

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE

ISSUE: The future Open Space Steering Committee structure.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Schedule a public hearing on February 24, 2007, to consider approving a new structure for the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) and retitling it the Open Space Advisory Group; and
- (2) If Council agrees to change the future structure of the OSSC, acknowledge and commend the members of the current OSSC for their pioneering and productive work in protecting and expanding public open space in the City.

BACKGROUND: With approval of the Open Space Master Plan in 2003, an 11-member committee, devoted expressly to the preservation of open space, was appointed by the then City Manager. Since its inception in 2003, the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC) has worked diligently with City staff to identify, analyze, review and rank potential open space sites throughout the City. The OSSC has also actively sought out opportunities for community outreach and education related to the City's Open Space programs and opportunities. The many successes achieved thus far related to preserving and protecting open space are a direct result of this committee's efforts.

The terms of their appointed service has come to a close, and in the September 20, 2005, Open Space Report and Recommendations, a future new structure of the OSSC was proposed. Since that 2005 report, and with review and approval from the existing OSSC, staff has taken into account additional feedback from OSSC members, staff and citizens, and has proposed revisions to the recommended structure. As much of the ground work for future open space protection has been established, the proposal is for a far smaller advisory group. The name of the group would also change to the Open Space Advisory Group. The recommended structure is outlined below.

We recommend the Committee be appointed as an *advisory group* to staff and the City Manager and include the following representatives: one person from each of the following commissions based on the nominations of these commissions.

- One member from the Planning Commission
- One member from the Park and Recreation Commission
- One member from the Environmental Policy Commission
- One member from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, and
- Two citizens who have shown a knowledge and keen interest in open space and represent diverse geographic areas of the City (to be appointed by the City Manager).

Staff would assist this six person advisory group, and work with the group primarily to implement education and outreach opportunities, and to review future potential open space pocket parks, and conservation easement sites.

The Advisory Group would:

- Meet up to four times a year, and/or additionally when necessary;
- Advise the staff open space team on open space issues and opportunities found during the outreach process;
- Work with staff to make initial contact with citizens concerning open space opportunities;
- Conduct and participate in open public forums to publicly review opportunities; and
- Review vacant and oversize lots for open space potential.

The Staff Open Space Team would:

- Confer with the advisory group on potential open space opportunities;
- Facilitate the meetings;
- Use long range development planning in securing open space on future development sites;
- Use the development process to secure open space on current development sites;
- Develop education and outreach strategies; and
- Report and make recommendations to City Manager and City Council as opportunities become available.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
Kirk Kincannon, Director, RPCA
Aimee Vosper, Landscape Architect Supervisor, RPCA
Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA

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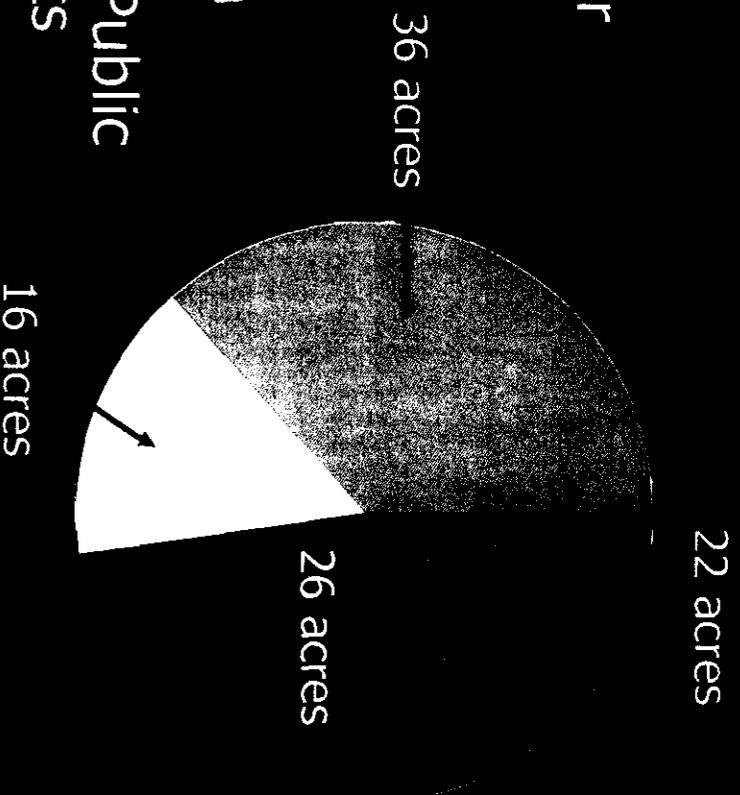
Open Space Plan Implementation

Status Report on the City of
Alexandria's Open Space Activities
January 9, 2007 City Council Meeting

Open Space Preserved — 100 Acre Goal

- 48 Acres of Open Space acquired or dedicated.

