

EPC Meeting Notes – Monday, November 15, 2010

Present: Jennifer Hovis, Kurt Moser, Peter Pennington, Bobby Croghan, Jessica Bayliss Brown, Scott Barstow, Laura Medhurst, Pat Hagan, Phil Voorhees, Khoa D. Tran

Public comment: none

City's Open Space Master Plan

Laura Durham was scheduled to attend to give a presentation on the City's Open Space Master Plan, but unfortunately she was unable to attend. She was able to share a written update for us, though.

Judy Guse-Noritake, the chair of the Park and Recreation Commission, recently wrote to City Manager Jim Hartmann on behalf of the commission to share some concerns and ideas regarding open space in the city. These include:

- Reconstituting the City's Open Space Advisory Committee;
- Concern about the City possibly allowing residents and commercial entities to count green roofs toward open space requirements and measures;
- “[P]lacing some larger parks under perpetual open space easements, to guard against future development pressures of parkland currently under public ownership”;
- Considering renewing open space funding.

EPC discussed issues related to open space, including what is—and is not—considered “open space,” the role of community groups in working to protect and promote open space in their area, and what size plots count as open space. EPC decided not to reschedule Laura's presentation at this point. There was also discussion about the potential merit of reconstituting an Open Space Advisory Committee, and such a committee's relationship to existing committees. Jennifer will attempt to meet with Judy Guse-Noritake soon to discuss possible coordination.

Green Business Opportunities

Bobby discussed possible opportunities for EPC collaboration with Alexandria businesses. Bobby has talked to business group leaders who have expressed interest in having EPC's help in promoting green businesses and green business practices. EPC discussed the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's work on environmental issues, and opportunities for increasing dialogue with the Chamber. The Chamber has regular breakfast or lunch meetings, which EPC could try to participate in. There was discussion of the recent green restaurant expo meeting, and the fact that many participants (and Alexandria residents) want to see themselves as being “green.” Green businesses could be promoted through the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, with endorsement or recommendation by EPC.

Bobby will invite Tina Leone, or her designee, to join EPC at one of our upcoming meetings to begin discussions. Local businesses may have a high level of interest in recycling and energy issues.

Staff and Committee Updates

Peter reported that the Waterfront Committee is waiting to see the next stage of the Waterfront Plan. The CSO (combined sewer operation) situation the City will soon be facing will likely be an issue EPC should follow closely during work on the plan.

MWCOG Transportation Planning Board held a training session recently to help educate interested members of the public in regional transportation planning and development, which Peter attended. Jennifer attended a public meeting last week about the commercial add-on tax and city and regional transportation planning.

The City is revamping its electronic calendar, which may be done in December. This will be located on the City's website, and could include Eco-City/EPC information. The site will not be able to collect contact names and email addresses. Volunteer Alexandria is being revitalized, and wants to begin promoting volunteer opportunities to residents; this could also include posting notices regarding Eco-City initiatives on the Volunteer Alexandria website.

Administrative Items and Announcements

October 18th and November 1st minutes were approved unanimously (motion by Peter Pennington, seconded by Scott).

The next Earth Day Committee meeting will be December 1, 7:00pm, at the Lee Center.

Energy and Climate Change Action Plan schedule discussion. EPC comments on the draft Climate Change action plan have been looked at by staff and passed along to the consultant. EPC discussed options for further consideration of the City's draft climate change plan, and its consideration by members of the public. City Council hopes to be able to consider the climate change plan in March, given that April and May will be taken up with budget work. EPC will organize a meeting on January 24th to help educate itself and the public about climate change, to be followed the next weekend with a broader public meeting which includes discussion of the Environmental Action Plan and the draft climate change plan.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm.