

My name is Carol James. I am a 31-year resident of Alexandria. I live two blocks from the border of the proposed Beauregard Small Area Plan. Last week, the Washington Post described this plan as: "Uneasy Street" (5/6/12) and said: "the issue comes down to a lack of trust in the city's elected officials."

Unaddressed is: Why? Here's some context: In 2004, after substantial citizen input, this body granted the Winklers redevelopment authority at Mark Center. Winklers then sold the parcel. In 2008, a monolith arose...without public notice: The "Mark Center" or "BRAC-133 building" housing the Department of Defense's Washington Headquarters Service. The building looms over Seminary Avenue at I-395. It dominates Alexandria's skyline. It casts its shadow - or "hangover" as Kerry Donley calls it - over the trust in this room, over the facts in this proposal, and over the implications of your decision today.

As the Post notes, the BSAP is "four times the size of the Pentagon." That comparison is apt. Just a hypothetical: What if DoD were to buy the BSAP parcel for what it paid per acre for the former Winkler site? The land value alone would be \$2.6 billion. DoD can be an attractive customer for hard assets. And, residential complexes for military personnel also can be an attractive business as well. Monthly housing allowances paid to military personnel run well above current BSAP rents. Today we in this room have a certain vision of a redesigned BSAP. Remember we had a similar experience with the Winklers. It is not unrealistic to envision the BSAP as a military/industrial/residential complex.

The Post's article fails to question Deputy City Manager Mark Jinks' assertion: "This is a complete pay-as-you-go plan." Accepting that statement also requires a certain ability to suspend disbelief. Why? It's pay as you go only if you get "pay."

The plan before you today fails to assess certain risks or to describe and account for certain assumptions. Mark Center took \$60 million in future taxes off Alexandria's revenue stream. That minus-\$60 million is ignored in budget analysis for the BSAP. And that \$60 million is only one of multiple negative Mark Center numbers - expenditures include infrastructure, traffic management, and fire/EMT - costs dumped onto Alexandria taxpayers - all ignored in the BSAP budget. The rationale: Why look back? Right?

Here's why: The plan before you relies on the assumption that no further property will be purchased by DoD and taken off Alexandria's tax rolls by a future BRAC round. This assumption, repeated at practically every meeting over the past three years, has yet to acknowledge announcements months ago by the Obama Administration that two, new, future rounds of BRAC are in planning.

Witness what has just happened with Mark Center. And learn from it. Alexandria is now a Ft. Belvoir annex. Just like Charlottesville.

Expansion now underway there has about doubled the number of employees and preempted land for potential future expansion to establish a buffer zone by keeping others from building on it. If it can happen at Ft. Belvoir/Charlottesville, why not Ft.

City Council Docket Item 12
May 12, 2012

Belvoir/Alexandria? What happens to the pay/go formula of the BSAP then? What are our liabilities and how will we meet them?

Defer this today. Take a longer, harder look. Go back over your assumptions. Run some tougher numbers. Truly question tax increment financing as an appropriate planning methodology. And ask: What will happen under alternative scenarios?