- 16 Acres of Open Space under Conservation or Public Access Easements



Acquired or Dedicated

Planned Approved Acquisition or Dedication

■ Conservation Easement

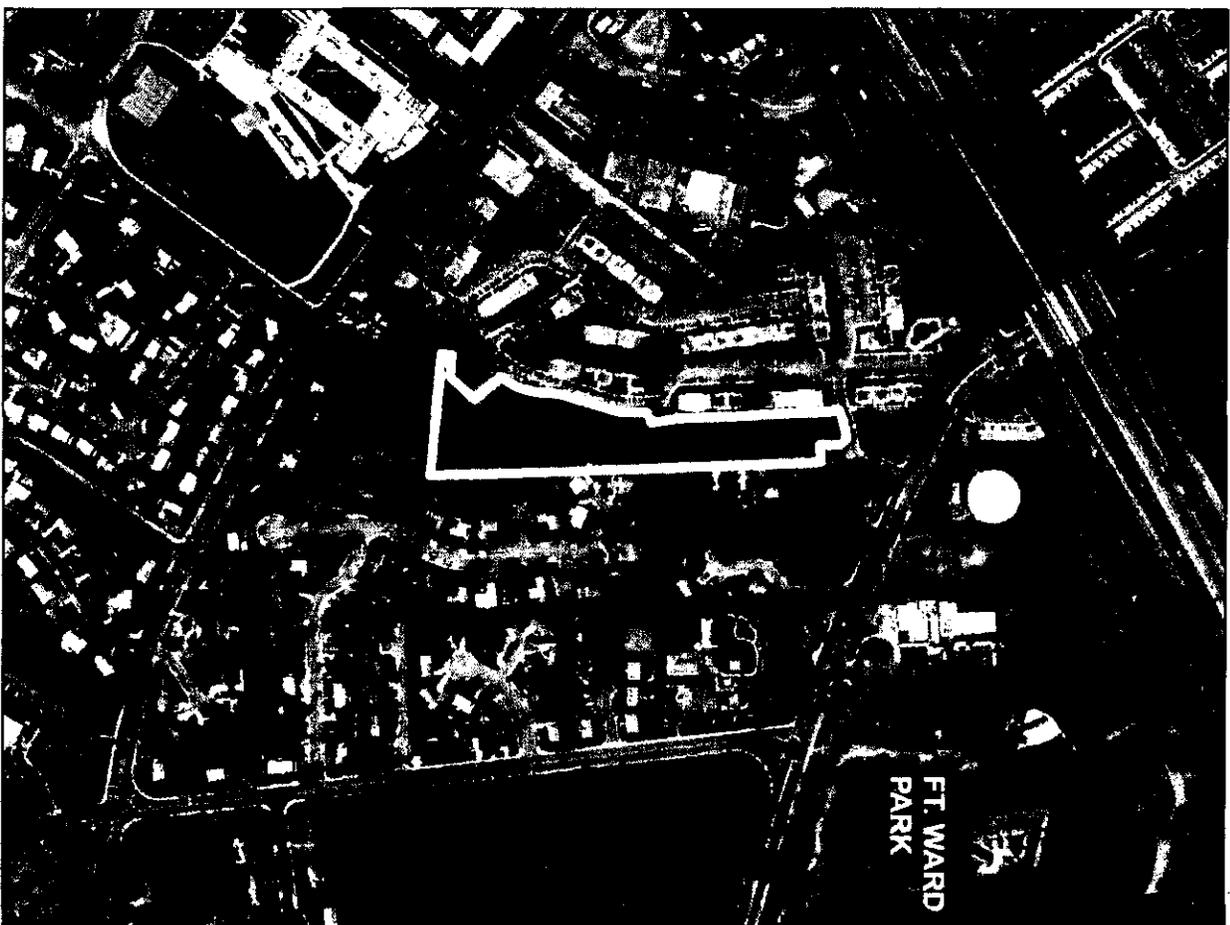
□ Balance of Ten Year Goal

Open Space Acquired



- Ivor Lane – Seminary Forest
- 2600 Business Center Drive
- Strand – Waterfront (three parcels)
- Mount Vernon Avenue - Four Mile Run
- Raleigh Avenue - Holmes Run Park

