

MINUTES
NOTICE BOARD MEETING
September 14, 2015
7:30 P.M.
Portner's Landing Community Room

Present: Board Members Ernie Lehman, Howard Middleton Tom Soapes, Clarence Tong, Christa Watters, Roger Waud; John Sander from the Zoning & Land Use Committee.

Absent: Matt Hennesy, Fran Zorn

Guests: Planning Director Karl Moritz, Senior Planner Nancy Williams, both of the Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning

Tom Soapes called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The meeting order was changed to permit the presentation by our guests.

Report from Planning Director about the Old Town North Small Area Plan Advisory

Group Process: Mr. Moritz said that the Planning & Zoning Department had learned a lot from the recent small area planning processes for the Waterfront, the Beauregard area, and Eisenhower West. They intend to use processes that allow for plenty of listening to residents and have worked training for that into the staff process.

North Old Town is ahead of the curve in that we already have conducted our own visioning process and as a result have a Vision document that can serve as a basis. [This document was based on months of committee work and a Survey Monkey questionnaire that was widely responded to in the community.]

Moritz said Planning realizes that “development here needs to fit in and be a good neighbor.” The community will have further opportunities to weigh in during the approximately 18-month anticipated planning process. He reported there were many applicants for the 16 slots listed on the advisory group and that the City Manager is expected to announce the selected members later this week. All applicants, including those not chosen, will get all documents sent to the Advisory Group members so that they too have an opportunity to be well informed and participate. The group's meetings will not be exclusive.

The process will:

- Convene big community meetings aimed at shaping the big picture
- Allow for the Advisory Group to wordsmith the content coming out of those meetings
- Be conducted openly so that the product is crafted in public
- Provide clear options for people to compare, evaluate, and choose among.
- Communicate results promptly and widely so that when majority opinions emerge at big meetings, those not there do not feel left out.
- Involve as many people as possible
- Give the greatest weight to the opinions of Old Town North people, balanced by representatives of City boards and commission to include the wider city view.

- Include some City events that are fun to build community interest and participation (starting with an October daytime event at Montgomery Park).
- Include options for online engagement, input, and responses for those who have trouble attending meetings.

Moritz said the formal process will start with a charrette workshop in the fall, where participants work to develop a vision, identify issues, explore options, and choose the preferred ones. He sees the workshop as a week-long process to concentrate and focus the thinking and continuity of the process – maybe 3 workshops over a 6- or 7-day period. He emphasized that staff is well-prepared for this, better than in the past. At the end of the charrette process, the goal is to emerge with a draft concept, but not in any way a final plan.

The draft plan then needs to be subjected to traffic analysis, studies of the feasibility of the options, financing and costs, etc. Then the group and staff would spend 6 months studying those concepts and recommendations. The goal is to have a finished Draft Plan by summer, so the community will have the summer months to consider the plan, react, and initiate any needed changes.

Further discussion between Mr. Moritz and the board addressed:

- Rezoning of the power plant site given that GenOn and PEPCO are in merger negotiations and there are environmental issues. Owner consent is preferred, but not required, for rezonings, especially comprehensive rezonings that follow a small area plan.
- WMATA Bus Barn parameters: It may be the end of the year before they choose a developer. Whatever proposal they eventually come up with will have to be worked into the SAP draft plan.
- ARHA will be coming to the City next month with proposals for the headquarters building and Hopkins Tancil. ARHA will select a developer partner next month for the headquarters building and Hopkins Tancil. Tom asked how public the process will be; the answer was that any proposal will have to go through the normal development review process which will be coordinated with the small area plan.
- The Giant/ABC site proposal will require some rezoning.

Nancy Williams discussed the fun and educational activities planned. These include a Community Day in Montgomery Park very soon, either Oct. 10 or 17. It will include fitness events, food from Farmer’s Market vendors, some entertainment events and possibly a restaurant crawl.

Working with the Old Town North Community Partnership, she plans a Taste of Old Town North event indoors on Oct. 29, to include exhibits from developers, tastes from restaurants, and a history of Old Town North.

The Charrette will likely be held during Fall Restaurant Week, so participants can perhaps combine attendance at the meetings with dining out in groups at least some of the time.

John Sander asked about the role of the National Park Service in the SAP process. Karl said as stewards of the GW Memorial Parkway, they have a say and can advise on any development occurring within 500 feet of the Parkway. They are the Federal Government's lead agency on the River.

That concluded the discussion of the Small Area Plan Advisory Group process and Mr. Moritz and Ms. Williams left.

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Minutes: The minutes of the September 10 meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report/Membership: Fran Zorn had reported to Tom a bank balance of \$7,062. 98 and membership of 129 households.

Status of Development Projects: Tom reported he attended the UDAC meeting last week. He emphasized that the Old Colony proposal is too big. Elizabeth Chimento was there and brought up traffic and process issues. Tom noted that the parameters of traffic studies are set by the City according to regulations. In this instance, the parameters are fairly limited to the immediate area.

Candidate Debate Plans: The Federation to date has been unsuccessful in getting the school system to lower prices for rental of its auditoriums. The Council Debate will feature all 11 candidates from Republican, Democratic, and Independent parties. Tom will keep us informed of the plans for location and further details.

NOTICE Annual Meeting Plans: Our annual meeting is set for **November 19**. The nominating committee will consist of the board members as a committee of the whole. The board consensus was to have a featured speaker – preferably the person to win the mayoral race if they agree. We would ask the victor to speak on their vision for the City during the coming 3-year term and to take questions at the end.

Old/New Business: Howard brought up the need to expand our membership more. The board discussed the need to broaden our E-distribution of newsletters and flyers. Christa said she would work to incorporate more civic association heads in future communications and make sure the list stays up to date.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the NOTICE Board is scheduled for Monday, October 12 in the Portner's Landing Community Room.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9.00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christa Watters, Secretary