

Reston P&Z General Meeting, March 19, 2018

Attendees: Cupina, Hovermare, Jennings, Kennedy, Mastran, Moran, Murphy, Oak, Pegues, Penniman, Petrine, Stevison, Straits, Vanell, Walker (Vice Chair), Weber, and Willcox (Chair)

A. Meeting Called to Order at 7:30 pm

B. Recognizing Service and Death of Mr. Arthur Hill:

It was noted with sorrow and appreciation that Arthur Hill, who served on the Committee for more than 20 years, had recently passed away. Information on services would be forthcoming

C. Affordable Housing presentation:

Committee member Richard Kennedy introduced Abdi Hamud from the office of The Fairfax County Housing and Community Development. Abdi is the Affordable and Workforce Dwelling Unit Program Administrator and presented information on the program and its mission.

D. General Items:

At the end of the Affordable Housing presentation, the Chair noted that he and the Committee remained interested in having other similar mini-overviews on how the Committee and its members could liaise and engage with other programs. He invited members to step forward, if interested in helping to bring those overviews to the Committee.

Mr. Murphy acknowledged that while architectural design issues are not directly under the purview of the Committee, those issues are very important to the Reston planning process. He mentioned the North Point Chick-Fil-A location as an example where the community processes held the developers feet to the fire and the result was that the site looks very good and is consistent with North Point's design.

E. **Reston Gateway - Informational**

Applicants: Boston Properties LP

Applicant Representative: Mark Looney of Cooley LLP

PC Hearing Date: 6/27/2018

BOS Hearing Date: TBD

Staff Report: TBD

In welcoming Mr. Looney and the developers to the podium, Mr. Willcox reminded the Committee that the project presentation was information only and recommended that members limit their questions reasonably.

Mr. Looney provided an update on the Project's review status and schedule. He included updated materials, drawings and slides, and he mentioned that the aggressive timeline is due to the efforts to meet delivery dates for a key tenant, Fannie Mae and its consolidated sites.

Mr. Penniman asked about parking spaces, both numbers and location (i.e., how much will be underground). He also asked about planned retail spaces, noting that there does not appear to be significant retail space planned. Also, he inquired about planned cultural venues and entertainment spaces. Applicants replied that the specific details are being determined, and emphasized that they are committed to Open Space programs that will all provide public access and utilization. A theater or entertainment venue is a possibility.

Ms. Mastran asked when Phase II would begin. Applicants replied that Phase II would begin the mid-2020s, and by 2024 at the latest. They noted that the aim is to complete Phase I by 2022 and then proceed to Phase II. However, they stated that this will depend on decision by Federal Government (as tenant).

Mr. Stevison said he is interested in what the entry point and the pedestrian experience will be from Reston Town Center to the Metro station, noting that he would favor something similar to the Woonerf and pedestrian access above traffic flow.

Applicants stated that one of the challenges is that all parties with rights relating to the W&OD Trail must agree when something affects/impacts the trail. They mentioned that the question of how the Bus Transit Center will be used during the development is one example of how involved the process is, moving forward.

Mr. Stevison emphasized that he sees this as the one chance to get this right in the design process. Applicants replied that the DRB process is integral, and agreed that importance of getting the design right is critical.

Mr. Pegues stated that attaining LEED designations for the Project is very important, and urged the Applicants to aim higher than the minimum LEED standard, opining that the cost is not significant for higher-level LEED certifications. He also noted that there will be more water run-off caused by the Project and emphasized that vegetated roofs can help significantly.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan talks about the wish for Performing Arts Center, and asked the Applicants to address whether the Project may be the ideal spot for such a venue. He asked if Applicants might elaborate on the possibility for the Project. Mr. Kennedy expressed appreciation for looking at the right types of questions.

Applicants said that a venue would more likely happen in Phase II than Phase I, mentioning that Commissioner Carter had suggested looking at Maryland examples of an entertainment venue to evaluate options. They have not done that in earnest, to date, and have yet to analyze whether there should be a stand-alone or shared facility, for example. They "are not there yet".

In addition, Applicants stated that a pedestrian bridge over Sunset Hills Road would be in Phase II because the Federal Government lessors required this and a temporary fix/access is not feasible.

Mr. Murphy asked if there would be a shuttle service from the Metro to the RTC, noting that the new Project will comprise 1/3 of the RTC space.

Applicants responded that they have committed to provide public access to the internal grid, so that county buses (FFX Connector/RIBS) will be able to provide the service. They suggested that the County does not like private companies to provide competing service.

