

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

~~16~~  
~~2-28-01~~

8  
3-17-01

DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2001  
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*  
SUBJECT: PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE PLANNED STUDY OF A POSSIBLE CITY VISITORS CENTER

**ISSUE:** Proposed scope of work for the study of a possible City visitors center.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council receive this report, and docket it for public hearing on Saturday, March 17, and for consideration on Tuesday, March 27.

**BACKGROUND:** Over the last five years, the City has discussed providing a new, larger and more convenient visitors center, in addition to the small Ramsey House Visitors Center located at 221 King Street. Currently, about 120,000 (about 330 per day) of the some 1.5 million annual visitors to Alexandria visit Ramsey House. At its November 28, 2000, legislative meeting, City Council requested that staff draft a scope of work (Attachment 1) for a consultant study to address the need and potential locations for a new visitors center, so that the scope could be reviewed by Council and set for public hearing to obtain citizen input.

**DISCUSSION:** At its January 26, 1999, legislative meeting Council received a report from the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) about the establishment of an additional visitors center. The ACVA report stated that Ramsey House alone was not adequate to meet the needs of visitors to the City due to its limited size, its historic status and its configuration, which limits the amount and types of information that can be provided to, and displayed for, tourists. At that time, Council discussed the feasibility of locating a new larger visitors center in the area near Union Station, as discussed below.

The physical limitations of the Ramsey House Visitors Center most likely do result in visitors receiving an incomplete view of all the City has to offer. As a result, ACVA believes that we lose opportunities for visitors to enhance or extend their planned visits, which results in lost opportunities for local museums, restaurants and retail establishments. Consequently, the City's economy and related tax revenues may not receive its full tourism potential. The large number of tourists and convention attendees who visit the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area raises the probability (particularly with the planned new Convention Center in the District of Columbia) that we may not be maximizing the full potential of the area's visitor market.

In addition to the location and the size of the Ramsey House Visitors Center, parking, of course, is difficult in Old Town. Frequently the Market Square parking garage is at capacity and cannot meet visitor parking needs, and visitors have to search for available parking in the immediate area. Surveys of tourists visiting the Ramsey House in the spring and summer of 1997 confirmed that parking, as well as finding the Center, were problematic, as was the lack of a handicapped accessible entryway to the main floor of the Center.

States, cities and historic areas have learned that the key to the success of visitors centers, orientation centers, or welcome centers are their being accessible to major highways and other forms of public transportation, and their being easily located by visitors. Examples of this include the roadside welcome centers on interstate highways operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia and other states, the City of Charleston, South Carolina, Visitors Center that is located in Charleston at the edge of its historic area, and the town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia where the National Park Service operates a visitors center with parking outside of the town and shuttles visitors to and from the town on buses. Charlottesville, Virginia, and Lexington, Kentucky, are other examples of cities that have established visitors centers that are accessible from major roads.

In addition to easy transportation access, the availability and convenience of parking is key to a visitors center's success in attracting tourists and extending their visit. If parking is easy to find and utilize, more visitors are likely to be attracted to a visitors center, and therefore to the City.

In January 1999, when Council received the ACVA report on the need for a new visitors center, the discussion focused on locating a new center at Alexandria Union Station (which at that point was being discussed for possible donation to the City). At that time, staff were directed to study the possibility of placing a visitors center, along with office space for ACVA and Virginia Railway Express (VRE), at Union Station, and to report back to Council.

At a June 22, 1999, Council work session, staff presented drawings and a plan to expand Union Station to accommodate a visitors center and office space for VRE and ACVA. Council expressed its concern about the size of the facility and asked staff to come back with a scaled back version of the proposed center. There was also community discussion of the plan, in an effort to seek input on the proposed location near Union Station. Since then, ACVA office needs have been satisfied with the lease of office space at 421 King Street, and VRE has determined that its future space needs were greater than could likely be provided at the Union Station site. As a result, the office space components of the original visitors center proposal are no longer applicable to the determination of the location or size of a visitors center structure.

At its November 28, 2000, legislative meeting, when Council accepted the donation of Union Station to the City by Commonwealth Atlantic Properties, and received the concerns of a number of citizens about the Union Station location for a visitors center, Council requested that the consideration of a new visitors center (and the related consultant study) not just focus on Union Station, but on other locations in the City as well. Council also requested that a proposed scope of work for the visitors center consultant study be the subject of a public hearing in order to obtain citizen input.

**Proposed Scope of Work.** In order to obtain an objective and independent study on the need and potential feasible locations for a new visitors center in the City, I recommend that a consulting firm (or a team of firms collaborating together) with the necessary professional expertise be hired. This would entail the City's Purchasing Office issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to a large number of firms that may wish to undertake the study, and then selecting the most advantageous offer (defined in this type of procurement as the best combination of experience, proposal and price) using the City's established competitive negotiation selection process.

The visitors center RFP will need to include a scope of the work that identifies the issues which the City wishes to have addressed by the consultant and generally the overall work that the selected consultant will be expected to undertake. Attached (Attachment 1) is the draft scope of work for the visitors center RFP. The draft covers the tasks to be performed including the proposed study methodology, as well as the desired deliverables.

Under the draft scope of work, the consultant would focus on the group tour and the individual leisure and business travel markets, which are important segments of the City's overall visitor market. The consultant would (a) collect and analyze data on these two visitor market segments, (b) analyze whether (and to what extent) a new visitors center would enable the City to attract a larger share of these market segments, (c) define what that center would have to provide in order to achieve this attraction of more visitors (in terms, for example, of space, parking, shuttle bus or similar service, location and general functions), and (d) propose a plan or alternative plans for a visitors center that would achieve this increased attraction of visitors.

In determining the benefits associated with a new visitors center and whether a new center is something that the City should pursue, and also in proposing a plan (or alternative plans) for a new center, the consultant would be directed to consider at least three visitors center options:

- a. A visitors center that would serve the group and individual leisure and business travel markets, would provide long-term day parking for both motor coaches and individual visitor vehicles, and would provide a shuttle service to transport these "group" and "individual" visitors between the center and the lower King Street area in Old Town.
- b. A visitors center that would not serve the group travel market but would focus on the individual leisure and business market visitor, would provide long-term day parking for individual visitors' vehicles only, and would provide a shuttle service to transport these individual visitors between the center and the lower King Street area.
- c. A visitors center that would not serve the group travel market but would focus on the individual leisure market visitor, would not provide any long-term day parking for individual visitors' and business vehicles, and would not provide a shuttle service to transport these individual visitors between the center and the lower King Street area. This option could focus, therefore, on a larger, more accessible

visitors center in the lower King Street area (through, for example, the leasing of retail space for a visitors center).

In addition to these three options, the consultant would be free to consider and propose other visitors center models or configurations.

The consultant will also be required to project the capital and operating costs of the plan (or alternative plans) recommended, as well as suggest possible locations for the recommended center. Union Station would be one of many locations that the consultant would be able to consider.

The proposed scope of work includes having the consultant obtain input on the topic of a visitors center from interested business, civic and neighborhood representatives.

The attached scope of work provides more details on the contemplated study methodology.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Estimating the cost of a complex study such as this is difficult, as this proposed study will require knowledge and application of a number of professional disciplines. Also, the degree that ACVA and City staff can provide the selected consultant with data and assistance will impact the cost of the study. At this point, we estimate that the cost of this study would be in the \$150,000 to \$250,000 range. In negotiations with the selected consultant, staff will of course seek to obtain the most cost effective contract. Funding for this study is available in a prior FY 2000 appropriation in the City's Capital Improvement Program of \$374,000 earmarked for visitors center development.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Request for Proposals, City of Alexandria, Virginia Visitors Center, Draft Scope of Work

**STAFF:**

Mark Jinks, Assistant City Manager

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA  
VISITORS CENTER**

**DRAFT - SCOPE OF WORK**

**OBJECTIVE:** Evaluate and report on the needs, economic impact and potential locations of a new visitor center in relation to various tourism market segments in the City of Alexandria

**SCOPE OF WORK**

**I. TASKS TO BE PERFORMED**

**A. The Group Tour Market**

1. Analyze the market for group tours and tour operators in the City of Alexandria, including developing a group tourist profile with demographic and geographic information and spending patterns. Group tourism defined for the purposes of this study includes tour operators and group leaders, as well as those who charter buses for schools, senior citizens, or non-profit organizations.
2. Interview and survey tour operators and group leaders to determine:
  - a) why they come to Alexandria
  - b) how they found out about Alexandria attractions
  - c) their itineraries
  - d) Alexandria's importance to the overall itinerary
  - e) number of days of complete tour
  - f) length of time spent in Alexandria

The information gathered shall include transportation elements such as a description of vehicle and routes into and out of the City.

The staff of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association will assist the consultant in identifying tour operators to interview and survey.

3. Determine the length of time that the typical group stays in Alexandria and visitor spending patterns on retail goods and restaurants.
4. Estimate the volume of group business deriving from the tour bus market as well as its direct economic impact on the City.
5. Determine through interviews and/or by survey: (a) how group tour operators utilize visitors centers, and (b) what services would encourage their return.
6. Determine through interview and/or survey if tour operators would utilize a visitors center either primarily as an information and orientation location only (and would proceed to Old Town via the charter bus), or would utilize a visitors center if charter bus parking was available and bus patrons could take a shuttle to the lower King Street area of Old Town.

Information gathered in addressing these issues would include, but not be limited to:

1. Why tour operators or group leaders would use, or not use, a visitors center.
2. The types of information or services that tour bus operators would like to see at a visitors center.
3. If the availability of a visitors center would cause tour operators or group leaders to increase the number of tours to Alexandria, or the length of time a tour stays in Alexandria.
4. The features or functions that should be included in a visitors center.
5. Other information or issues pertinent to usage of a visitors center.

**B. The Leisure or Business Traveler**

1. Analyze leisure and business markets (defined as persons, business travelers, or groups of persons such as families, who visit Alexandria via automobile or mass transit), develop a visitor profile, and determine when those visitors come to the City of Alexandria, including lengths of stay and times of the year, by segments of the visitor market that the individual leisure or business traveler (often day visitors) represents. The Alexandria

Convention and Visitors Association will provide the consultant with available information about the leisure and business travel market in Alexandria, as well as copies of prior studies.

2. Determine where leisure and business travelers originate, and what their destination is after visiting the City, including the routes taken in and out of the City.
3. Determine the length of time that leisure and business travelers typically stay in Alexandria, attractions they visit and their spending patterns on retail goods and restaurants.
4. Estimate leisure and business traveler volume by day and overnight visitor and the direct economic impact on the City.
5. Determine problems or issues relating to the current Ramsay House visitors center (amount of Alexandria information, disability access, parking, etc.) where the existing center may be falling short of visitor needs and expectations, as well as suggestions for improving service.
6. Determine if (and to what degree) the individual day visitor would utilize a new visitors center, the type of programs, facilities or information that a new center should provide the individual day visitor, as well as if a new visitors center would increase (and to what degree) tourism in the City.
7. Determine if (and to what degree) additional visitors center services would increase the number of day and overnight visitors to the City.
8. In order to assist the consultant, the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association will survey visitors to its existing visitors center (Ramsay House) in the spring and early summer of 2001 to obtain some of the information needed for the analysis described in B.1-3 and B.5 above.

C. The Visitors Center

1. Review and include in the final report information about the types, sizes and functions of visitors centers for at least five comparable cities/areas in the United States. City staff, the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, and the consultant will jointly select visitors centers to be studied.
2. Interview and/or survey local representatives of the tourism and travel industry to gain an understanding of the needs of Alexandria visitors to

determine if those needs are being met. The Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association and City staff will assist the consultant in the identification of tourism and travel industry representatives in Alexandria.

3. From interviews, surveys, and other information gathered about the various segments of the visitor population (in tasks A and B above) who visit the City of Alexandria (from the various visitor population segments who arrive by automobile, transit, tour or charter bus), provide an analysis of this information.
4. Summarize the findings in A and B above and provide the consultant's best professional judgment on (a) to what degree a new visitors center (in addition to the current Ramsay House location in Old Town) would be utilized, and (b) by which segments of the visitor population (and in what estimated volume) would it be utilized, as well as what the estimated economic impact of any additional visitor utilization would be.
5. In determining plans and alternative scenarios for a visitors center, consider at least three program plans and scenarios as described below in a, b and c, and, as to any center plan and scenario determined to be feasible, estimate the amount of land needed and the ranges of cost for the capital investment in and operation of the center and shuttle (in options a and b below).

#### Potential Program Plans

- a. A visitors center that would serve the group and individual leisure and business travel markets, would provide long-term day parking for both motor coaches and individual visitors' vehicles, and would provide a shuttle service to transport these "group" and "individual" visitors between the center and the lower King Street area in Old Town.
- b. A visitors center that would not serve the group travel market but would focus on the individual leisure and business market visitor, would provide long-term day parking for individual visitors' vehicles only, and would provide a shuttle service to transport these individual visitors between the center and the lower King Street area.
- c. A visitors center that would not serve the group travel market but would focus on the individual leisure and business market visitor, would not provide any long-term day parking for individual

visitors' vehicles, and would not provide a shuttle service to transport these individual visitors between the center and the lower King Street area. This option could, therefore, focus on a larger, more accessible visitors center in the lower King Street area (through, for example, the leasing of retail space for a visitors center).

- d. The consultant may recommend other visitor center models or configurations.
6. In any proposed visitor center plan that includes shuttle service to the lower King Street area, the consultant shall project the capital and operating costs of providing a shuttle based on recommended shuttle vehicle design, seating capacity, shuttle headways, and frequency of service (both in peak and non-peak tourism seasons).
7. In projecting shuttle costs, the consultant shall assume that the type of vehicle used in the shuttle is a rubber tire multi-passenger vehicle of some recommended type (alternative fuel vehicles can be considered) and is not a fixed guideway or fixed rail type of shuttle system.
8. In addition, the consultant should review and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing a shuttle and recommend the fare for the shuttle.

