

**The Beauregard Design Advisory Committee (BDAC)**

January 23, 2014

7:00pm to 9:00pm

Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Gus Ardura  
Pete Benavage  
Abed Benzina  
Don Buch  
Matt Clark  
Carolyn Griglione  
Donna Fossum  
Mark Ramirez

**Absent:**

None

**Community:**

Paul Bickmore  
Shirley Downs  
Nancy Jennings  
Stephanie Booth  
Danny Blum

**Agenda Items**

1. Review and Approval of Draft December 17, 2013 Meeting Minutes
2. Applicant Introduction of DSUP2013-0026: Seminary Overlook Concept II
3. Next Steps

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. A quorum for the meeting was established.

**DISCUSSION**

- Staff gave a brief introduction to the meeting.
- Jon Puvak, from the applicant team, introduced the architect team and goals for the meeting.
- Matthew Fitzsimmons began the applicant team presentation of DSUP2013-0026: Seminary Overlook Concept II.

### *Seminary Overlook Review*

- Mr. Buch asked if there had always been a street connection to Francis Hammond [along the new Kenmore Avenue] during the Small Area Process. Mr. Farner responded that yes, it had always been in the plan due to the proximity of curb cuts and safety of the intersection.
- Mr. Fitzsimmons described the open spaces, linkages to open space near Seminary Towers, location of entrances to the residential buildings, the character of the spaces near entrances as plazas, with the central green intended to be a large open space with site specific programming along edges, stormwater treatment options in tree wells along the streets.
- Ms. Griglione asked the team about the differentiation between public and private open spaces. Mr. Fitzsimmons responded that courtyards are private, the central green and bike path are public spaces.
- Mr. Harvey continued the presentation with an overview of the architectural elements of the project including precedent images, opportunity to define the new streets with architecture, building material palette, pedestrian scale elements at street level, variety of planes in the façade of the building, use of masonry and metal elements, variety in fenestration, opportunities for innovative design with sky bridges and structure. Mr. Harvey emphasized the language of the four buildings and the relationship between the new construction and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Ms. Puskar concluded the presentation and distributed the applicant team’s checklist matrix of design guidelines for the group to use as a framework to review the projects. Ms. Puskar then asked for comment from the Advisory Group members on the project thus far.
- Mr. Ardura suggested that the project architecture move more towards the precedent images the applicant group presented, and that there should be more of a sense of a “gateway” at the entry from Seminary Road to Kenmore Avenue.
- Mr. Benavage thanked Ms. Puskar for the design guideline matrix and asked if the facades would vary on each face of each building and about ADA compliance with regards to the units with front stoops. Mr. Harvey responded that the buildings would not have different facades on each side of each building and that ADA requires one accessible route, so the interior corridor for the stooped units would provide the accessible route but would explore possibility of having external accessible routes.
- Mr. Benzina commented that moving the main entrance to the corner of the building was a positive change, suggested that the team look at turning the corner with the amenity spaces to better announce themselves and add activity to the street. Mr. Benzina echoed Mr. Ardura’s comments regarding the precedent images and suggested that the stoops should be activity spaces and that the street-level continuity of the units having presence would be important.
- Mr. Buch thanked Ms. Puskar for the design guideline matrix. Mr. Buch expressed concern that the architecture did not say Alexandria and asked about the relationship of the Advisory Group to the final decisions made by City Council. Ms. Puskar responded that the Advisory Group was established to ensure compliance with the design guidelines and that the intention in Beauregard is to create something different.

