

Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working Group

November 19, 2002

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Working Group Members Present:

Mayor Kerry J. Donley
Councilman Bill Euille
Councilman David Speck
A. Melvin Miller, Chairperson, ARHA Board
Carlyle Ring, Vice Chairperson, ARHA Board
Donna Fossum, Planning Commission

Working Group Staff Present:

Phil Sunderland, City Manager
Bill Dearman, CEO, ARHA
Mark Jinks, Assistant City Manager
Connie Lennox, Director of Development, ARHA

Other Staff and Consultants Present:

Mildrilyn Davis, Office of Housing
Jeff Farner, Planning and Zoning
Eileen Fogarty, Planning and Zoning
Bill Grindl, TAG Associates/ARHA
Marye Ish, ARHA
Beverly Jett, City Clerk
Jeff Lines, TAG Associates/ARHA
Rob McLeod, Planning & Zoning
Archie Morris, ARHA
Sandy Murphy, Mayor's Office
Loren Pope, TAG Associates/ARHA
Mary Reader, Architect/ARHA
Fay Slotnick, Council Aide
Cindy Smith-Page, Real Estate Assessments
Karen Snow, Assistant City Attorney

Others Present:

Susan Britta, neighbor/North Old Town Independent Citizens
Marilee Menard, Bulfinch Square
Carolyn Merck, Old Town Civic Association
"Van" Van Fleet, Citizen, Old Town

Mayor Donley called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. The minutes from October 9 were approved unanimously.

Planning and Zoning Director Eileen Fogarty summarized the recent work session with the Planning Commission to discuss the on- and off-site developments.. The major issues for the on-site development involved building articulation and retention of trees. The issue at Reynolds Street was the lack of usable open space provided on-site for children to play, and the inadequate nature of the pedestrian route to nearby recreation facilities at Cameron Station Park and Tucker Elementary School. At Whiting Street, the discussion centered on the placement of units on the site, open space, and the provision of a tot lot. The Planning Commission was supportive of the on-site and Braddock Road developments, and concerned about the issues raised at the Reynolds and Whiting Street sites. ARHA Board Chairperson Melvin Miller concurred in the summary. Planning Commissioner Donna Fossum stated she was pleased with the developments as presented, but concerning about the Whiting Street site, particularly with regard to the tot lot. Staff distributed a new plan provided by ARHA for the Whiting Street site. Mr. Miller noted that the changed definitely raised the costs of the project.

Ms. Fogarty reported on the schedule for distributing the staff reports for each site, and confirmed, in response to a question from Mayor Donley, that this the project would remain on schedule.

Mayor Donley noted that the last financial projections for the project included underground parking, and asked whether the current plans would be more costly than that. Mr. Miller responded that he was more concerned about the total unit cost for HUD approval and tax credit approvals. Jeff Lines clarified that HUD is concerned about the HUD cost, while VHDA, for tax credit purposes, is concerned about the total cost. Tax credit applications lose points if the cost exceeds \$140,000 per unit. Mr. Miller also noted that four accessible units had been lost by stacking units.

Jeff Farner discussed outstanding issues related to the on-site development: building articulation, open space, and parking. Connie Lennox discussed how ARHA had addressed the facing of units at Braddock Road, stated ARHA's position that nearby school playgrounds should address the concern for play areas for the Reynolds Street site, and described what ARHA had done to increase open space at Whiting Street through stacking of units and the removal of a module. She also noted that this resulted in a loss of four accessible units. Rob McLeod expressed concern about the amount of usable open space, which he would not be able to determine until receipt of the new plan.

In response to a question from Mayor Donley, Ms. Lennox stated that 20 of the 100 replacement units would be accessible, which would enable ARHA to exceed the 5% accessibility requirement for its overall public housing units, for which ARHA is currently 15 units short.

There was a brief discussion of an emergency vehicle easement and ingress/egress issues on the Whiting Street site. Councilman Speck asked whether the easement was really needed, and suggested that it would be better to landscape the area instead. City Manager Sunderland asked that Karen Snow look into the easement issue.

ARHA discussed the status of the demolition approval. Once the ad for the environmental clearance is signed by the City Manager, HUD's Washington, DC and Chicago offices will need to approve. ARHA expected to select its contractor on November 25. Councilman Euille asked whether the bids had been within budget. Ms. Lennox responded no; the budget estimate had been \$358,000 but the bids ranged from \$521,000 to \$523,000. Jeff Lines explained that ARHA had asked for extra items, including rodent control, fencing of the entire site.

Ms. Lennox reported on discussions with Virginia Power and Verizon. Verizon service goes from the Bus Barn to the Madden downtown site, and from the Madden site to the southern part of the City. It is not yet clear whether the pole with the necessary lines can be left on-site when the buildings are demolished, but the pole could be moved elsewhere if the City allows. A major issue of concern is whether ARHA's developer, Eakin Youngentob Associates (EYA), will have to underground now to comply with a Code requirement that re-engineering of utilities requires undergrounding. EYA considers it premature to do the undergrounding in connection with the demolition, as without an engineered site plan, they don't know where service will be needed. There was consensus that a special request is in order. If the situation is not resolved in an upcoming meeting between EYA and Verizon, ARHA should let City staff know. Emily Baker in Transportation and Environmental Services was designated as the contact person for this item.

Councilman Euille moved that the Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working Group convene in executive session at this time, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real property for a public use, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City of Alexandria and ARHA. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fossum and approved unanimously.

Following the executive session, Councilman Euille made the following motions, seconded by Councilman Speck:

I move that the Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working Group reconvene its meeting of this date which was recessed for the purpose of conducting an Executive Session. (The motion was seconded by Ms. Fossum and unanimously approved.)

I move that the Working Group adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working Group has this 9th day of October 2002, recessed into executive session pursuant to a motion made and adopted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working group that such executive session was conducted in accordance with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Samuel Madden Homes Downtown Redevelopment Working Group hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters that were identified in the motion by which the executive session was convened, and that are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act from the Act's open meeting requirements, were heard, discussed or considered by the Working Group during the executive session.

This resolution was unanimously adopted by roll-call vote.

ARHA Vice Chair Connie Ring asked where things stood with regard to strategies for the tax credit application. Mayor Donley stated that the City's legislative delegation should be briefed during the first two weeks in December. Mr. Ring noted that ARHA will put in a preliminary notice to VHDA concerning the application, and will be able to find out with whom they're competing. In response to a question from Mr. Euille, Ms. Lennox reported that TAG (off-site) and Mid-City Urban (on-site) were developing the two tax credit applications. There was a brief discussion as to whether lobbying with regard to the tax credits would be appropriate, with a consensus to discuss again at a subsequent meeting.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, December 17 at 5:30. (That meeting was subsequently cancelled.)