**D. Location Options for a visitors center**

1. Based on the information gathered on visitor travel routes and patterns, and likely utilization of a visitors center, and the land needed for a visitors center, the consultant shall recommend one or more specific or general locations for a visitors center in the City. City staff will assist the consultant in providing land information and land cost estimates.
2. The consultant shall interview at least 20 key business, civic and neighborhood leaders as to their thoughts, ideas and concerns about the location of a visitors center. City and Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association staff will assist the consultant in identifying the persons to be interviewed.
3. In considering location options, the consultant shall review and take into consideration traffic counts, traffic projections, as well as planned transportation improvements. The City's Department of Transportation & Environmental Services will provide the consultant with information on

planned traffic and transportation improvements and shall be consulted regarding location options, as well as in analysis of the traffic impact of any proposed location.

4. In considering location options, the consultant shall consider proximity to, and value contributed by, other transportation systems (interstate highways, inter-city highways and parkways, Metrorail, Metrobus, DASH (Alexandria Transit Company), AMTRAK and Virginia Railway Express).
5. In considering location options, the consultant shall consider ease of pedestrian access to and from potential visitors center sites.

## II. DELIVERABLES

- A. In responding to this Request for Proposal, the offeror shall provide the City with a suggested time line for the proposed tasks as well as for completing the study.
- B. The offeror shall provide the City with a report of preliminary draft findings (see III. A below), as well as a final report. The final report shall be in an easy to understand format, including a combination of text, tables, and graphs as appropriate. The final report shall include all items listed in the scope of work. The raw data used in the study shall be organized and submitted to the City as part of this study.
- C. During the course of the study the offeror will present its preliminary research findings to the Board of Governors of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, the City Manager, as well as present those preliminary findings in one City-sponsored public input setting where business and residential community feedback on the preliminary findings will be sought. The offeror should budget for three meetings.
- D. The final report will be presented at one or more meetings (including a potential work session) to City Council. The offeror is required to be present at these meetings. The offeror should budget for two meetings
- E. The offeror will provide 100 final copies of the study to the City by the completion date.
- F. During the period of this study, the consultant will be required to meet frequently with City and Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association staff to plan the details of the study, to work out issues as they arise, and to review the progress and outcomes of the study as they emerge.

### III. PROPOSED STUDY METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

- A. This written scope of work outlines the City's best judgment on the areas and issues that it believes need studying, as well as outlines some of the proposed methods of undertaking that study. However, the City remains open to other opinions and professional judgments from offerors of the best methodology of undertaking this study. As a result, in written responses to this Request for Proposal, offerors may propose alternative study methodologies, additional areas of study, fewer areas of study, a different framework developing recommendations, or revisions in the proposed desired deliverables or study process.

4300 Ivanhoe Place  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304  
March 3,, 2001

8  
3-17-01

*Sent to  
CC, CM, Jinks  
PF 3/17/01*

Mayor Donley and Members  
of City Council  
City Hall  
Alexandria, Virginia  
Submitted by FAX

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council,

Because I will be out of town on business during the next three weeks, I am writing you somewhat in advance of the March 17 public hearing on the scope of work (SOW) for the planned study of a possible city visitors center.

This is a subject in which I have been interested for several years and on which I have been in touch with many of you in the past. It is my contention that the need for a visitors center has not been demonstrated and that its cost, when weighed against the capital cost requirements of our schools, gives it little if any priority. I have two concerns about the SOW:

First, it should be rewritten to permit the consultants to entertain other options outside of a center that would benefit our tourist industry and perhaps not involve such major expenditures. The study should be broad enough to gather in all kinds of good ideas that individuals may articulate to the consultants. The present S.O.W. would not seem to do that.

Second, the SOW in Section D. 1. tells the consultant to interview 20 "key business, civic and neighborhood leaders...." While that is a positive step, the provision calls for the names of those leaders to be assembled with the help of the ACVA as well as by City staff. I believe ACVA in this case is a special pleader and should have no role in the interview selection process. Please delete that reference.

Finally, it is my understanding that individuals from surrounding neighborhoods will ask that the Union Station site explicitly be removed from consideration by the consultant. It seems to me that this is an issue worth exploring. Certainly its advocates make a strong case. I hope you all will listen to their arguments with an open mind.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

*Jack Sullivan*



EXHIBIT NO. 2

8  
3-17-01



MIME:darrylpedersen@  
hotmail.com

03/17/01 07:43 AM

To: Beverly I Jett@Alex  
cc:

Subject: Docket Item #8, Please defer

Docket Item #8, City Council Meeting, Saturday, March 17

Please defer consideration of this item until such time as a number of issues can be addressed, among them the impact on traffice in the area, particularly tourist buses throughout the old town area.

Thank you.

Darryl Pedersen and  
Tescia Yonkers

801 Rivergate Place  
Alexandria, 22314

---

Get your FREE download of MSN Explorer at <http://explorer.msn.com>

PHONE-O-GRAM®

for: Mayor & Council <sup>8</sup> 3-17-01

From Joan Pryce Company \_\_\_\_\_

City 322 S. Lee St. Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Telephoned  Please return the call  Returned your call  Will call again  Came in  See me

Message The new visitors center should be deferred. She has two concerns: (1) what it will do to the traffic pattern, and (2) tourism by buses.

Date 3/16 Time 10:48 Taken by bc

Action Wanted \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken \_\_\_\_\_

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:peterjuge@jun  
o.com**

03/16/01 08:28 AM

To: Beverly I Jett@Alex

cc:

Subject: Alexandria Union Station

I urge the City Council to defer any decisions on the RR Station until adequate info has been assembled on the impact of placing the Visitor's Center there. Peter Juge  
460 S. Union St. 22314

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:TwigM@aol.co  
m**

03/16/01 09:40 AM

To: Beverly I Jett@Alex, schotta@erols.com @ INTERNET

cc:

Subject: No Visitors Center at Train Station

As a resident of Alexandria, I would like to register my view that I do not want a Visitors Center in Old Town Alexandria. I specially do not want one at the historic train station. I am bothered by the slow, noisy, smelly busses that clog our beautiful streets already and would like to stop any and all efforts to attract more visitors.

Twig Murray  
513 S. Lee St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703 683 5058

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:mmiller@washingtonworkplace.com** To: Beverly I Jett@Alex  
cc:  
03/16/01 09:52 AM Subject: visitors center

Please defer item #8 on tomorrow's docket until further questions regarding the impact upon current traffic and gridlock can be addressed. Thank you.  
Michael and Margaret Miller, 600 South Lee Street, Alexandria, VA

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:dsolinger@erols.com** To: Beverly I Jett@Alex  
cc:  
03/16/01 09:48 AM Subject: Docket Item #8 - Visitor's Center SOW

I am writing to urge that the proposed Scope of Work be divided into two phases, the first to determine the costs and benefits associated with a new Visitor's Center, especially with regard to the need for such a facility and the objectives that it would serve. A second phase to suggest target market and design criteria, and to consider specific sites would then take place only if first phase clearly supported the need for such a facility.

The study as presently proposed appears to assume that a new Visitor's Center is highly desirable and that the expenditure required to build such a facility should have a high priority for scarce City funds.

In my opinion, the present Docket Item should be deferred so that the SOW can be substantially revised. I'd appreciate your making my views known to the members of the City Council.

