



City of Alexandria
Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

December 2, 2009
7:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Jayme Blakesley, Donna Fossum, Keith Freihofer, Jesse Jennings, Sean Kumar, Jennifer Mitchell, Councilman Rob Krupicka

Staff Present: Rich Baier, T&ES, Karen Callaham, T&ES, Al Himes, DASH, Yon Lambert, T&ES, Pat Mann, P&Z, Sandra Marks, T&ES, Karl Moritz, P&Z.

1. Minutes

Chairman Kumar asked if there were any edits in the November minutes. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes as drafted was made and seconded. The November 4, 2009 minutes were approved 7-0.

2. BRAC- 133 I-395 Interchange Alternatives - PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Kumar introduced staff Rich Baier, Bob Garbacz and consultant Paul Prideaux hired by VDOT to determine the most feasible direct access connection into the Department of Defense BRAC-133 site from I-395. Mr. Baier reiterated major themes heard from the community, the BRAC/MARC Center Advisory Group's "Guiding Principles", and City Council members during the City Council's preliminary hearing on BRAC access. He explained the process of VDOT's Preliminary Interchange Justification Report (IJR) and indicated the process is expected to culminate in May 2010. Mr. Baier stated that VDOT and FHWA have the final decision on the chosen access into the BRAC site. Bob Garbacz spoke about planned City roadway improvements approved by City Council for the Seminary-Beauregard and Beauregard Mark Center Drive intersections.

Mr. Baier presented the following staff recommendations for the Transportation Commission's consideration.

- a. Request that Council send Duke Realty a letter Encouraging Duke Realty complete the local roadway improvements as approved by the City Council
- b. Request that Council direct VDOT to provide direct access to the army garage
- c. Request that Council direct VDOT to pursue a design option at Sanger Avenue providing direct access to I-395

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A. **Nicholas Bowers, 106 W. Monroe Ave** expressed that the Winkler Preserve is a fun place to go to learn about nature and should be saved.

B. **Nathan Pugh, 1208 Key Drive** reported he attended summer camp and have taken school field trips to Winkler Preserve. He said it builds self esteem, a fun place to go for field trips and to learn how to protect nature.

C. **Jack Barbour, 108 E. Howell**, feels Winkler Preserve should be saved because he goes to camp there and loves it.

D. **Ana Humphrey and Grace Bower of Maury Elementary** thinks Winkler should be saved because it is fun and they have learned a lot there.

E. **Nora McIntosh, 404 Russell Road**, went to Winkler on a field trip today and saw a buck, learned about the weather and would be sad to see Winkler go.

F. **Meredith Lemke, 16 W. Uhler Avenue**, would be sad to see Winkler go because it is a real good learning experience in wild life preserve and wonders where all the animals would go if it were tore down.

G. **Ella Turner, 309 Summers Drive**, has an older brother who says its fun to attend camp at Winkler and hopes it is not destroyed before she is old enough to attend camp there.

H. **Skyler Vansderkamp, 506 Russell Road**, revealed her class went on a field trip to Winkler and discovered it is a really good place to learn about nature. She doesn't want it to be torn down.

I. **Conor Rowe, 209 S. Oak Street**, estimated that Winkler was the only preserve left in Northern Virginia. He has spent some of the best times of his life there since he was 6 years old. He wants his younger brother to be able to enjoy Winkler as much and long as he has.

J. **Tyler Reddex, 506 North View Terrace**, declared if Winkler was torn down there would be no other fun camp for kids and animals to go and Winkler should stay where it is.

K. **Lillith Todd, 634 No. Columbus St.**, doesn't want Winkler to be torn down and has been going there for 5 years. She really likes it there and is worried there would be no place for the animals to go.

L. **Geoffrey Goodale, 493 Naylor Place, Vice-Chairman, BRAC/Mark Center Advisory Group and President, Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association, Inc.** related that both of the aforementioned groups submitted comments for the record relating to BRAC access. Mr. Goodale urged the Transportation Commission to recommend to City Council that in its recommendations to VDOT to consider the "Guiding Principles" that the BRAC/MARC Center Advisory Group presented at City Council's preliminary BRAC public hearing in November.

