carolyn Griglione, Dianne Costello, Lynn Bostain, Dietra Trent, Brian Robey, Carter Batey, Paul Vogel, Scott Price.

2. Minutes from the July 20, 2011 meeting were discussed and a number of corrections suggested. The minutes were tabled pending further corrections.
3. The process for election of new officers commenced with David Grover pointing out that Geoff Goodale was not physically present, but was joining the meeting via conference call. Mr. Grover advised the group that Mr. Goodale would not be able to chair the meeting nor participate in any votes while not physically present. Jim Banks, City Attorney was present to provide guidance on the conduct of the elections. Mr. Banks recommended that the group select a Chair Pro Tem to serve for the purpose of holding elections. Based on this Kathy Burns moved that Owen Curtis be Chair Pro Tem. Second by Ron Sturman. Owen Curtis was elected to preside as Chair Pro Tem by acclamation.

Mr. Curtis suggested that in lieu of holding the elections tonight, the group create a nominating committee to come back at the next meeting with a list of potential candidates for Chair and Vice-chair. This suggestion did not generate a motion. There was then discussion among the members that this did not necessitate a complicated process and John Komoroske then suggested polling the members present to see who might be willing to serve as Chair. Mr. Komoroske put that into the form of a motion and was seconded by Don Buch. The motion carried by voice vote.

The poll of members indicated that Geoff Goodale was the only person interested in serving as Chair. John Komoroske then moved to nominate Mr. Goodale for the Chair, seconded by Donna Fossum. Mr. Goodale was elected unanimous voice vote.

The members were then polled to see who was willing to serve as Vice-Chair. Mark Benedict offered himself. Donna Fossum then nominated Mr. Benedict for the Vice-Chair position, seconded by John Komoroske. Mark Benedict was elected by unanimous voice vote. Mr. Curtis then surrendered the gavel to Mr. Benedict to preside in the absence of Chairman Goodale.

4. Mr. Benedict then called upon John Lynch of VDOT to provide a presentation on the HOT Lanes project under study by VDOT. Mr. Lynch proceeded to describe the HOT lanes project, which is outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Alexandria. Mr. Lynch then gave a description of the Auxiliary Lane from Little River Turnpike to Seminary, which would be a separate project from the HOT Lanes with separate Environmental Review and Public Hearings from the HOT Lanes. While the City has consistently opposed the HOT lanes, there is a general feeling that the Auxiliary Lane might prove beneficial to the City in terms of providing additional capacity and thereby protecting local streets from being used to relieve I-395. Staff said the VDOT presentation would be posted on the BRAC web page.
5. Abi Lerner then gave a brief update on the progress of the Short and Mid-term Road Improvements project, saying that the project has \$20 million in DoD funding and is being managed by FHWA. Design for this project is underway and the expectation is that the design will be ready for presentation to the Advisory Group at the October meeting.
6. Ed Fruit, representing WHS as the manager for the BRAC-133 Facility at the Mark Center, then gave a brief status report on the move-in process. Per Mr. Fruit, approximately 2,200 seats have been moved into the facility. This amounts to approximately 1,950 persons as they work with a 10% vacancy rate on a daily basis. The expectation is that they will have another 2,300 seats moved in by the end of 2011, with the balance of the 6,409 moved in by the end of the fiscal year (October 2012).

An unidentified person inquired what happened with Congressman Moran's legislation to delay opening and/or to limit available parking spaces. The response was that it has died in the Senate.

Mr. Curtis inquired about rumors that the food service was sub-par. Mr. Fruit responded saying the food service is excellent, but that there was an issue with a vendor initially.

Mr. Curtis then inquired about the lack of refrigerators. Mr. Fruit responded that he takes full responsibility since this is a LEED Gold building he had made the decision to disallow individual refrigerators to keep energy use to a minimum.

7. David Grover then presented an update on the ridership for the DASH and WMATA Express Transit services, which began on August 8. Ridership is on a growth trend as the occupancy of the building increases. Ridership of the WMATA buses in particular shows much promise with large numbers of riders paying the regular fares. This indicates there is a real need for transit in this corridor. Staff indicated that the ridership data presented would be posted on the BRAC web page.
8. Blaine Corle of the APD then gave a status report on the GRIP program. The implementation of this program began on September 6. Conditions during the first two weeks indicated that there is not a real need for the traffic control officers at this time. The APD will monitor conditions on a daily basis and when a need develops, officers will be dispatched again to traffic control duties. Deputy Chief Corle also gave a briefing on implementation of the Daytime Parking district. Approximately 34 block faces have submitted petitions and 27 have been activated with signs installed and enforcement actively being pursued. While there are some minor snags in the implementation, overall it is moving ahead well.
9. The Chair then asked if there were any further comments from the members.

Jim Turkel mentioned that they believe the 'tipping point' for seeing real traffic impacts will be when they reach an occupancy level of approximately 5,000.

Abi Lerner reviewed the three traffic monitoring efforts that were ongoing (VDOT, City and travel time runs).

Mr. Curtis described some instances of illegal and/or dangerous movements from traffic coming across the Seminary overpass and making lefts and rights from the through lanes.

Dick Somers commented that the 5300 block of Southbound Echols still needs signs posted.

Ron Sturman noted that there is a memo circulated by Shirley Downs with a petition attached regarding the HOV/Transit Ramp and impacts on property values.

10. The Chair then asked for public comments.

Carolyn Griglione inquired if the City had sent a letter opposing the HOT Lanes coming further than Edsall Road. Ms. Griglione commented about the U-turns from Seminary at Beauregard and also suggested that the intersection of Howard and Seminary should be

included in the GRIP program. Ms. Griglione inquired about the disposition of the public comments submitted in response to the scoping letter.

Cathy Hart noted that the segment of Beauregard from Morgan to Sanger should also be included in the GRIP program.

Kerry Donley stated that we should all be delighted with the success of the enhanced transit programs. Mr. Donley noted that the auxiliary lane is a separate project from the HOT Lanes and should be the focus of the Advisory Group since the HOT lane is outside of the City. Mr. Donley also said that he believes the Auxiliary Lane has great potential to provide additional capacity for I-395, thereby protecting local streets from cut through traffic. The City has already stated opposition to the HOT Lanes.

Shirley Downs stated that VDOT needs to provide perspectives of the ramp other than “bird’s eye views” so residents can fairly assess the impacts of the design on them.

An unknown person asked for clarification regarding ‘seats’ versus people. Ed Fruit explained that they deal with a 10% absence rate and so while they might have ‘x’ positions moved in, the actual number of persons present is always less.

Diane Costello commented asked how many construction workers were present during the construction. Jim Turkel responded approx. 2,000. He also pointed out that those workers were bused to the site from Landmark Mall.

Councilwoman Del Pepper noted that there has been no discernible increase in the traffic around the Mark Center to date, but she believes it will come as the building is further occupied.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.