Thank you,

David S. Olinger

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:ssimsassocs@** To:Beverly J Jett@Alex  
**msn.com** cc:  
03/16/01 01:39 PM Subject:Visitors Center

Please inform the Mayor and Council that the Clover-College Park Civic Association strongly opposes including the Union Station among the alternatives to be studied for the visitors center site. Assessing the train station location now, before the impact of the Patent and Trademark Office on vehicle and pedestrian traffic can be known, will be a waste of time and money.

Respectfully,  
Stephen Sims, President, CCPCA

8  
-----  
3-17-01

**MIME:schotta@erols.com** To: Beverly I Jett@Alex  
cc:  
Subject: RE: Docket Item #8, Alexandria City Council Meeting, Saturday, March 17, 2001  
03/16/01 02:37 PM

To: Ms. Beverly Jett [beverly.jett@ci.alexandria.va.us](mailto:beverly.jett@ci.alexandria.va.us)

For: Members of the City Council

From: Sarita and Charles Schotta

Re: Docket Item # 8 (Public Hearing on and Consideration of the Proposed Scope of Work for the Planned Study of Possible Locations for a New Visitors Center.

We urge Council to defer this item until the Waterfront Alliance can complete its study of tourist bus guidelines. There is enormous dissatisfaction in Old Town neighborhoods around the lack of guidance concerning the use of loud speakers by drivers, refusal to park in permissible areas, engine idling, haphazard loading/unloading, double parking which clogs entire blocks, etc.

In other words, we would urge Council to support an intensive requirements analysis before going forward with a center-which, we think should be designed around agreed-upon functions. Otherwise we will wind up with yet another instance of retro-fitting citizens' objectives to Council actions.

Thank you for your consideration.



Union  
Station  
(mkt)

On Thursday, March 8, the Rosemont Citizens Association voted to "exclude the site from study if the Visitors Center is to be built in the next five years. On the other hand, if the City is willing to defer the study until the Patent and Trade Office (PTO) has been fully operational for at least a year, the community would not object to its being one of the sites studied".

We the undersigned support this position:

Name	Name (print)	Address
<u>Robert H. Floyd</u>	ROBERT H. FLOYD	814 PRINCE ST.
<u>William E. Long</u>	WILLIAM E. LONG	413 S. PITT 22310
<u>Jennifer Hollings</u>	JENNIFER HOLLINGS	511 S. LEE ST
<u>David Dlinger</u>	DAVID DLINGER	100 Prince St
<u>Anthony J. DiStefano</u>	Anthony J. DiStefano	602 S. Pitt St.
<u>Martha Welch</u>	MARtha Welch	1604a Hunting Creek Dr. 22314
<u>Louise Meng</u>	Louise Meng	916 Franklin ST
<u>Jon Wilbor</u>	Jon WILBOR	310 So. LEE St.
<u>John Waugh</u>	JOHN WAUGH	27 WILKES ST.
<u>Kathleen Waugh</u>	Kathleen Waugh	27 Wilkes St
<u>Jody Waugh</u>	Jody Waugh	25 Wilkes St.
<u>J.C. Milner</u>	J.C. MILNER	468 S. Union St.
<u>Joan Pryce</u>	JOAN PRYCE	322 S Lee St



Docket Item 8

Mayor Donley, Vice Mayor Cleveland, and Members of Council:

I am Katy Cannady. I live at 20 East Oak Street. I've lived in Alexandria since 1983. It's my home and I want all who come here as tourists or students of our long history, to be comfortable, relaxed, and made welcome while they're with us. I want this for these strangers just as much as I want it for visitors to my own home.

I object to considering the Union Station site as a possible visitor center location because I believe it is not a welcoming site. I know that proponents of this location estimate that it will bring only an additional 300 cars per day to that area. In the crush of traffic in the upper King Street area, we residents aren't even going to notice 300 more cars, the argument goes. That argument may well be right.

I've lived here a long time. I know my way around. Even in the convergence of streets in the upper King Street area, I can manage the traffic. But what about someone who doesn't live here and doesn't know his way around? The Patent and Trademark Office is coming soon. We know that it will bring, not 300 more cars, but almost 4,000 more cars and many of them will be on King Street, Duke Street, and Callahan Drive. Do we really want a stranger to brave that traffic before he or she even starts site seeing or shopping? I foresee frazzled nerves, even traffic accidents. It's going to be the sort of thing that would make most people decide to cut their visits short. It's not welcoming. It's not hospitable.

Supposedly we can "integrate other transportation modalities" at this site, in other words, Metro riders and tourists arriving by train. But if the visitor center is at Union Station, tourists alighting from the Metro, many of them families with young children in tow, would have to walk away from Old Town, our main tourist attraction, before they even begin their site seeing. I think many will opt to go it alone without a visit to the center. There are some tourists arriving by train, but they are very rare. I have often watched from the Metro platform as train passengers disembarked. They were all wearing business attire. I've seen many with brief cases, none with cameras.

The Union Station site can be presented as relatively inexpensive because we own the land and we can avail ourselves of a million plus Federal dollars earmarked for transportation uses around the King Street Metro. Even with the free land, we'd have the expense of an entirely new building. It would be better from an economic standpoint to find space in the first floor of an existing building or one planned mainly for another purpose. The Federal money should go to improving pedestrian and vehicle access in and around the King Street Metro. That would be a welcome gift for all of us, tourists and residents alike.

I voted for the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Rosemont Citizens' Association because I thought the proposal encompassed in the resolution was more likely to gain Council acceptance. My personal preference is to exclude the Union Station from the outset. I think the best public policy is to exclude plainly unworkable options at the beginning of the every decision process and concentrate on those that might be successful. Thank you.

Remarks before Council (3/17/01) by Matthew Natale , president Parkfairfax Association,  
3401 Martha Custis Drive, Alexandria, Va 22302 (703-578-3674/h 703-319-0330/w)

8  
3-17-01

Good Morning, Mr. Mayor, members of Council and Staff.  
Hello, my name is Matthew Natale and I currently serve as  
president of the Parkfairfax Condominium Unit Owners  
Association.

I would like to start my brief remarks on the visitors  
center<sup>RFP</sup> by noting the concept of opportunity cost. That every  
opportunity taken has a cost, not just measured in money, but in  
other opportunities that are consequentially no longer possible.

As you know the purpose of the RFP is to determine the  
specific scope of work for an outside consultant to study  
potential sites for potential visitors center. As City Council  
considers this RFP, I urge them to exclude the Union Station as  
a possible site for the Visitor's Center.

A consultant may be able to accurately predict most sites'  
current and future suitability for a Visitor's Center. However,  
due to the future significant and unpredictable impact of the  
PTO development that will unfold over many years, it would be  
impossible for any professional to provide anything but a best  
guess as to Union Station's suitability as a potential site.

**Remarks before Council (3/17/01) by Matthew Natale , president Parkfairfax Association,  
3401 Martha Custis Drive, Alexandria, Va 22302 (703-578-3674/h 703-319-0330/w)**

If City Council is focused on Union Station, then they need to merely delay a Visitor's Center until such time as the PTO is built and the resulting traffic snarls are untangled. It could be that the traffic snarls never get untangled. A consultant can't accurately predict this now, unless the consultant is the foretelling Miss Cleo.