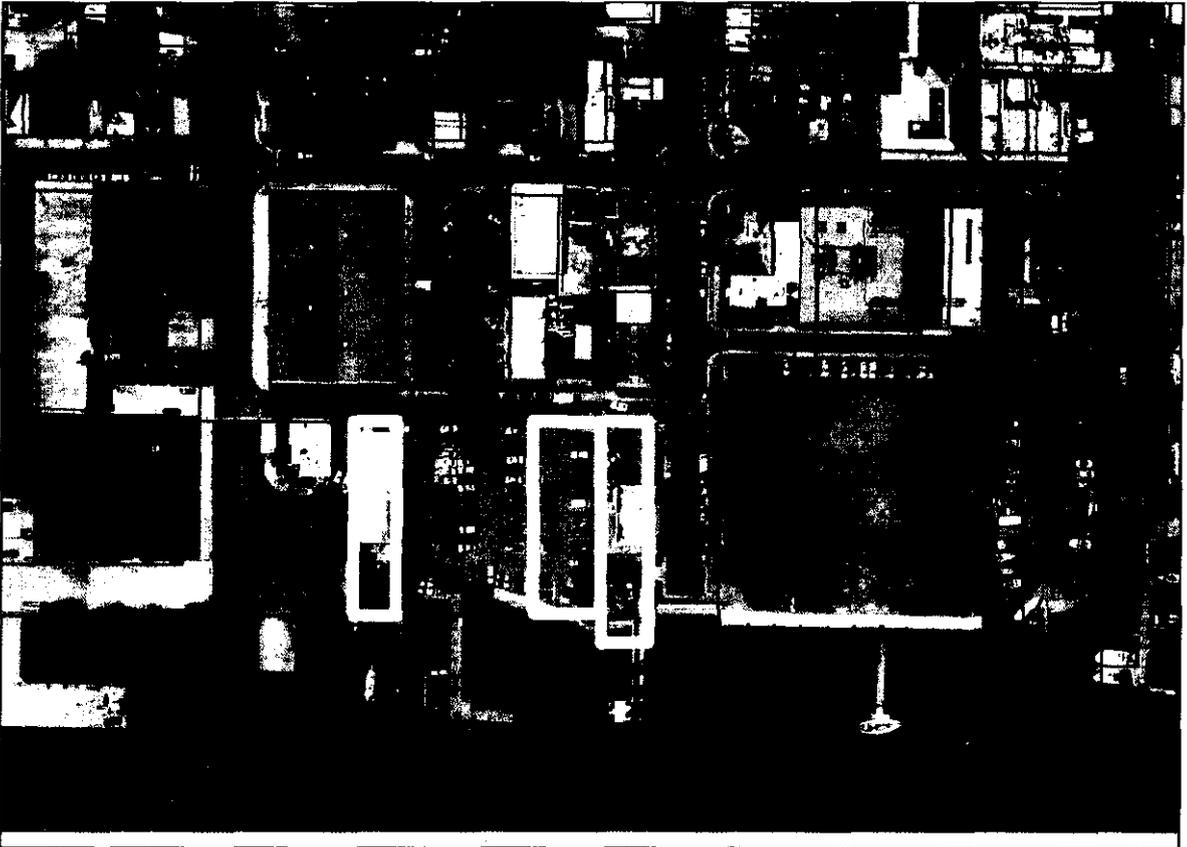
2200 Ivor Lane -- Seminary Forest



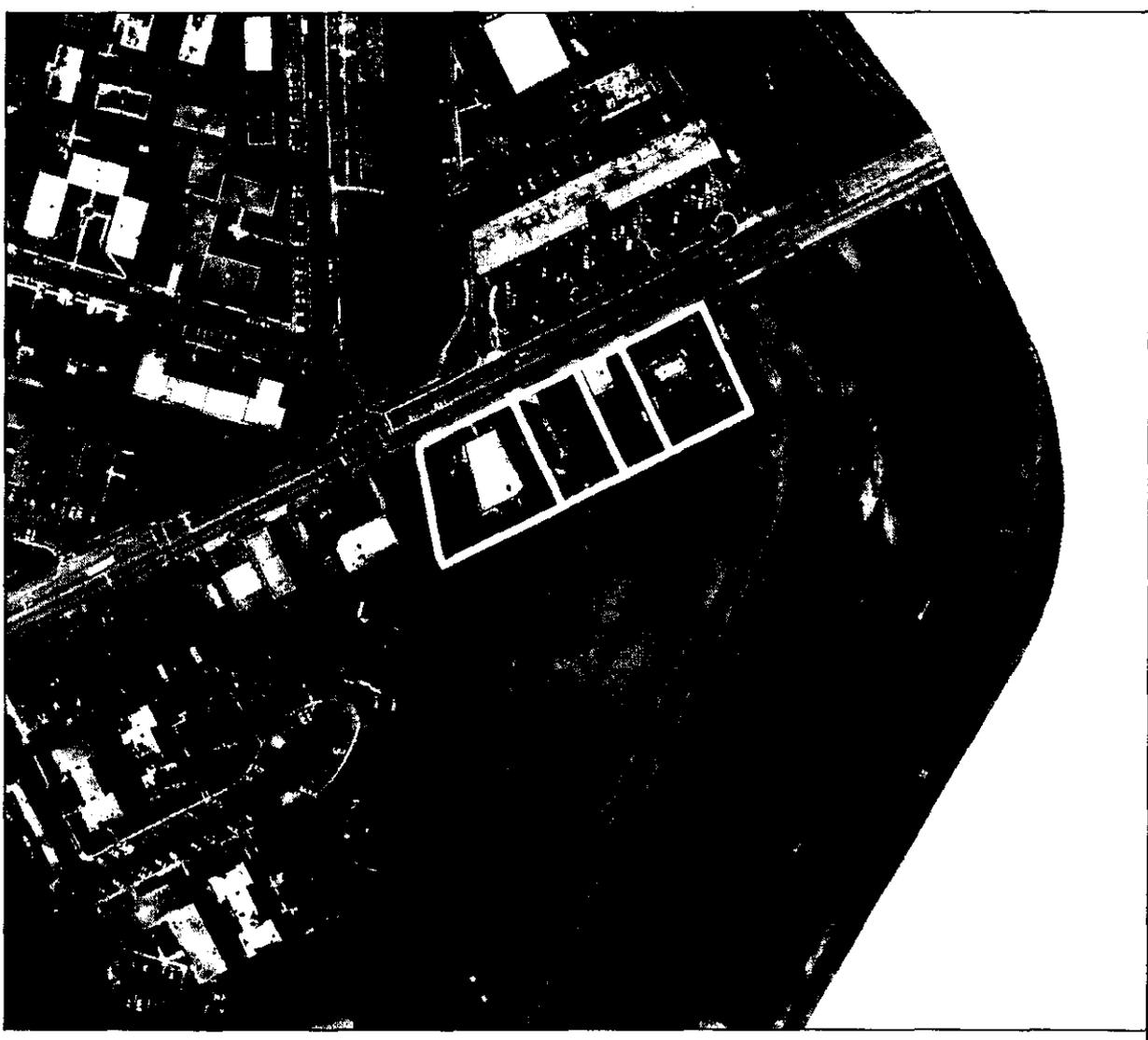
2600 Business Center Drive



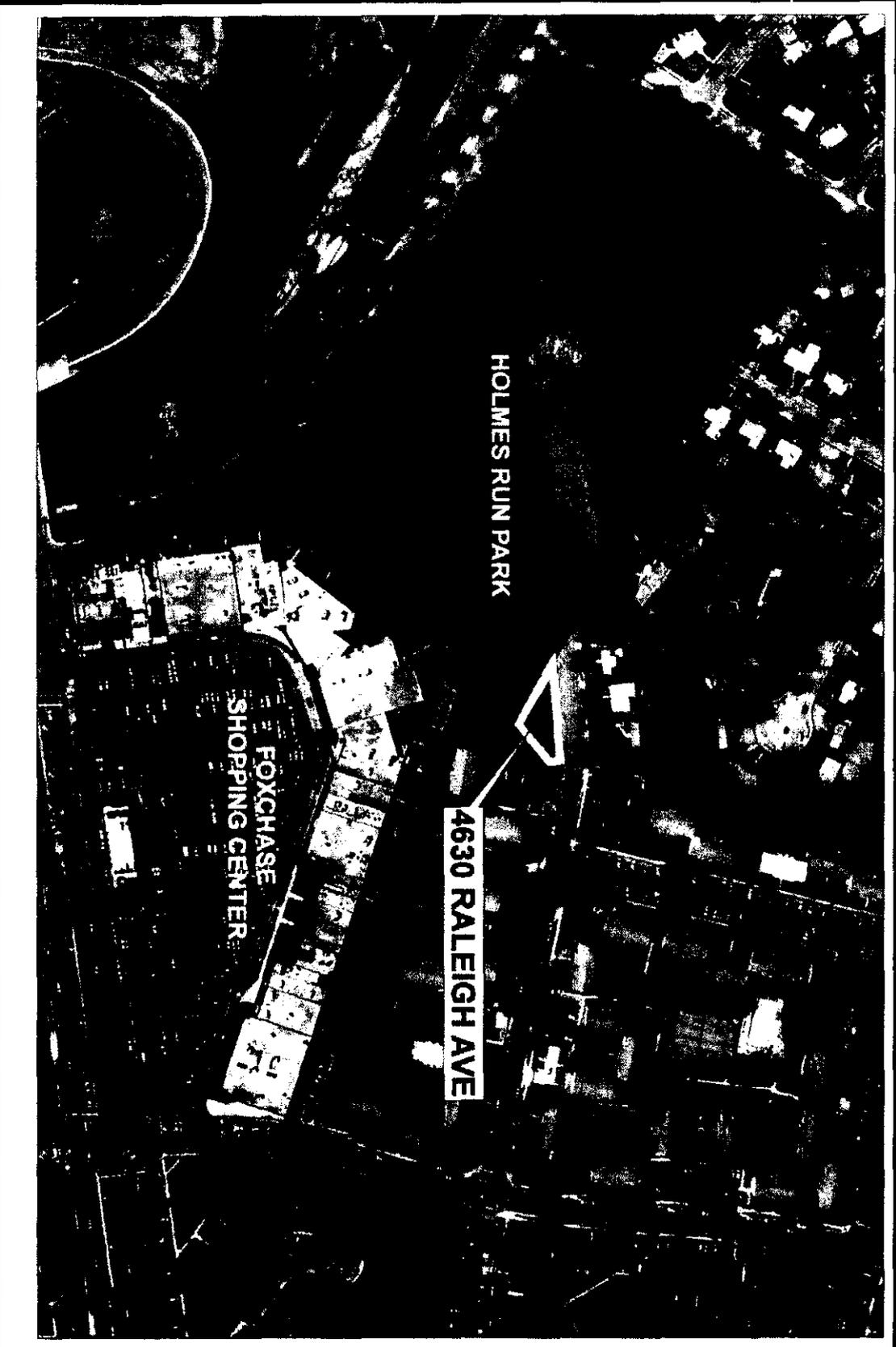
Strand - Waterfront



Mount Vernon Avenue -- Four Mile Run



4630 Raleigh Avenue



Open Space Dedicated



Open space dedicated or approved for future dedication, to the City:

- Oak Grove
- 1301 Powhatten St.
- ATA – Mill Road
- Eisenhower East Parks and Public Squares

Voluntary Conservation and Public Access Easements

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Open Space preserved under voluntary conservation easements:

- 1900 Russell Road
- 403 West Masonic View
- 3401 Russell Road

Development Site Open Space:

Open space preserved on nine approved development sites.

Open Space Master Plan Achievements



- Ongoing Partnerships in Open Space Preservation: NVCT and the Office of Historic Alexandria.
- Ongoing Community Outreach: Civic, Association Meetings, RP&CA program information, educational events, etc.

Revised List of Valuable Open Space Protection Sites

- Sites no longer prioritized, and all considered “valuable open space” with a goal to be preserved.
- Valuable open space to be preserved through voluntary mechanisms: acquisition, right of first refusal, conservation easements, public access easements, or other means.

Revised List of 2005 Pocket Park Sites



- Property owner outreach concluding with removal of all uninterested parties from the 2005 list.
- Review and ranking of two additional proposed properties.
- Revised list of properties to be voluntarily considered, one property for immediate consideration.

Revised Potential Voluntary Conservation Easements

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- Property owner outreach concluding with removal on all uninterested parties from the 2005 list.
- New list created with all interested property owners to be contacted by NVCT.
- Increased efforts to build interest in voluntary conservation easements.

Recommendation of the Future OSSC Structure

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- New group would be appointed by the City Manager and would act as an advisory body.
- Group would include representation from the current commissions and committees and two citizen representatives.