

City of Alexandria
Department of Planning and Zoning
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Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 838-4666

**Landmark/Van Dorn Advisory Group
Meeting Notes
Monday, December 17, 2007**

Meeting Summary

Meeting notes are recorded by City staff to provide a written record of principal items of discussion, key comments and decisions of the Advisory Group and comments from the public. They are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of events at the meeting.

Welcome

Faroll Hamer, Alexandria's Planning Director, opened the meeting and described the Landmark/Van Dorn Area planning effort as a 6-8 month exercise in creating an exciting, vibrant, diverse community that is also pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use. She stated the planning effort is a chance to make something good, better. She described the city blocks in Landmark/Van Dorn as very large (the smallest blocks are at least 3 or 4 times larger than Old Town blocks). She referred to the map on Slide #8 of the presentation. There are opportunities to create mixed-use (residential, retail, office spaces) development. Redevelopment potential is great because there already exist large tracts of assembled land that can be used for development.

She noted that the Advisory Group represents interests and constituencies that are relevant to the planning effort. Their challenge will be to create a new community for people who are not there [in the Planning Area] yet. The members of the Advisory Group will represent their interests but also need to look at what the community will be that you are building. She stated that this is not an exercise in creating new structures, or new transportation zones, or economic sustainability but it is an exercise in creating community. Therefore, they must put all of the pieces together.

Mrs. Hamer then asked the Advisory Group members to introduce themselves.

Following self-introduction by the Advisory Group members, Pat Mann, the City's planner for the Landmark/Van Dorn Plan, commented that Gregory Hamm (Project Manager for Landmark Mall with General Growth Properties) is not present because he is delayed on a train from New York but does intend to make the meeting. Mr. Mann also recognized City officials in attendance – City Vice Mayor Del Pepper and City Councilmember Justin Wilson.

Consultant team members introduced themselves.

- Tom Osborne of PHR+A (Lead consultant on project)
- Matt Bell of EEK (Architect in charge of physical planning and community facilitation)

Work Program and Schedule

Rich Josephson, Deputy Director of the City’s Department of Planning and Zoning, introduced the Work Program and what the Advisory Group is charged to do. He also stated that this effort will build on the current Concept Plan. The Concept Plan will serve as a starting point for this process. He then presented information included as slide #3 in the staff presentation.

Planning Area and Planning Background.

Mr. Mann presented background information on the planning area. This is described in slides #5 - #35 in the staff presentation.

Questions from the Advisory Group

Q1. Can we get a list of contact information for all of the persons on the Advisory Group? In the event we wish to contact one another.

A1. There are privacy issues associated with distributing contact information. The advisory group is subject to Virginia’s open meeting law and Freedom of Information Act regulations regarding Advisory Group business. Advisory Group members cannot conduct discussions about the planning effort and/or Plan in outside of public meetings. A list of Advisory Group members will be distributed to all Advisory Group members; however, contact information will be withheld unless the Advisory Group member explicitly informs Mr. Mann that his/her contact information can be shared with all Advisory Group members.

Q2. How do members of Advisory Group submit items to the meeting agenda?

A2. Requests should be made through Mr. Mann.

Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Mr. Bell introduced a facilitated discussion with the Advisory Group. He noted that there is a large public turnout, and stated that the large turnout demonstrates the great interest in this planning area as it relates to the issues of transportation, housing, and quality of life. He noted that the auto-oriented lifestyle was the focus of planning efforts at the time the area was developed, but we are now finding is that as the metropolitan area expands, inner communities cannot continue to be successful with the auto-oriented model. This is a problem being faced by many communities but we must figure out how we can solve this problem for the residents and nearby residents. This area provides significant opportunities for redevelopment with substantial tracts of developable land at Landmark Mall and other shopping centers.

Mr. Bell's discussion with the advisory group was recorded on lecture pad sheets which are transcribed separately as Lecture Pad Notes.

Comments from the Public

Following discussion by the Advisory Group, Mr. Bell invited the public to provide comments and observations. The public's comments are outlined in the Lecture Pad Notes.

Next Steps

Mr. Mann stated that the next meeting will be held on January 28, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. The location for future meetings will be announced when space has been arranged.