M. **Jodie Smolik, Executive Director of the Winkler Botanical Preserve**, spoke on behalf of the Winkler Board of Directors. She stated they were adamantly opposed to the 4 alternatives that would go through the preserve and delighted that the Transportation Commission is taking a position to oppose those alternatives as well.

N. **Converse West, 200 N. Pickett St., #704**, Secretary of the Holmes Run Park Committee elaborated on how he is in favor of the Transportation Commission's recommendation. He drew a parallel of a proposal years ago having Blue Stone Road off of Eisenhower Avenue connecting to Wheeler Avenue and Quaker Lane. The Citizens got City Council to pass a resolution that the Blue Stone Road connection was off the table and the Winkler Preserve should be off the table as well. He

recommended the Transportation Commission convey to City Council that the Winkler Preserve was a gift to the City and it is off the table.

O. **Diana Beckman** told of how her two children have been to the preserve numerous times and arrives home with wonderful stories of what they learned and enjoyed. She was pleased that City staff was embracing alternatives A-1 and A-2 and the Sanger Avenue interchange. She affirmed that we should not lose the forest for all of the trees. She challenged all to be creative with VDOT and come up with a solution that will work for the City, tax payers and commuters going to work at the BRAC facility.

P. **Dean Graves, Institute for Defense Analysis**, described how IDA is the largest employer in the Mark Center and selected the site because of the Botanical Preserve. IDA condemns the alternatives going through the preserve and the alternatives that route the access road through or encircle IDA property. Staff determined in 2004 that to save the wooded area and open space, lane improvements, landscaping and pedestrian improvements should be put in place to eliminate the need for a ramp connection from I-395. The density is still as it was then. IDA is glad to hear the Transportation Commission's recommendation, and give their support.

Q. **Amy Beal, 3827 Courtland Circle**, communicated she went on a field trip to the Winkler Preserve and learned about weather. She cited the preserve is an oasis in the City and any change would be detrimental to the education of thousands of people and the animals that live there. She advocated for alternatives A-1, A-2 and C that do not affect Winkler.

R. **Susan Pettey, 220 N. Royal**, detailed how Alexandria is the 11th densest city in the US and how the City needs more open space although Winkler Preserve is more than open space; it has a free educational program. She asks the Commission to support staff's recommendation on Winkler.

S. **Antti Talvitie, Springfield, VA**, detailed how his kids attended the Winkler Preserve camps when they were younger and are now counselors in training there and wants the Preserve saved.

T. **Kathy Bower, 106 N. Monroe**, reiterated that Winkler is more than green space; it is a subsidy to the school science education which has been reduced to part-time staff. She indicated that the impact the alternatives would have on the Winkler Preserve is more than what it appears on paper. She encourages the City's Sanger Avenue option and wants VDOT to know that the options that impact the Preserve are unacceptable to the citizens of Alexandria.

U. **Jessica Miller, 61 E. Taylor Run Parkway**, announced she represents students at NOVA Community College and Fairfax County Park Authority. As a naturalist for the Fairfax County Park Authority she understands the irreplaceable value of the Winkler Preserve. It is a vital source of the remaining eco-system. She asks all to consider how much emissions each of the Preserve's acres absorb from the adjacent highway and traffic areas.

V. **Gretchen Thompson, Falls Church, VA**, disclosed that as a grandmother, she has involved all of her grandchildren who visit from the east coast in Winkler over the last 10 years. One grandchild who is a junior in high school reported she would not be the person she is today had it not been for her Winkler Preserve experience.

W. **Teresa Wilson, Fall Church, VA**, moved to the area from the mountains in the Pacific Northwest. Desperate for nature, she found Huntley Meadows and Winkler. At Winkler she felt transported to an oasis and spoke of what a gem Winkler is and that it should be protected and cherished. She mentioned that 2.5 acres set aside for

open space at the Marc Center has already been built upon. If you whittle way more of the Preserve for BRAC, they will return for more and more until the Preserve no longer exist. Ms. Wilson strongly urges that Winkler be taken off the table and preserved.

X. **Nancy Jennings, 2115 Marlboro Drive, President of the Seminary Hill Association, Inc.**, appreciated that staff's recommendation is in line with what Seminary Hill has asked for since last January. She urges staff to take a broader look and bring HOV into Duke Street where the master transportation corridor is and get more bang for the buck by redeveloping Landmark Mall, getting it connected to Beauregard on the light rail, and consider adding a general purpose lane that runs south and north between Seminary Road and Duke Street. It may help eliminate the problems at the Seminary Road interchange.

Y. **Marie Getoff, 37 E. Bellefonte Avenue**, daughter has attended several of the Winkler camps. Ms. Getoff cited a newspaper article on the benefactor of the Winkler Preserve who was a quiet philanthropist and social activist. She wanted no recognition but only to do the right thing. Ms. Getoff asked all to also do the right thing; save it – don't pave it.

Z. **Stephanie Booth, 1653 N. Van Dorn Street**, recounted she is a resident that lives in the area and wanted to go officially on the record against any flyover options especially option C that would be on the residential side of 395 which would increase noise and pollution.

AA. **Sara Greco, 1404 Oakcrest Drive**, worked as a camp counselor in training and her younger brother had been a camper at the Winkler Botanical Preserve. It helped her love of nature blossom and she stated today's youth need that love of nature and feel that if Winkler is paved at all, it would have a detrimental affect on the youth of the City.

A motion to close the public hearing portion of the meeting was made and seconded.

Chairman Kumar asked the Commissioners for comments or recommendations to the public hearing item. Discussions proceeded among the Commissioners regarding their opinions and recommendations for the BRAC-133 access. Staff reported the Duke Street option will be reviewed as part of the Beauregard plan. Commissioner Fossum stated that the Winkler Preserve should be taken off the table as it relates to VDOT's IJR alternatives. She then made a motion to amend staff's recommendations as follows:

1. Request that Council send Duke Realty a letter encouraging Duke Realty to move with all speed to complete the local roadway improvements as approved by Council.
2. Request that Council direct VDOT to retain alternatives A1 and A2 which provide direct access from I-395 to the army garage.
3. Request that Council direct VDOT to pursue a design option at Sanger Avenue providing direct access to I-395 with an emphasis on transit.
4. Request that Council instruct VDOT to eliminate from consideration of any access alternatives within their preliminary interchange justification report which would impact the land area of the Winkler Botanical Preserve.
5. Request that Council adopt the BRAC Advisory Group's guiding principles.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

3. LRP Presentation and Discussion

Sandra Marks presented the revised LRP prioritization chart which reflected the Commissioner's recommendations. The chart was broken down into programs, projects and studies. They were ranked within each section from highest to lowest in priority. Staff answered the Commissioner's questions regarding the format of the chart.

4. Staff Updates

RSTP/CMAQ – The City learned that NVT A endorsed the projects the Transportation Commission submitted for funding for Alexandria. The Commission had recommended \$2.4 million for the acquisition of four (4) DASH buses. However, because of the City's total allocation in CMAQ/RSTP funds, the purchase of four buses can not be funded. The City will now purchase three buses (\$600,000 each) for \$1.8 million. All other funding costs and projects remained as submitted.

King/Beauregard – A VDOT public hearing was held. The majority of comments dealt with the loss of parking in front of the doctor's office building at Beauregard and King and the issue of the roadway section with the inclusion of a bike lane. The intersection will reflect complete streets aspects. The next phase will address plan development. The Transportation Commission will have an opportunity to review those plans and comments at the next meeting. Comments will be posted on the T&ES King Beauregard webpage.

Potomac Yard – The draft plans for the north Potomac Yard small area plan has been uploaded on Planning and Zoning's website. Comments can be made directly on-line. The next Potomac Yard Metrorail Feasibility Group will meet again on December 14th.

5. Commission Updates

None.

6. Other business

Discussions evolved as to whether the Transportation Commission should focus more on a complete streets policy for new development and roadway improvement plans. It was decided to discuss this further at a future meeting.

Rich Baier announced that Abraham Lerner has been hired as the new Deputy Director of Transportation and Transit Operations for T&ES. Mr. Lerner possesses an engineering degree and masters degree in urban planning while specializing in national and international transit planning and funding.

The Transportation Management Program Policy update will be on January's Transportation Commission agenda.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded.