



Work Group to Draft New Old Town North Small Area Plan

City Council voted June 23 to establish the Old Town North Small Area Plan Advisory Group, consisting of 16 members. The group will have one resident representative each from NOTICE and from the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA); two representatives of Old Town North homeowners' associations; and one representative of Old Town North not representing a group. In addition the Advisory Group will have two business owners who live in old Town North or whose business is located in Old Town North and three representatives of redevelopment sites. There will also be one representative each from the Planning Commission, the Environmental Policy Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Board of Architectural Review – Old and Historic District, the Urban Design Advisory Committee, and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.

Staff assistance to the Advisory Group will be provided through an interdepartmental team, and managed by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Council has resolved that the Advisory Group shall work towards developing consensus positions and brokered compromises and shall take formal votes to the extent possible. In cases of differing positions, they shall be included in reports to City Council.

The existing Old Town North Small Area Plan was adopted in 1992. City staff estimates that drafting a new plan will likely be a process lasting approximately 18 months. City planning staff member Nancy Williams said the City will begin to solicit Advisory Group participants in the coming week. She expects meetings of the Advisory Group will begin early in the fall. The process will be complete when the new plan is adopted by Council which is estimated in January 2017.

Community Hears Giant/ABC Block Development Plans

By Fran Zorn

A standing room only community meeting with the developers of an entire block of North Old Town was held July 9, 2015. Over 80 residents, 3 city council members, the City Manager, several city planning staffers, and the Vice-Mayor crowded a meeting room at the Old Colony Inn to hear Edens developers and their attorney, Catharine Puskar, describe their concept for the block surrounded by St. Asaph, Montgomery, Pitt and First Streets. They plan a mixed retail and residential development that would widen the variety of retail stores and services available to the community. Locally Edens is best known for the Mosaic District in Fairfax County and Union Market in Washington, DC. In this project Edens plans to build 50,000 square feet of retail space at street level, with 232 residential units above.

The company, which had earlier submitted its initial concept design to the city, presented the proposal to residents for comment during the meeting. Prior to this time they had walked the neighborhood with and presented a preliminary concept to the NOTICE Board and representatives of nearby homeowners associations. Of note in the conceptual design:

- The loading dock is interior to the building to avoid neighborhood noise.
- Building height varies throughout the block, in an effort to break up the mass of the building and fit into the neighborhood.
- Wide sidewalks will set the building back from the street and make it pedestrian friendly.
- Some landscaped open spaces will encourage neighborly gathering.

The residential development partner has not yet been announced, but Edens suggested that the residences would likely be rental apartments.

There is a long way to go in the process. First, Edens must resolve the issue of the extended lease that Giant holds on their empty building through 2022. The two companies are currently in negotiation. Second, Edens must submit a second, more detailed conceptual plan to the city. They will hold more public meetings.

The formal process includes the Board of Architectural Review, the North Old Town Urban Design Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. Puskar anticipates the proposal may reach the Planning Commission and City Council in early 2016. As part of the process, Edens will request a change to the site's zoning to increase the height of the building to a maximum of 77 feet, trading the increased height in one portion of the site for lower than the allowed 50 feet in other sections such as those adjacent to the Watergate town houses. They plan two levels of underground parking. The number of spaces will be based on a planned analysis of area traffic patterns and potential changes to parking and traffic needs based on the intended uses of the site.

Resident comments at the meeting centered largely on the residential aspects of the plan. Many were disappointed that the residential units would be rentals, preferring owner occupied condominiums. Others raised questions about height, traffic patterns, truck routes, and the types of retail stores that Edens hopes to attract.

See related article: http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/breaking-ground/2015/07/edens-details-planned-mixed-use-overhaul-for-a.html?surround=etf&ana=e_article

Dominion Power Line Findings Due Mid-July

In early June, Dominion Virginia Power (DVP) announced that it anticipates engineering analysis regarding the need for a new 230KV underground power line to be built in Alexandria to be completed by mid-July.

The power line had originally been proposed last year. DVP had studied various routes to run between the transmitting station on the old power plant site on North Royal Street in Alexandria and the transmitting station to our north, just across the Arlington border. Alexandrians questioned the need for the line and protested that digging for the line would be hugely disruptive to the city's residents, businesses, and traffic.

Earlier this year, DVP notified the City that it had delayed plans to build the 230KV underground power line, citing a new lower forecast for electrical demand. DVP initially planned to file with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) in January 2015, but wanted to analyze the new information prior to moving forward with filing. DVP will inform the City when results are complete.

Redevelopment Planned for Towne Motel Site *By Tom Soapes*

Owners of the Towne Motel (808 N. Washington Street) and the neighboring town house (802 N. Washington) recently submitted plans for redevelopment of those lots to the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and received preliminary approval to proceed. They propose demolition of the existing two-story brick motel and the two-story frame addition. Further, they propose moving the three-story Second Empire style town house closer to the southern edge of the lot and restoring and renovating that building, which has been deemed of architectural merit for its period. The house was built by the McCauley family siblings in 1901 as a freestanding building.

In the redevelopment design, the town house will be part of a new 50,000-square-foot, 98-room, 5-story brick hotel. A glass connector will join the hotel and town house. The motel was built in 1955, and, while it is an example of an urban motel building of that time, city staff did not consider it sufficiently historic to retain because of its "loss of original and character-defining features and details" through alterations over the years. One interesting note in the proposal is a change in the curb cut on Washington Street; the proposed traffic pattern within the property assumes the eventuality of one day changing Madison and Montgomery Streets to two-way traffic.

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) endorsed the height, scale, and mass of the proposal and suggested the developer return with a refined concept proposal to the BAR. Carrying out the proposal will require a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP). It is anticipated that the DSUP will come before the Planning Commission and City Council in the fall of this year.

NOTICE is for you

We Inquire: *Staying connected with changes and issues that affect North Old Town.*

We Inform: *Circulate information to our members through newsletters and circulars, email and our website.*

We are Open: *Welcoming varying views of our role in North Old Town.*

We Discuss: *Remaining involved in finding alternative solutions and being tolerant of our neighbor's perspectives.*

We Meet: *Membership meeting three times a year, and a winter party in February.*

Membership - Join NOTICE

Single \$15, Family \$25, Sponsor \$50, Angel \$150+

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NOTICE; P.O. Box 25571; Alexandria, VA 22313

Upcoming Events

**Community Meeting:
Revised Old Colony
Redevelopment Proposal**
Tuesday, July 21, 7 p.m.
Old Colony Meeting Room
1101 N. Washington Street
Parking available

**Ballyshaner's Irish
Festival**
Saturday, August 8
11am -7pm
Vendors, crafts, food &
beverage, pipe bands and
irish entertainment.
Free

**US Navy Band Sea
Chanters**
Friday, August 21
6:30-7:30pm
Mrket Square performance
including choral music.
Free

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