Mr. Murphy expressed concern that there will be a gap if the County does not provide, and if Boston Properties does not step up to provide shuttle service.

Ms. Oak mentioned that she is very interested in learning of the type of retail development will be part of the Project, and urged the Applicants to be proactive in incorporating sustainable features.

Mr. Jake voiced appreciation for the design inclusion of the central park and urban core. He asked if it might be possible to extend the long, linear park all the way into RTC.

Applicants noted that there are broader efforts to spruce up the W&OD trail and to incorporate natural features into the urban development.

Mr. Jennings said that he likes the Project overall. He said he prefers to see an actual commitment in place, rather than broad statements in the proffers. One example would be to have ballfields be in Reston, not some other place.

Ms. Straits stated that she also is interested in the Applicants being proactive in looking at addressing the issue of a community cultural space.

Mr. Walker mentioned that he strongly concurs with Mr. Stevison's comment about the need to consider and improve the walking experience from the Metro to the RTC. He noted that the W&OD space is an excellent opportunity for the Applicants to lead with a solution and not to be deterred by challenges with Northern Virginia Parks authorities. He also agreed with Mr. Jennings about the need to have the Project's recreation facilities support be in Reston proper, and he encouraged working on coordinating pedestrian flows and connections as a key element. Noting the tight meeting schedule, he suggested that the Applicants work to coordinate the various groups needed.

Applicants said these suggestions were reasonable to consider and to explore.

Mr. Willcox followed up on the need for "connectivity" with the RTC, the W&OD Trail, and the Metro transportation system. On the Trail, he suggested looking at re-grading so it is more of a walkable, useable park. He stated that the Project should not be the "backside" of the RTC.

Mr. Cupina asked if everything west of the Central Park is in Phase I and was informed that Applicants will undertake the preparation work to integrate readily with Phase II developments. He also asked if the Project's parking policy would be the same as now employed by RTC. Applicants said there is no decision on that yet.

Ms. Petrine inquired about the number of residents in Phase I and also about the mix of Studio apartments to 2 Bedroom units. Applicants replied that there will be roughly 850 residents in Phase I, and it is too early to assess the mix of types of units.

She also expressed concern about the length of time it will take to build the central park, e.g., it could take up to 4 years until built. She asked if there will be an earnest payment if the park is not built. In addition she asked about the lack of adult play space areas. Ms. Petrine also asked about how the Project will link to the underpass under the Toll Road for Town Center Parkway.

Applicants said they will dedicate a right-of-way to lower the grade needed to allow the road under the Toll Road. They also discussed the ball field options, noting that Boston Properties has the obligation to provide the proffer support before Phase II starts. They said they either will build on park property or acquire and build during Phase I.

Mr. Vanell talked about the focus on architecture, saying the plans look good so far, but it needs to be good, and could be the most important part of the RTC. He stressed that the Project needs to be pedestrian-focused, not vehicular-focused. Mr. Vanell also agreed that aiming LEED Silver and Certified is necessary.

Applicants responded that they will try to learn from previous lessons with RTC, e.g., retail trends and changes. They discussed the experience of the Hyatt restaurant which is isolated from customer foot traffic. Accordingly, they are trying not to place retail where there is limited traffic flow.

Mr. Weber asked if it is possible to expand W&OD and said there should be a way to do so. He also said there needs to be better shuttle bus and bus access to the Project and RTC. In addition, he stated that Applicants should not charge for parking and criticized the overall traffic flows around RTC.

Mr. Butler mentioned the Herndon Old Town example of having a lighted W&OD Trail for one mile as something to adopt for this Project. The goal is to allow/encourage people to walk to and from evening events at the RTC.

Comments were then welcomed from the public.

One question related to whether it might be possible to integrate with the parking garages north of Bluemont. Applicants said it is harder to do in practice.

Another public member voiced concern that it will take six more years to have above-ground connection. This should be paramount, as should be a way to get pedestrian access from the W&OD Trail to RTC. Right now, there are blocks and impediments.

Mr. Carter mentioned the Roundhouse Theatre in Montgomery County on East-West Highway as a good example for Applicants to consider regarding a cultural center. He also urged Applicants to focus on the Project streetscape.

Applicants mentioned how a special meeting could be an effective way to focus on streetscape and landscape issues, as well as on other details relating to connectivity, W&OD Trail, and transportation options between Metro and RTC.

Mr. Willcox emphasized that the desire is to have the overall RTC space together, not bifurcated. He said that modes and connectivity are key.

F. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20.