Further, it is important to note that City Council has already reviewed a detailed plan for Union Station as a Visitors Center site. On June 22, 1999, a work session was held on this very topic, and City Council heard plans so detailed that it included specific bus routes for a tourist shuttle.

Therefore, suggestions that all options will not have been considered if Union Station is excluded may not be based on the facts.

Frankly, it's a matter of choices, of "opportunity cost." Certain members of Council simply must accept the fact the "opportunity" of bringing PTO to Alexandria has "cost" them the opportunity to bring the Visitors Center to Union Station.

I urge members of Council to accept this fact and move on.

EXHIBIT NO. 6

4300 Ivanhoe Place <sup>8</sup>  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304 <sub>3-17-01</sub>  
March 3,, 2001

*Sent to  
CC, CM, Jinks  
PF 3/17/01*

Mayor Donley and Members  
of City Council  
City Hall  
Alexandria, Virginia  
Submitted by FAX

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council,

Because I will be out of town on business during the next three weeks, I am writing you somewhat in advance of the March 17 public hearing on the scope of work (SOW) for the planned study of a possible city visitors center.

This is a subject in which I have been interested for several years and on which I have been in touch with many of you in the past. It is my contention that the need for a visitors center has not been demonstrated and that its cost, when weighed against the capital cost requirements of our schools, gives it little if any priority. I have two concerns about the SOW:

First, it should be rewritten to permit the consultants to entertain other options outside of a center that would benefit our tourist industry and perhaps not involve such major expenditures. The study should be broad enough to gather in all kinds of good ideas that individuals may articulate to the consultants. The present S.O.W. would not seem to do that.

Second, the SOW in Section D. 1. tells the consultant to interview 20 "key business, civic and neighborhood leaders...." While that is a positive step, the provision calls for the names of those leaders to be assembled with the help of the ACVA as well as by City staff. I believe ACVA in this case is a special pleader and should have no role in the interview selection process. Please delete that reference.

Finally, it is my understanding that individuals from surrounding neighborhoods will ask that the Union Station site explicitly be removed from consideration by the consultant. It seems to me that this is an issue worth exploring. Certainly its advocates make a strong case. I hope you all will listen to their arguments with an open mind.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

*Jack Sullivan*



EXHIBIT NO. 7

8  
3-17-01

*Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations*

March 14, 2001

Mayor Kerry Donley and Members of City Council  
City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Feasibility Study of New Visitor Center

Dear Mayor Donley and Members of City Council:

We, the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, strongly feel that the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association should not be a source for identifying the people to be interviewed for the planned study of the proposed visitors' center.

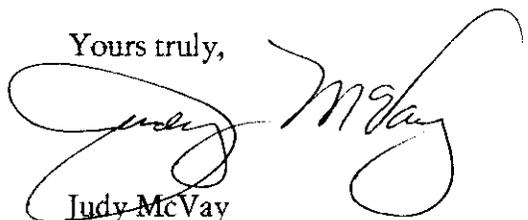
The Federation sees this as a clear conflict of interest on the part of ACVA. We feel the public would be better served if the decision regarding who should be interviewed in this matter was made by those who have no stake in the final decision.

At the very least, it calls into question the objectiveness of the conclusions of this study. At worst, it would seem to give the appearance of preconceived bias orchestrated to deliver a predetermined outcome.

We respectfully ask that you make the proper alterations to this proposal in order that any recommendation, either positive or negative, made by the consultant can be considered to be completely unprejudiced.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,



Judy McVay  
Co-President



Poul Hertel  
Co-President

**ROUGH DRAFT**

**CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA  
Public Hearing Meeting — March 17, 2001  
Partial Verbatim of Docket Item No. 8  
City Council Discussion**

\* \* \* \* \*

8. Public Hearing on and Consideration of the Proposed Scope of Work for the Planned Study of Possible Locations for a New Visitors Center (#16 2/28/01)

Mayor: Thank you. That ends the public hearing. The recommendation is that we had the other night was to receive the report, docket it for public hearing. This matter will be up for Council consideration on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Eberwein.

Eberwein: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. First I'd like to thank Mr. Speck for bringing us together for another non-controversial project. And I'd like to thank the citizens who came to speak today. All of your remarks were well taken and I know that all of you sincerely meant them, and I'd like to thank you for all of the e-mails which were a lot. I know we're not here to vote on this today and we're going to bring this back for final consideration, or at least a more thorough discussion by Council Members, on Tuesday, March 27. But, I'd like to make a few remarks and a few suggestions. I believe that the study is an acknowledgment by Council that the current Visitors' Center is wholly inadequate to the City. It's not accessible to the handicapped. It's difficult for able-bodied individuals to use, let alone the elderly. It is way too small, and it has inadequate bathroom facilities. This actually may be an opportunity for us to perhaps restore Ramsay House someday, get some grant funding and provide another tourist attraction to the City. A nice simple house representative of how most of our citizens actually lived in the seventeen hundreds as opposed to Carlyle House or the Lee House. I'd like to point out the time line. We're going to be looking at our budget, both Operating and Capital, and this is not in the six-year capital budget, construction of a Visitors' Center. And, we have heavy capital obligations currently, so planning now is for out years. At least it's four years beyond, I believe, this current Council sitting here. So, the planning is taking place now, but I don't believe we have obli, I know we have not obligated any funds and I don't believe they will be obligated for a couple of years at least. And, I also believe that good planning does absolutely dictate that we look at all of the site options and that we don't eliminate any site prematurely, particularly when it has not been studied in the context of other available sites. If we do, I believe the entire study will be viewed as inherently flawed and will be subject to future criticism. And, I think once it's studied we have in here that we

will look at density and traffic and at some point politics will come into it, and that is the time when you eliminate a site based on the facts, or you don't eliminate it. But, we need to have the facts, and once we have those facts we can make decisions about whether we want to go with new construction or a renovation around any of the particular sites, but we will know that we have choices and we will have dollar figures, and we will know if we decide to put it in "a" location versus "b" location that we have dollar figures to look at in our budget and know that we will have to offset some other project if it is more expensive in one location versus another location. And, I, for one, want to have those facts in front of me. We all know that the tourism industry brings in a lot of dollars, and we all know that property tax assessment rates are high right now. We're feeling a lot of pressure on the Council, I believe, from citizens on fixed incomes. We have a lot of current capital obligations. We have a lot of expenses, and I, for one, want to have all those facts at my fingertips before I make a decision. **That said**, I would propose the following suggestions or changes to the RFP for further discussion on Tuesday night. Item d (2), I am sympathetic to the comment that we need perhaps a more neutral party to help select the business, civic and neighborhood leaders, and I would ask that the Council consider striking "the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association" from that and insert the City Manager who will assist in identifying the persons to be interviewed. I would also suggest, and I think this is important, on both c (5),

Pepper: What page are you on?

Eberwein: I'm working with typed pages 4 and 5 of the docket item or 8 and 9. And with regard to c (5) and d (1), I would like to suggest. Well, first let me say, I really think it was important that we have three different types of visitors' centers considered. I thought that was very well drafted, a, b and c. We have a low-key minimal-impact-type center which would be ala Ramsay House, although modernized. You would need parking for buses or cars. You have a more intense visitors' center under (b) which would allow parking for visitors, but vehicular parking, not buses. And, you have under (c) a fairly intense visitors' center which would allow the large motor coaches to park. What I believe, though, is we do not ask the consultant to provide at least two potential locations or a general location for each one. With the low impact, I think a general location makes sense because you might say another low-impact center could be in Old Town some place. But, I think when you're talking about the high-impact visitors' center if the market study show that's what we want or if we decide up here that's what we want, I think we need to have at least two viable locations provided. And, I would ask that that be included in the study. And so, between the words "feasible and estimate" which is four lines down, I would add "provide at least two potential locations or a general location and". If Metro is important to this concept, then we do have other Metro stations. I would remind people that Eisenhower is not as easily accessible as everyone believes it happens to be. Most of the land around it, in fact, I believe all of the land around it is privately owned and it is restricted to

that private owner's office buildings. That was something that I learned when I got on Council. I was actually quite surprised. But the Eisenhower Metro Station is not something that the City can go in and very easily plan with, we don't own or control the property around it. But, if a Metro station is important, there are other Metro stations in this City. You could develop the concept, like Charleston, South Carolina, where you actually park on the edge, some place in the valley, or you can even look at Braddock. You can easily take a shuttle bus up West Street and down King or some other route. So, there are other options but I want to make sure that the consultant affirmatively entertains other options for each proposal of low-impact, moderate-impact and high-impact visitors' center. With that, I think it's important that we do this study and I believe that there is a lot of empathy with many of the comments that were made today about traffic impact and impact on the neighborhood, but I believe it's important to make sure that we have a study with all of the facts out there so that no particular group of citizens or business people or neighborhood group can impugn the integrity of the study because we didn't consider all of the facts.

Mayor: Mrs. Pepper, then Mr. Speck.

Pepper: I was very pleased to see so many people on both sides come out so that we could have this kind of really good discussion. I was very concerned about a letter that we received in which the gentleman writing it wrote: "I am also aware that a small, vocal, selfish group of nearby residents are seeking to have the Council elevate their own interests above the interests of the City as a whole by eliminating a site at Union Station from consideration in the proposed study, and elsewhere this group is called a NIMBYISM or their attitude was." I would just like to note that from the broad spectrum of views we've gotten here, I think that everybody in the City understands that it is a City issue. I may live at 4600 Duke, but I can tell you that coming through this intersection it is a dysfunctional intersection and is a city-wide issue. Anybody whose coming this way knows that. So, it's not just those neighbors. And, also, I would like to point out that this particular intersection is not just a concern to those faces you see out here or those people who voted at Rosemont or Taylor Run or the other areas, this has been an issue for two decades. If you all will recall when we were looking and talking about the Carr property, Oliver Carr's property, now called Carlyle property, we were very concerned about keeping it at low density because we knew what was going to be happening to just this intersection to say nothing of Duke Street, itself. And, also when it came time for us to talk about putting in a King Street station, we did not want to zone the area around it to be so dense that we would have trouble getting in and out of this intersection. This intersection is one of the worst in the City, and I want to suggest that even though Richard Baier can work miracles here and there, there's only so much you can do and unless you are talking about grade separation here, you've got a major problem. So, that was my first point. The

second point I wanted to make is, I think one of the things that we are picking up here and certainly very obvious, is that we've got a credibility problem. What's happened is we have watched over the years beginning in '99, this was the only site that came before us with a full plan, or a concept plan, with drawings and so forth. This was the site. It was the only one being considered. So, no wonder the neighbors are and the City is worried about that. So, originally it was the only site. What they're watching is that this area has been packaged. It has been predetermined, if you will, to be the site, the chosen site, and why wouldn't they think that because here we've worked so hard to get CAP to give us the land, that was last year. And this year, we're going to begin a shuttle to make this a very desirable site for a visitors' center. In '99 there was a federal transportation bill for transit uses which could, in fact, include some portion, not necessarily, but could be used in some way for something like this. Anyway what you have here is a real credibility problem because there is this feeling that by golly there's a predetermined site here. So, I want my colleagues to keep these thoughts in mind as we vote on the 27<sup>th</sup>, because whatever we decide to do it had better involve an enormous amount of input from the citizens. And, I want to say one last thing and that is, if this consultant isn't chosen partly by non-business types, some of the activists who have been here today or maybe some others, the consultant won't have much credibility. And, if the only person that this consultant, whoever it turns out to be, reports to on a regular or daily basis turns out to be people who have a vested interest, then, there again, you have no credibility, so we've got to look very carefully for some kind of objectivity, we must protect the process. Thank you.

Donley: Mr. Speck, then Mr. Euille, then Ms. Woodson, then Mr. Cleveland.

Speck: Just a couple of things, Mr. Mayor. I thought Ms. Eberwein's comments were constructive and I think useful for staff and for us to consider prior to any adoption. It certainly was a broad overview. One of the things that we need to keep in mind as we're considering any of this is what some of you have alluded to and that's how critical tourism is to the economic base of the City. And the fact that the Council decided about six years ago now to both privatize the Convention and Visitors Association and create some fairly significant sources of funding and direction to the ACVA to really begin to create a first-class visitor, tourism and convention effort, I think is reflected in some of the results, but it's not happening by chance. I mean there has been a concerted effort on the part of a lot of people to do this and I think that there is a recognition that just simply from a facility standpoint, the existing facility is inadequate, as the office space was. There were a number of sites considered actually and there's a history to this. The Manger was directed by Council over two years ago to look at alternatives because of the problems of Ramsay House, and kept coming back with possibilities that were found to be inadequate also. I mean the one that I actually was pushing for early

on was the Lyceum on Washington Street because there was first floor space and they were doing a renovation. I was really hot to try to take advantage of that before it was leased out and for any number of reasons why that proved not to be a site. But the Manager was directed to look at a lot of alternatives. What emerged with Union Station was because initially it was free, and then there were a whole series of other factors like the ability to link to transportation modalities and the availability of a lot of funding sources that conceivably could result in a capital project that had little or no capital funding from the City. And, I don't know how many times I've said this, but I'll say it again. I think Union Station has some very attractive possibilities but I don't know if I'm right. And if I try to muscle that decision through Council it would be as irresponsible as saying, let's not consider it because some people decided that it's wrong, and that's what you ask a consultant to do. I mean if you go out and hire professionally, skilled, objective trained consultants, they're supposed to look at that stuff so when it comes back to us, as Mrs. Eberwein said, and it's a political decision, we have the facts in front of us. I don't think that anyone was drafting this in a way to try to imply that somehow ACVA was going to have some sort of sinister role in selecting the people. I think it was just really language that said it's important to have a broad participation by people in the community from a variety of sources. I mean if there is a credibility issue on that, I think that it was inadvertent because there's no benefit to ACVA in some how creating it's own select group of advisors and then trying to present that as being fair and objective. I mean the point is if you are going to do a study and you're going to do it correctly and professionally, then you want to make sure that as many people who have some position or ideas or input are included. And any consultant that didn't do that wouldn't be worth being a consultant. The RFP process is to identify the scope and then ask people who are responsive come in and present an offer. We do that all of the time. I mean the City at various levels reviews RFPs and determines whether they were responsive both in terms of ability, experience and costs, and I hope that we don't spend as much money on this as we are initially budgeting, but we want to get the best job we can and part of the job of a consultant is also to evaluate future circumstances in the context of what's being considered. The final issue that I would make in terms of the argument that says because PTO is coming and we don't want to look at this site at this point, really if you apply that argument logically, then you're saying we really can't do anything other than PTO until PTO is built. No restaurants, no businesses, no destination activities that would bring more people in because the affect that that might have or be affected by PTO. I see a couple of you shaking your heads, but the logic of the argument that says, don't look at this while PTO is being built, is the same logic you would say, don't do anything until PTO is built because that in of itself is going to sort of create the frame work for all other activities. Well, we can't just stop. And part of our responsibility, I think all of us, everybody sitting in here no matter what perspective you have is to make sure that we make our decisions as accurately as

