

The Beauregard Design Advisory Committee (BDAC)

December 17, 2013

7:00pm to 9:00pm

Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center

Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Absent:

Abed Benzina

City Staff:

Jeff Farner, Deputy Director, P&Z
Amy Friedlander, Urban Planner, P&Z

Applicant Representatives:

Miguel Iraola, Hord Coplan Macht
Michael Eastwood, Home Properties
Cathy Puskar, Walsh Colucci
Jon Puvak, Walsh Colucci
Steve Liam, Bowman Consulting

Community:

James Brown
Danny Blum
Stephanie Booth
Paul Pickmore
Whitson Hoffman

Agenda Items

1. Review and Approval of Draft October 29, 2013 Meeting Minutes
2. Applicant Introduction of DSUP2013-0026: Seminary Overlook
3. Next Steps

CALL TO ORDER

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

DISCUSSION

- Staff introduced the newest member of BDAC, Matthew Clark and then the members of BDAC introduced themselves to the applicant team.
- The applicant team, led by Cathy Puskar, made introductions and began their presentation of DSUP2013-0026: Seminary Overlook.

Seminary Overlook Presentation

- Ms. Puskar explained the basic principles of the project, including context, existing plan, and implementation. The DSUP covers the portion of the Home Properties site east of Kenmore Avenue, and will require the demolition of the existing 236 garden apartments. The existing development has lots of parking and less organized green spaces than the proposed development. The Seminary Towers are not anticipated to be demolished, either as part of this DSUP or future DSUPs as part of CDD #22. Home Properties is working through resident relocation issues as per the CDD #22 conditions.
- DSUP2013-0026 divides the site east of Kenmore Avenue into two landbays, A & B, and will be phased accordingly.
- Mr. Buch asked for clarification on what will be demolished, Ms. Puskar replied that everything east of Kenmore will be demolished, but in phases.
- Ms. Puskar continued with an explanation of the basic layout for the proposed development: four buildings, two with active-use lined parking garages, connected to the other buildings with sky bridges for pedestrians. There will be an open central green as part of the open space requirements, which will be designed as a public space for both residents and the public.
- Ms. Puskar also mentioned the main road improvements of New Kenmore and the intersection at Seminary Road and Library Lane. The applicants are working with ACPS to make a single access point along Seminary Road to make the intersection safer.
- Mr. Buch asked if there was a light at Library Lane now, Ms. Puskar confirmed there is a light. Mr. Benzina asked if there is a fence along the Francis Hammond School property, which Mr. Farner confirmed.
- Mr. Buch asked about the bus route through the site, Ms. Puskar replied that the team is looking at bus stop improvements including ADA compliant pads and pull-offs or bulb outs for the buses.
- Ms. Griglione asked whether a traffic count had been completed at Library Lane and about the interaction of the medical building traffic and the intersection, Ms. Puskar replied that with the DSUP submission the applicant is required to do a traffic analysis.
- Ms. Puskar continued with the presentation and discussed how the applicant team feels that the proposed development fits with the Beauregard Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.

- Mr. Buch asked about whether trees would be saved on the site. Ms. Puskar responded that trees on the site would have to be removed and new trees would be 2-3 inch caliper. There is a 40% tree canopy requirement in the plan area.
- Ms. Griglione asked about a pedestrian connection with Hammond's artificial turf field, Mr. Eastman replied that they are not opposed to a pedestrian connection and that they would look into it.
- Mr. Ardura asked about the difference in character between the buildings, Mr. Iraola responded that the facades would be cementitious siding and masonry in compliance with the Design Guidelines, and that the parking garages would be lined with single loaded corridor units that address the street in meaningful ways.
- Ms. Puskar explained that the current parking proposal was 1.5 spaces/unit, 155 spaces on the streets, both land bays would comply with parking requirements within the bay itself, and that there would be 720 total units about equally split between each bay.
- Ms. Fossum asked why the units would be apartments and not condominiums. Ms. Puskar responded that Home Properties holds property for a long time and that is their business model. Ms. Fossum also asked about the parking for the Seminary Towers residents, Ms. Puskar responded that the parking lot for the Towers would remain and that the streets would become public, but that when development occurs on the Towers site there will need to be improvements for parking replacement.
- Ms. Griglione asked about residential parking in adjacent neighborhoods and how this new development would address overnight parking. Ms. Puskar responded that by providing enough parking for the new units and by creating a new housing type would help the problem.
- Mr. Ramirez asked what the current parking ratio is, Mr. Eastman responded that it's currently about 1.15, increasing to 1.5 with the new development.
- Mr. Benavage asked if it might be better to seal off Old Kenmore from Seminary Road, Ms. Puskar responded that this intersection was fully vetted during the Small Area Plan process and was part of the traffic study so it needs to remain as planned.
- The group asked about whether a pedestrian bridge would be appropriate at Library Lane and what was happening with the VDOT pedestrian bridge project. Mr. Farner responded that by improving the intersection and putting cars and pedestrians at grade at a signal, it formalizes the movements and will be safer. Hammond school is also eliminating their curb cut which contributes to safety issues. Pedestrian bridges are very rarely used by Americans so they wouldn't necessarily be an improvement here, rather than controlling speed and volume. Ms. Puskar added that they are improving the sidewalks so that they are wider and feel safer so that people will be more inclined to use them.
- Ms. Griglione asked about the fence at the medical building, Mr. Farner responded that staff and the applicant would have to investigate the situation as fences are generally discouraged in the R.O.W. Ms. Puskar responded that it would have to be discussed as to how BDAC interfaces with external concerns which are valid but not necessarily part of BDAC's purview.
- Mr. Ramirez asked that with the complete masking of the garages with building, how did the applicant envision gateway conditions? Mr. Iraola responded that gateway conditions in the Design Guidelines would be addressed as required.

