

Beauregard Urban Design Advisory Committee (BDAC)

October 24, 2016

6:30 pm

Goodwin House Auditorium (4800 Fillmore Avenue)

Committee Members in Attendance:

Pete Benavage, Chair

Donna Fossum, Co-Chair

Abed Benzina

Carolyn Griglione

Gus Ardura

Mark Ramirez

Absent:

Ben Jehle

Agenda Items

1. Overview of Beauregard Design Guidelines
2. Staff Update on New Projects
 - a. 1701 N. Beauregard: Urban School Proposal
 - b. 2280 N. Beauregard: Church of the Resurrection
3. Questions and Next Steps

City Staff:

Maya Contreras, Principal Planner, P&Z

Nathan Imm, Urban Planner, P&Z

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Benavage called the meeting to order. A quorum for the meeting was established.

Overview of Beauregard Design Guidelines

Ms. Contreras provided an introduction stating the desire to collaboratively utilize the Beauregard Design Guidelines to work with committee members to guide forthcoming development projects and opened up to questions as to how members would best like to use the matrix. To provide context on the process, Ms. Contreras asked Ms. Puskar to summarize the experience with the 2014 Concept I for JBG.

Ms. Puskar stated that for the Beauregard Town Center, the BDAC committee had met several times to review and discuss design iterations of the project and had found areas of agreement and disagreement with the proposed design. When the project was ready to file for a preliminary site plan with a DSUP application, City Staff went through the Beauregard Design Matrix and identified guidelines which were not applicable to the project, guidelines the project had already met, and guidelines from which the project had deviated. The BDAC committee then discussed the deviations and put forth recommendations.

Committee members present agreed that the identification of the deviations was an efficient way to guide discussion, in addition to the committee's ability to identify other issues where they had

questions and discuss those issues without a prompt from staff or the applicant. Committee members stated that the guidelines also serve as a strong checklist to create consistency across project review.

Ms. Contreras stated she was pleased that the guidelines and design matrix were working well and would continue to provide the matrix in future project reviews.

Ms. Contreras asked Ms. Puskar for an update on the progress of JBG's Town Center project to which Ms. Puskar stated the project was on hold as the applicant addressed City comments. Committee members inquired as to the delay which Ms. Puskar responded the delay was due to a difference in opinions in regards to the proper phasing and square footage of uses in the Town Center project and the appropriate height of proposed buildings.

A committee member inquired about the legislated amount of retail in the project. Ms. Contreras responded that the mix of uses were carefully calibrated to support a wide range of uses, such as the proposed ellipse, and should a designated use wish to relocate from a designated location, a careful discussion about phasing and new location needs to occur to protect the larger objectives.

Mr. Benavage inquired if there was a strategy to offer more flexible language for uses in small area plans which could be more responsive to economic forces. A committee member offered that there were new real estate prototypes which offer a flexible mix of office and residential uses. A committee member indicated that they would rather have right-sized buildings and uses constructed which reflected the market demand instead of what was mandated in a small area plan. Further elaboration ensued that there was a balance between achieving urban design guidelines of scale and massing seen in small area plans versus market forces. Discussion concluded that greater flexibility in the mix of uses, square footages, and timing would be beneficial to actualizing the goals of the Small Area Plans. The committee recommended caution on inadvertently setting precedent in specific development approvals which may go against the larger goals of the Small Area Plans.

Staff Updates on Projects:

Urban School: Ms. Contreras provided an overview of the proposed site and stated that Alexandria Public Schools were interested in purchasing 1701 N. Beauregard Street as a possible location for an urban school. Staff recently sent comments to the applicant in regards to open space and parking and is working with Code to assess egress for the building and on the adjacent parking structure. Staff provided an overview of the potential approval process to the committee. Committee members indicated additional information was posted on the ACPS website in regards to the proposed project.

Mr. Benavage expressed concern that the school system was moving forward on the proposed school without good coordination with the City and Development department and had concerns that the proposed school did not have adequate open space. Ms. Contreras responded that the school facility plan had recently updated to allow greater flexibility on open space requirements. Mr. Benavage continued to express his concerns over limitations on the site, including safety of

transportation to the site and the potential widening of N. Beauregard Street and the potential proximity of the road to an elementary school. While the urban school format was seen as a good idea, Mr. Benavage thought it was ultimately the wrong location for an urban school.

A fellow committee member expressed the concern that the city was rapidly transitioning from Suburban to Urban and more attention should be paid to the transition. The BDAC member requested to have a meeting with the school board to see how the plan came to be. Ms. Puskar informed the committee that the Planning Commission recently voted that a school use was consistent within the Beauregard Small Area Plan. Clarification was provided that BDAC would like to meet to review the plan for safety issues and impact on future development but recognized the site was outside of BDAC boundaries of review.

Church of the Resurrection: Ms. Contreras indicated staff has been working iteratively with the applicant for about a year and would like to add affordable housing to an existing church to enable the continued mission of the church. The applicant was expected to submit a concept plan within about six weeks and it would ultimately be an amendment to the existing Goodwin House CDD.

A committee member inquired how much of an impact, if any, additional projects such as the Saint James or Church of the Resurrection would have upon the Town Center plan. Ms. Puskar stated that many of the proposals were consistent with the small area plans and would not impact the Town Center plan. A committee member inquired about the long-term fire safety concerns in the area as additional density is delivered within the context of the limited connectivity of the roadways in the Beauregard area. Ms. Contreras responded that all new development is reviewed for safety and capacity by the fire department.

Questions and Next Steps

Ms. Contreras inquired if an update on the West End Transitway would be of interest to the Committee to which members responded that they would like an update. An individual asked why the Transitway did not connect to King Street. Ms. Contreras described the proposed route and Mr. Benavage responded that the Beauregard Plan only included the segment within the area and that long-term the Transitway would be expanded.

Q: How will the West End Bulletin be distributed?

A: The bulletin is posted on the city website and ENews and open to hearing of other options for distribution.

Q: Looking at the matrix, in addition to the office use, a community space may still be determined?

A: Ms. Contreras responded that the earlier matrix was covering six blocks of potential development and the current proposal had been reduced to two blocks, so the community space was less likely but still being explored.

Q: How would trucks enter the Town Center area and access loading docks (blocks G & F1)? Limiting trucks would enhance the Town Center feel with a pedestrian scale and activities. And how does this compare to Shirlington?

A: Well Shirlington has a different street network but most loading is likely in the rear of the building. Trucks will likely enter off of Reading Street, but as the street network continues to evolve that may change.

Q: Do you know which grocery store is going into the King and Beauregard project?

A: A Harris Teeter.

Q: When do you expect the redistricting to be complete for the school system?

A: I believe the process will be complete in mid-2018 and the results will be announced next spring.

DRAFT