we can and this is really part it. And, I don't think any attempt to sort of subvert that process or suggest that there is already a predetermined conclusion should be a concern because if you are going to do this right you're going to do it fairly. That's the only way I think that we could ever make this kind of decision. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Mr. Speck. Mr. Euille, then Ms. Woodson.

Euille: Yes, Mr. Mayor. I certainly concur with the expressions of my colleagues relative to both the citizens input and suggestions and the quality of this proposal from staff. Couple of things I want to make mention of, first of all, this is a competitive bid process. An RFP will be prepared by the City Manager's office through the City's Purchasing office and then they will evaluate the responses with regards to the best combination of experience, proposal and price and using the City's established competitive negotiation selection process. So, that being a given, I feel comfortable, at least initially in terms of how we are going to proceed. However, the caveat or suggestion to the Manager and hopefully my colleagues will concur because the question has been raised whether it's credibility or whether it's just to whom will the consultant report to whether it's ACVA or what have you. Personally, I think the consultant ought to report to the Council. This is a matter that's gravely concerning all of us that we're going to need to make the final decision on anyway, so I think the consultant ought to report back to the Council. Relative to going out and advertising the RFP, it says to a large number of firms, let's expand the definition of firm to include other businesses or entities that have experience in consultant arena, ala, colleges and universities which come at a very reasonable cost compared to private sector consultants and also, and this may be news to the general public, but our own WMATA, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has a separate development team that provides services to other municipalities, consulting services, and so I think that we ought to invite them to participate likewise. Someone made mention, well first of all, this document talks about the scope of work that identifies the issues which the City will need to address. I think we need to be more specific and spell out what those issues are. I know it's mentioned at some points in the document, we've heard quality of life, we've heard traffic and parking impacts. The third thing in terms of analyzing the three levels of a type of visitors' center with the attraction to achieve this increased attraction of visitors, a goal rather to achieve increased attraction of visitors. That concerns me. I'm not really concerned about attracting more visitors initially to the City, as I am maintaining and sustaining an attractive level of visitors. You know, I know the end result will be increased attraction of visitors, but I don't think that should be the driving vehicle in terms of us moving forward with this. It says the consultant will also be required to project the capital and operating costs of the plan or alternative plans and recommend as well as suggest possible locations for the recommended center. Union Station would be one of many

locations that the consultant will be able to consider. And amongst those many locations, it's already been stated this morning, it can be something in the Eisenhower Valley, it could be the Lyceum, it could be something along the gateway to Washington Street corridor, ala the Old George Washington Restaurant that's been sitting for the past 10 - 15 years vacant which is becoming an eye sore. So, there are just so many choices and options available to us that we need to certainly be open to. Someone made mention to the fact that they didn't see anywhere in here where the consultant will be collaborating and soliciting input from the community. Again, I think I see it in here. It states that the proposed scope of work includes having the consultant obtain input on the topic of a visitors' center from interested business, civic and neighborhood representatives. So, I think it's addressed, but we need to clarify that to make sure that it's stressed further. Of concern that I do have is this even though I do know we put into the FY 2000 budget which has been appropriated in the City's capital improvement program \$374,000 earmarked for a visitors' center development and staff is estimating the cost of this study to be \$150,000 to \$250,000 range, to me that seems to be just too excessive. A suggestion to staff and you can certainly come back to the Council at the appropriate time once the bids have been received, proposals have been received and say, gosh, you know, we need more money. I would like to cap it at \$150,000.

Mayor: Well, I don't know if you can do that. I think you let your budget drive that, but you got to see what the bids are.

Euille: Well, that's what I said. Your bids can come in and if it's more than \$150,000 staff before they make the award can come back to Council and apprise us of such. I just don't, I think even spending \$150,000 for the study I think is a little unusual but hopefully, again, if we were to focus on using other sources for consideration for responding to the process, we may find that we can get it even under the \$150,000, but just because the range is, and it's a broad range, \$150,000 to \$250,000, that's a lot of money. The cost of the facility was mentioned. I don't know what the facility is going to cost. A year or two ago there was something on the table relative to focusing primarily at Union Station. In my mind, right now in my mind is clear that is no longer on the table. I will never support a proposal to spend at least until I know where we are going to do and what we are going to do. A number that was thrown out was five million dollars, I don't know what it's going to be, but it's certain I can say right now it's certainly not going to be five million dollars. The construction, there was concerns about the construction impacts of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the PTO projects as they commence that will have an impact not only on this particular neighborhood, the area around Union Station, but certainly these impacts are citywide. All of us up here concretely agree and empathize with those feelings and those concerns. Those impacts are going to be there, but that doesn't mean that we should not include the

Union Station site as part of this study and then when we get the report on this study, and who knows when we are going to get the report back, I can tell you through the normal process and Mr. Speck or someone just mentioned, we were more than two years getting this far, we're probably going to be two, three, five years down the road before anything of substance is going to be committed in terms of funding to commence construction of this project wherever the location may be. But, I do agree that if the consultant comes back and says it's Union Station, I'm not going to say today that I won't support Union Station, but I certainly won't support commencing construction until we have completed the Patent and Trade Office Project and we have had an opportunity to further understand their potential impacts. In closing, my last statement that I want to make, my colleague, Ms. Eberwein, made mention that when we make the decision whenever it is and it may not be this body, this present Council because it could be three to five years down the road that, the politics will decide the outcome. I can tell you if I'm on this Council, whether I'm on this Council or not, politics will not determine the outcome. The community and citizenship will determine the outcome because this is not a project that should be beved in political wisdom. Thank you.

Mayor: Joyce.