- Mr. Farner discussed the how the character of the architecture in the project reflects and abstracts “Alexandria” architecture with tectonic walls, punched openings, brick and masonry. Mr. Farner also discussed the strength of Alexandria’s character is the nature of individual neighborhoods, Beauregard should become its own neighborhood.
- Mr. Clark commended the team for their attention to detail. Asked about the distance residents will have to walk from their parking spaces. Suggested that the edge condition on Kenmore Avenue and streetscape will be important as there are many full grown trees that will have to be replaced.
- Ms. Fossum asked about the tower elements on the buildings and expressed concern about stoop access and suggested that the team consider security when designing the project. Suggested that pitching the roofs would soften roof lines and to reflect Alexandria’s history with a statue of a historical figure in the central square.
- Mr. Ramirez commended the team on breaking down the scale of the buildings, materiality and that the buildings feel independent but work together. Mr. Ramirez expressed interest in seeing more about the materiality in subsequent presentations and suggested that a stronger contrast between material colors will be more successful than the closer tones.
- Ms. Griglione expressed concern about the reflective nature of the façade surfaces. Mr. Harvey responded that their team will do solar orientation and light studies to determine those effects, and that the glass will be low-E and low-reflection so it should not become an issue. Ms. Griglione asked if the public open space uses will be made apparent for the public, Ms. Puskar responded that it is still in the conceptual design stages but that the size has grown considerably since the Small Area Plan and Mr. Harvey added that the open space is intended to be a grassy green area with activities around the perimeter.
- Mr. Benzina added that the treatment of the street next to the green would be important and should become part of the space. Mr. Benavage suggested a statue in the open space, Ms. Griglione suggested a water feature. Mr. Fitzsimmons responded that the team was looking into ecological elements to include in the design.
- Ms. Griglione expressed her appreciation to the team for looking at setbacks along the building to make the project less harsh and sit more softly on the land. Mr. Benzina added that there are limitations in building type as it is hard to design setbacks in wood buildings such as this one. Mr. Benzina continued to say that the elevation drawings do not show the variety in the façade and that fenestration can give the building character. Mr. Benzina said that we have to pay homage to the past in a dynamic way, but the most important thing is that an apartment building is an apartment building and not to over or under promise.
- Mr. Buch asked about the 40% tree canopy requirement. Mr. Farner responded that with the DSUP submission, the applicant is required to show how they will meet the requirement or otherwise. Ms. Escher added that tree canopy is determined more exactly through the Final Site Plan review.
- Mr. Buch asked about school children increases based on this new construction. Ms. Escher responded that Karl Moritz, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning, would be looking into the issue.
- Ms. Griglione asked about the proposed blending of the intersection of Seminary Road and Francis Hammond’s entry. Ms. Puskar responded that it would be easier to bring an

exhibit back at the next meeting and reminded the group that traffic issues are the purview of City staff, but that design related issues were the Advisory Group's purview.

- Mr. Benavage asked about reanalyzing the intersection issues at Seminary, Kenmore, and Van Dorn as it involves several jurisdictions. Ms. Escher encouraged anyone who has concerns about traffic related issues to contact her and development staff to have a discussion about them; she added that the development review process and the Advisory Group review are concurrent processes.

### **Public Comment**

- Ms. Downs added that she agreed with Mr. Buch, Ms. Fossum, and Ms. Griglione. Ms. Downs suggested that the West End should be modern but reference Alexandria tradition, and that she liked the way the Waterfront meetings were run. Ms. Downs continued by suggesting that impacts from the VDOT noise wall and landscaping will be significant to this project.
- Mr. Blum suggested that there was very little notice for this meeting and that the meeting should be located closer to Seminary Overlook. Mr. Blum also expressed concern about the VDOT soundwall and the landscaping that will be affected by it and asked if bus stops will be upgraded in the Seminary Overlook project. Mr. Farner responded that while the group could meet closer to this particular project, the Advisory Group is intended to serve all of Beauregard and that consistency is important. Ms. Friedlander added that there were 3 eNews alerts issued prior to the meeting but that specific emails to neighboring civic associations could be sent in the future. Ms. Escher responded that the bus stops will be upgraded and made ADA compliant.
- Ms. Jennings, representing Seminary Hill Association, said that adding a sidewalk along Seminary Road will be useful, and agreed with Mr. Buch's sentiments about the character of Alexandria and suggested that since the area was once plantations, the project should reflect more of that history.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:02