



Braddock Metro Neighborhood and Braddock East Plan Implementation

City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning
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IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Wednesday, May 20, 2009
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Black History Museum

Attendees

Braddock IAG: Franklin White, Patricia Schubert, Sarah Becker, Herb Cooper-Levy, Bill Campbell, Bill Conkey, Salena Zellers, Michelle Saylor, Leslie Zupan, Heath Wells, Wilson Thompson, Bill Cromley, Eddy Cettina, Glenn Hopkins, Deborah Rankin

Braddock IAG members not in attendance: Heidi Ford, Nakia Johnston, Mariella Posey, Hattie Thompson

Community: Duncan Blair, Lorena Alvarez, Roger Wood, Gerri Legstrom

City Staff: Faroll Hamer, Jeff Farner, Kathleen Beeton, Veronica Davis, Brandi Collins (P&Z), Alisa Carrel (RPCA), Helen McIlvaine (OH)

I. Introduction

Faroll Hamer, Director of Planning Zoning, welcomed the group. The BIAG introduced themselves by saying their name, where they lived, and how long they lived in Alexandria.

II. Meeting Conduct and Group Charter

Staff passed out a working draft of a group charter and a document outlining meeting conduct. This will be discussed more at the next BIAG meeting. Patricia Schubert suggested adding a requirement to *turn off cell phones during meetings* to the meeting conduct.

III. Overview of Braddock Metro Neighborhood (BMNP) and Braddock East Plans

Faroll Hamer provided an overview of both plans. Ms. Hamer discussed the public amenities and character areas identified in the plans.

IV. Implementation Task List

Staff passed out a matrix that lists all the implementation tasks identified in the BMNP. Ms. Hamer explained that the City is working on developing a more comprehensive matrix that includes who is responsible for each task, what triggers the implementation of each task, and whether the task will be implemented in the short, medium, or long-term.

V. Developer Updates

Jeff Farner, Deputy Director for Planning and Zoning, provided a status update on the development projects in the planning area. Mr. Farner stated that the City has completed the final site plan approval for the Madison project. The Madison project is challenged by economics. The Madison conditions state that the project is subject to make a fair share contribution to the Braddock Open Space Fund and Braddock Community Amenities Fund if the funds are approved by Planning Commission and City Council prior to the release of the final site plans. If the Braddock funds are not established before the final site plans are released, the Madison project will not be required to confer approximately \$373,000 in developer contributions.

The City is in the process of completing the final review and permits for the Payne Street Project. The project could proceed to construction as early as the summer. It will be rental apartments.

Jaguar is one of the major projects identified in the BMNP. The project still requires Planning Commission and City Council approval.

James Bland is currently in final approval from the Board of Architecture Review by the Parker-Gray BAR and concurrently the City is reviewing the final site plans. Construction on Phase I, which is the southern block, could begin Fall 2009 or Spring 2010.

VI Developer Contributions

Mr. Farner provided an overview of the developer contributions. Mr. Farner emphasized that the establishment of these funds do not preclude contribution to or establishment of other funds.

Cost Estimates

Herb Cooper-Levy asked if the cost estimates and developer contributions were in present dollars or net present value. Mr. Farner stated that the cost estimates and developer contributions are in current dollars; however, the policy includes an annual adjustment for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for the Washington-Baltimore region.

Bill Campbell asked why public housing is exempt by the block and not by square footage. Ms. Hamer stated that the market-rate housing will subsidize the cost to construct the public housing units, creating mixed-income communities, which is a public benefit.

Sidewalks

Deborah Rankin asked about the width of the sidewalks. She stated that during the BAR review of the James Bland development project there was no provision or guidelines on sidewalk length. Mr. Farner stated that the width of sidewalks in the planning area currently range from three to eight feet. The new sidewalks will be a minimum of fourteen feet measured from the building edge to the curb, which includes the actual sidewalk, plantings, and street trees. Ms. Hamer stated that different uses require different sidewalk widths. For example, retail needs more sidewalk width than residential areas.

Bill Campbell asked if the sidewalks in front of the Charles Houston Recreation Center were eight feet curb to building. Mr. Farner stated that he believed that there is 10 feet between the curb and building wall to accommodate children congregating outside the building.

Glenn Hopkins asked if it was possible to implement streetscape improvements sooner using federal stimulus funds. Ms. Hamer stated that the streetscape projects in the planning area are not “shovel ready”, a provision of the federal stimulus funds.

Neighborhood Park

Sarah Becker stated that the BMNP identified the Post Office location as the preferred location for the park. She asked if staff suggests other locations in the presentation. Mr. Farner stated that the purpose of the graphic was to show that other locations were considered during the planning process. The City has had meetings with the Post Office and the adjoining property owner.

Leslie Zupan stated that the BMNP mentions a minimum one-acre park, but in some sections of the BMNP it refers to a 1.3 and 1.5-acre park.

Ms. Zupan asked what is happening to the Citywide Open Space Fund if the City has ceased the \$0.01 set aside. Ms. Hamer stated that the City is no longer collecting the set aside; however, there is still money in the Citywide Open Space Fund.

Housing

Sarah Becker asked if the housing type influenced the return to the city in the developer contribution formula. Mr. Farner stated that public housing was only mentioned to show that it is exempt from the formula.

Leslie Zupan asked about the affordable housing contribution. Helen McIlvaine, Deputy Director for the Office of Housing, stated that the Office of Housing is forming a developer contribution workgroup to review the current policy. Ms. McIlvaine stated that she would seek input from the BIAG during that process.

Development

Sarah Becker asked for clarification on the Madison project timeframe. Mr. Farner stated that the condition for the Madison DSUP stated that they will contribute to the funds for public amenities if the funds are approved by Planning Commission and City Council prior to the release of the final site plans. The worse case scenario is the Madison is able to pull their final site plans prior to fund approval, resulting in a loss of \$373,000 in contributions that the Madison would have been required to pay. Duncan Blair stated that the final site plans are sitting on a shelf in City Hall. Once the fees and bonds are paid, the Madison will be able to pull the final site plans.

VII Discussion

Ms. Hamer stated that Planning Commission recommended approval of the developer contributions. The City Council deferred action until the June 9th Legislative Meeting and requested staff to consider including public art and non-walking streets in the developer contributions. Staff asked the BIAG to provide a recommendation on the funds, formula, and public art. Ms. Hamer explained that if the formula were modified staff would take it back through the process of outreach to the community and property owners, public hearings, and Planning Commission approval.

Public Art

Ms. Hamer explained that City Council requested staff to consider including public art in the formula for developer contributions. Ms. Hamer showed the six public art sites identified in the BMNP. Out of the six locations identified, only two locations will be publicly-funded: Adkins and Hunter-Miller Park. If the public art is on private development, the city has less control over the design. However, if it were on City property it would allow the City to have design competitions. City Council's concern is that if there is no dedicated fund for public art, then it will not be a priority.

Patricia Schubert asked if the City has discussed public art on the Madison site. Mr. Blair Duncan stated that the Madison will have an art display of the old rail tracks in addition to another feature on Bel Pre Way.

Heath Wells stated that the public art fund seems like a lot of overhead for little gain. Mr. Wells expressed that he thinks the developers should get credit for having public art on their project.

Bill Campbell stated that a fund would allow for consistency across the planning area. Heath Wells stated that the two locations for public art could be funded through some other mechanism.

Ms. Hamer asked for the group's thoughts about having a separate fund for public art. Patricia Schubert expressed that it should be a separate fund for public art. Michelle Saylor stated that the advantage of a fund explicitly for public

art is having funds available for public art. The disadvantage to creating a separate fund for public art is that it would take longer and would delay the process for establishing the other Braddock funds [OSF, CAF]. Ms. Saylor expressed that it may not be worth the effort to include public art in the formula for developer contributions.

Glenn Hopkins asked if public art donation and funding could be controlled through the development review process. Ms. Hamer stated that Planning Commission and City Council have an opportunity to include public art in the developer's conditions.

Alisa Carrel, Director of the Office of the Arts in RPCA, stated that there is currently no funding mechanism for the installation or maintenance of public art. Ms. Carrel explained that the City is currently working on a public art policy for the City in addition to a Citywide Public Art Master Plan.

Glenn Hopkins stated that a citywide policy is better and the public art fund should be separate. Sarah Becker expressed that there is a need for a larger citywide fund, but money from developers in the Braddock area should be earmarked for public art in the Braddock Neighborhood.

Bill Conkey asked if the process for public art changes depending on where the funding comes from. Ms. Hamer stated that the City would have less ability to have a design competition and engage local artist for public art on private development.

BIAG Recommendation: *It is the recommendation of the group not to include public art in the Braddock funding formulas. Public Art should be funded by private developers or by a separate citywide fund with money to be earmarked for the Braddock Metro Neighborhood. The citywide fund should also allow charitable contributions to be tax-deductible.*

Non-Walking Streets

Ms. Hamer stated that the other issue that Planning Commission asked staff to consider is the inclusion of costs to improve non-walking streets in the developer contribution. Including streets that are not designated walking streets and streets not adjacent to development would cost approximately \$7 million.

Leslie Zupan stated that the BMNP includes a provision for non-walking streets. It was her understanding during the planning process, that Parker-Gray would receive some of the streetscape improvements since there will be no development in the historic district, but there would be an impact on the neighborhood from development in the northern part of the planning area. Ms. Zupan expressed that some of the funding should go to the Parker-Gray Historic District. Ms. Zupan also expressed concern that the scope of improvements has been scaled back and that Jaguar, in particular, will pay less under the proposed formula.

Sarah Becker expressed from her recollection of the planning process the developer contributions were supposed to benefit the Parker-Gray neighborhood.

Mr. Farner stated that the conditions of the developer contributions require the developers to have a certificate of occupancy within a five-year period to pay the catalyst rate. If they are unable to meet that deadline, they will actually make a larger contribution.

Eddy Cettina stated that even though the proffer and the BMNP stated that Jaguar would pay \$1 million to each fund, they would receive credits for all the other amenities they are providing for the neighborhood. Specifically, she stated that Jaguar is providing a one-acre park on-site, undergrounding of utilities, improvements to Powatan Park, and bicycle/pedestrian trail, which is approximately a \$12 million contribution to the neighborhood.

Leslie Zupan asked about the improvements to the streets not designated "walking streets." Ms. Hamer stated that staff's position is to not recommend an increase to the amount of developer contribution to include the cost of streetscape improvements on non-walking streets. She stated that the Plan allows for flexibility in prioritizing improvements and phasing. The BMNP is intended to be a guide and a living document.

Patricia Schubert stated she agreed all the streets should be improved, but the developers should not have to pay a higher contribution rate.

Glenn Hopkins stated that the staff should advise City Council that the BIAG will consider prioritizing improvements to non-walking streets when it considers the implementation task list. Leslie Zupan suggested staff include the non-"walking streets" be included in the task list.

Glenn Hopkins suggested that the BIAG learn about the City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) so they can learn how to be involved in the City CIP process to ensure the streets in Braddock are included in the City CIP. Ms. Hamer stated that it could be added to the agenda. In addition, Ms. Hamer stated that advocacy be added to the task list.

Glenn Hopkins asked if it was the consensus of the group to prioritize Parker-Gray. Mr. Farner stated the Advisory Group may determine how the funds are allocated once they are available. The estimates for the streetscape funds include costs for sidewalk and curbs repairs, lighting, and street trees. All streets may not require all of those improvements. The Advisory Group could assist staff in deciding the scope of improvements to the streets. Some funds may then be available to improve streets in Parker-Gray.

Leslie Zupan asked if property owners that were not identified as redevelopment sites by the BMNP would be subject to the funding formulas. Ms. Hamer stated that they would be subject to the formulas if they were to request an up-zoning.

Bill Cromley stated that both the staff report and the BMNP identified which properties are subject to the developer contributions - those identified as redevelopment sites. Mr. Cromley stated that he agreed that all properties within the planning area are subject to complying with the provisions of the BMNP (land use & zoning) but not all properties should be subject to paying into the Braddock funds. Only the properties identified in the staff report and BMNP as being subject to the developer contributions should be required to pay into the Braddock funds.

BIAG Recommendation: *It is the consensus of the BIAG that City Council should approve the formulas as recommended by staff. The BIAG requests flexibility in allocating the funds for improvements to non-walking streets in Parker-Gray and to use retail funds for improvements to retail street frontage.*