Woodson: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And my comments are very brief which I think at this point everyone will be grateful that they are brief comments. I have a few points and I will make a written statement to the City Manger prior to the vote on the 27<sup>th</sup>. I just want to say that I also agree with a couple of members of Council points so far. The Williamsburg and Charleston, South Carolina, I been to both of those tourist centers. They are not in the middle of the tourist area. They are outside of the tourist area. They are far more accommodating for the kind of problems that many of our citizens have spoken about today. So, I would really support something, I do, first of all, support a tourist center, and I support this study. I just don't support it in the middle of the tourist area because I think our area is too densely populated, too much traffic, it's very uncomfortable. So, I would support it outside of the area with shuttle service of some sort of, you know, trolley or something quaint that would be nostalgic. Second point, I would like to see the language removed in the comments in the RFP that identifies or even implies remotely that we are supporting one site over another possible site. I would like, Point three, I would like to include the ACVA but only as a member of a group not as a primary advisor to the consultant. I think that that does give rise to concerns that perhaps it's biased, but I do believe that they have a role there that is their job just like the Planning Commission has a job, the ACVA has a job, they have a role here and I'd like to see them perform it. I would also like to see the Federation, the Chamber and citizens-at-large and I think that's our role to appoint. The final point that I would like to make has to do with fear because I

think that's what I'm hearing here and I think that we have spoken to that quite a bit. I think that postponing this is born out of fear and I think that fear really spells out a lack of trust in this body to make a decision that's based on everyone's best interest and I think that trust is predicated on our having earned it in the past and I'm not sure we've always have because if we had I don't know that we'd have so much concern about it right now. So, that's a charge that I would like to levy on all of us up here that we do everything that we can in this and in anything future that creates this kind of fear to alleviate it and to earn the trust of the citizens. And, those are my only comments. Thank you.

Mayor: Mr. Cleveland.

Speck: Could I just ask a question? Is there anything in the RFP? I've read this many times, is there anything in the RFP that suggests that there is any predetermination or....The memo does to staff, if there is, I agree, I don't think it should be in there. I didn't see anything like that. I mean if I picked it up and didn't know the history, I wouldn't find any site specific language. Does anyone, is there anything in this?

Mayor: I don't believe there is.

Speck: Okay. All right. It was the memo. I agree the memo showed the history of that, but not the RFP. Okay, thank you.

Mayor: Mr. Cleveland.

Cleveland: Excluding Councilwoman Eberwein and Councilwoman Woodson, we do have a credibility problem, a real credibility problem. When PTO was coming to the City of Alexandria the only point of traffic, and it was a traffic projection, was that Callahan Drive and Russell Road and King Street were overwhelmed. We could not get a traffic projection which I asked for time and time again on Telegraph Road and Duke Street, Route 1 and Duke Street, and we have a credibility problem. We settled for the equivalent in the amount of if you think \$400,000 is a lot of money for Rosemont, we settled in the way of a settlement for road and traffic for two, I'm sorry, three and a half traffic lights. Not enough. We have a credibility problem. And, I'm going to tell you something, I wish that we would have been able to do a little bit more at Potomac Yard, and if we had of been able to do a little bit more at Potomac Yard, we would have had a Metro station with a VRE station everything down there, we wouldn't have this problem now. I don't care if we spend \$500,000, \$600,000 or one penny on a consultant study that's going to come up that the place to do it is going to be at the Union Station. That's the place that we're looking at. That's the place that it will come to, and it's going to come down to whatever you want to talk about the facts. The facts are the traffic is terrible. It was hard for me to get down here this morning. It's going to

be hard in the future, even harder in the future. We have a real big credibility problem. So, I think that, I don't care whether if you go by projections again and we come up with the study whether we do it five or six years down the road, that's what they're asking for if you want to talk about the people, the people that's being involved and everything, that's when we should do it, and it should not be done now. Thank you.

Mayor: All right real quickly. Let's gain some points of agreement. Number one, I think we are all sort of in agreement, that the tourism industry is important to the City. Not only is it important to our tax base, it is important to our employment base and also it is important to our history that we convey the history that we work so hard to preserve to others. I think that there's also some general agreement that the Ramsay House is woefully inadequate, particularly for a City that relies so heavily on the tourism industry, and quite frankly, one of the reasons why we have a problem with some of the buses that Sarita Schotta mentioned is because we really don't have any alternative for them other than just sort of plow around the streets. You know we have got the policies and we got the bus parking areas but they still are trying to get around the streets and that in fact causes congestion as do some of the individual travelers. I think our abilities to potentially do a better job there are certainly part of the proposal to do this study. Regarding the, Mrs. Pepper raised it and Mr. Cleveland raised it, and I'm not going to debate the credibility issues, Ms. Woodson raised it as well, but one of the things I think is important about the credibility issue is that we need to make informed decisions. You know we acquired Union Station because first off it was given to us, but largely it had a lot of popular support and we were being responsive to the public. We, in fact, have opened this public hearing today and have gone out or least the proposal is to go out for a study in response to public comment and public concern that we weren't going to move forward just evaluating one site. You know that is building credibility. It gets to some of what you are talking about here. Mrs. Woodson raised the issue of fear, well, we want to make informed decisions. We want to try to remove the uncertainties about this particular project, or quite frankly, almost any of the projects and getting information going about a study in a deliberative process does just that. And that's one of the reason why I think we should move forward with a study of all sites, but a study that's thorough and that's really what we're talking about here. A lot of the discussion has been based upon a site specific element or looking particular elements that are just related to traffic and parking or congestion or just the Union Station. But, let's be real clear about what we're asking for here. First off, this is not a site selection process. There is nothing in the RFP that is...excuse me Mrs. Pepper, we were all kind to listen to you while you were talking, so I'd appreciate the same. This is not a site selection process, but the site element is only one facet, one element of the study. We're looking at the utility of a center, the marginal affects or the incremental benefits that may or may not accrue from a visitors' center. That's one of things

we're asking the consultant to look at. We're looking at potential costs. I mean that's one of the things that is identified in the RFP. What would something like this cost. Quite frankly, this proposal would have to compete with any other proposal for capital improvement dollars, and I've made it clear to both sides who have talked to me about this that a visitors' center is not potentially high on my priority list when it comes to capital improvement dollars because I think there are other things that are more important like the City's infrastructure, some people mentioned schools, some people mentioned sewers. We have a lot other capital needs that may or may not or that may, in fact, outweigh an investment in a visitors' center, but that's not what we're asking for here. What we are asking for is to try to get an idea of costs. We're also asking for what elements potentially should be in a center that would make it a utility to the City. What needs to be there. We heard some discussion about should offices be there, should information be there, a media center, I think Mr. Sullivan mentioned the media aspect, those are all of the things that are built into this. That's what we are asking for. So, let's be real clear about what is included here. It's not a site selection. It's a study to get us information. Which really sort of brings me to my final point. One of the things we all want to do whether we are managing the affairs of our families, whether we are working in our civic groups, whether we are running our businesses, we want to make informed decisions. And that is what we are elected to do and in order for us to make informed decisions, we need information. And that's what's being requested here. Nothing more, nothing less. Give us the information. You know when that is information is available once the study is complete, then a lot of the other aspects whether we move forward, what is in, what's out, how much it costs, whether those costs are relative or how they are weighed in terms of other capital needs in the City, that's the time when we make these decisions. And, this is an attempt for us to get information so that we can make informed decisions just like you would in your households, in your businesses and you in your neighborhoods. Those are my comments. I do want to say that Ms. Eberwein, I think that your amendments strengthen the RFP and I think Council should consider them when we take the matter up on the 27<sup>th</sup>. All right. That closes the public hearing. We will take this matter up for final consideration on the 27<sup>th</sup>. We will now move to items 9 and 10.