- Mr. Ardura asked about what the applicants envisioned the green being, Mr. Iraola responded that it would be an open lawn area, larger than required, contained by trees and buildings, engaged by the bike/ped trail to the south.
- Ms. Fossum asked where the amenities would be located and whether the pools would get sunlight. Mr. Iraola responded that amenities would be located inside building courtyards and that they were looking at a solar diagram for the pool. The BDAC later expressed concern about whether the pools would be adequately sunlit or whether they should be covered pools. Mr. Ardura suggested that perhaps the southern side of the buildings could be shorter and the northern sides could be taller to allow for more light on the pool, Ms. Puskar responded that they are currently up to the height limit set by the CDD for this design and that changing floors in that way would affect building efficiencies in this building type. Mr. Farner suggested that a shadow/light study be part of future analysis by the applicant team.
- Mr. Buch asked how many children were living on site now and how many were projected to be living in the development. Ms. Puskar responded that this topic was fully vetted during the Small Area Plan process when they worked with ACPS to determine child generation numbers. Mr. Farner added that when the DSUP goes forward to Planning Commission, the expectation is that there will be an analysis of this in the staff report.
- Mr. Ramirez asked what the pedestrian entrance to the buildings looked like. Mr. Iraola responded that there would be special paving to differentiate the lobbies but that it is still a street so it is intended to read like a street.
- Mr. Benavage asked about bus service to Seminary Towers, Ms. Puskar responded that there is bus service. Mr. Blum responded that there is service but that it had been cut in half recently. Ms. Puskar responded that the City determines bus service.
- Ms. Fossum asked if there was other development in the pipeline, Ms. Puskar responded that Hekemian has not come forward with any projects but that JBG is looking into options for the Town Center.
- Ms. Griglione asked if the applicant team was taking this project to other civic associations. Ms. Puskar responded that BDAC is intended to be the forum for Beauregard projects. Mr. Farner added that BDAC represents different groups and that part of the reason it was intended to be the forum was that the City has received complaints that different messages are conveyed at different meetings. The goal is to have the same message and comments at the same time in the same meeting. Ms. Puskar added that they will be meeting with impacted residents, but that was a different matter than the development review process.
- Mr. Benavage asked how many residents would be returning. Ms. Puskar responded that there was no way to be sure and that they wouldn't know anything until they meet with them. There are places to relocate residents, including JBG, Southern Towers.
- Mr. Ardura asked about Seminary Towers and the shape the buildings are in, Mr. Eastwood responded that they are in decent shape and that they are renovating on a rolling basis.
- Mr. Buch asked what the price points of the old units vs the new units would be. Mr. Eastwood responded that the new units would be market rate, so the old units are rented from approximately \$1100 – 1700 and the new units may be \$1500 – 3000.

- Mr. Blum asked about the west side of the development: that currently it is a very straight fence and wanted to know how the applicant proposes to break it up. Ms. Puskar responded that it will be addressed through design with courtyards and landscaping.
- Mr. Blum asked about the left turn from Seminary onto New Kenmore and whether it would be a cut through. Ms. Puskar responded that it is a public road system and not a cut through.
- Mr. Blum asked how many new parking spaces would be on New Kenmore. Mr. Iraola responded that there would be approximately 115 spaces on the Seminary Hill side and 40 spaces on the Seminary Towers side.
- Mr. Blum asked whether trees would be saved on the Seminary Towers side. Ms. Puskar responded that it depends on the utilities and sidewalk buildout, but that they would not be affected until the Towers side redevelops. Mr. Blum asked about the bike path along the central green and where it originates/terminates. Ms. Puskar responded that it goes along the parking lot to Seminary Road as requested by Parkside Condominiums.
- Mr. Blum asked why the VDOT pedestrian bridge can't be forked and land on both sides of Seminary Road. Ms. Griglione responded that she had requested that of VDOT also and that VDOT responded that it was not possible.
- Ms. Booth suggested that the fences down at Cameron Run and along the Route 1 bridge were attractive and that they should be considered for fencing options.
- Mr. Brown asked about Hammond's parking lot along Kenmore, Ms. Puskar responded that the school will still have access, they will have to go down Kenmore instead of entering from Seminary Road.
- Ms. Puskar concluded by emphasizing that this is only their Concept I submission and that at the next meeting architecture would be presented, followed by the Preliminary submission which would include more details that residents may be interested in.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.