

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
ON THE  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL PLANNING WORK PROGRAM  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2011  
5:30 PM  
COUNCIL WORKROOM**

**AGENDA**

- I. Welcome and Comments by the Mayor Mayor William D. Euille
- II. Proposed Interdepartmental Long-Range Planning Work Program for FY2013
  - Faroll Hamer, Director,  
Planning and Zoning
  - Rich Baier, Director,  
Department of Transportation  
& Environmental Services
  - Mildrilyn Davis, Director,  
Office of Housing
  - James Spengler, Director,  
Department of Recreation,  
Parks & Cultural Activities
- III. Council Discussion

*Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the City Council Work Session may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 746-4500 (TTY/TDD 838-5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.*

WS  
10-25-11

**Jackie Henderson**

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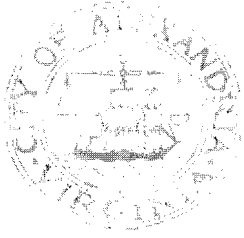
**From:** Elizabeth Jones  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:17 AM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson; Alicia Hughes; Beth Temple; William Euille; Del Pepper; Frank Fannon; John O'Neal; Judy Stack; Kerry Donley; kerry donley (work); Nancy Lavalle; Paul Smedberg; Rob Krupicka; Sharon Annear  
**Cc:** Michele Evans; Mark Jinks; Bruce Johnson; James Banks; Faroll Hamer  
**Subject:** memo from Rob  
**Attachments:** Community planning process.pdf

Rob asked me to share the attached memo with you all. It pertains to the work session on Tuesday.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth L. Jones  
Aide to Alexandria City Councilman Rob Krupicka  
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Effective Wednesday, March 16th, [krupickaaide@comcast.net](mailto:krupickaaide@comcast.net) will no longer be checked for messages on a daily basis. Please change your address book to [Elizabeth.jones@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.jones@alexandriava.gov)



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ECO-CITY  ALEXANDRIA

Rob Krupicka  
Member of Council

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#### MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 21, 2011

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

CC: Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager  
Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning  
Alexandria Planning Commission Members

FROM: Councilman Rob Krupicka

SUBJECT: Community Planning and Commercial Development

**Community Planning:** As I mentioned at the budget work session the other night, it is time for us to get our house in order with regard to how we do city planning. Each small area plan and related project over the past 10 years has followed a different process. Different ways to engage stakeholders have been used. Different expectations for what goes into a plan have been developed. Different ways to listen to the community and to analyze options have been utilized. Different consultants have been used. The lack of any clear or consistent process has been a disservice to the community. It makes things take longer and cost more. Braddock Road, Beauregard, Landmark and now the Waterfront have all required a "re-set" to modify what we were doing. As we begin discussing the planning department work-plan for the next few years, I suggest the following:

- 1) No more small area plans until we document the standard process, the "Alexandria Way" so to speak, that we will follow to engage the community, listen to and respond to different points of view and make decisions.
- 2) No more consultants leading the community process. It is clear that we will always have some type of community planning work going on. While we may need consultants for specialized knowledge from project to project, they should not be used to manage a process. We should have a team of professionals in the planning office that can be tasked with managing community planning, ensuring our process is consistent and making sure all stakeholders are included.

*"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"*

I am not comfortable moving forward with or spending money on any more small area planning projects until we get this fixed.

**Commercial Development:** Alexandria's commercial base is at risk right now. If we don't respond, we'll be setting a course for higher taxes and lower services for residents. There is a waterfront commercial building, the Iron Workers building, which is being converted from commercial to residential. This is allowed under the current city code. We are starting to hear rumblings of other development projects in the city that would put residential development in areas that should be commercial. What we are told is that the residential market is stronger than commercial, so that is what developers want to build. The problem for us is that residential property, whether we like it or not, typically costs more dollars in city services than it pays in taxes. And commercial property pays more in taxes than it uses in services. True mixed use is not just having a few small retail shops near residential projects. True mixed use has to include commercial projects in order to provide the balance of land-use that encourages people to live near work, to get around without a car and that supports retail business viability by providing customers during work and non-work hours.

If we let the down economy erode our commercial options or if we approve too much residential without a plan to preserve options for commercial as the market improves, we are in essence cutting city services and reducing revenues available to support our schools, roads, public safety and overall quality of life. A careful balance of residential and commercial is important for the affordability of housing, the sustainability and quality of city services and much more.

Adding to these concerns, the fiscal challenges facing the federal government mean our commercial base can't rely on federal tenants. Right now, federal tenants are the primary focus of our commercial leasing efforts.

I suggest we consider the following:

1) We need to expand our economic development strategy to go beyond just federal tenants. We need a niche that will distinguish us from Tysons and Reston, that is compatible with our residential neighborhoods and that that will keep our commercial base vibrant. I'd like to ask the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) to work with the City and community to help us adjust our strategy.

2) We need to review our planning tools. As we have discussed at recent Council meetings, we need to make sure we have adequate tools to protect commercial sites from residential conversion, to encourage commercial development in the proper locations and ensure a clear set of guidelines for when the Council should say "no" to residential projects. Not every residential project is bad, but we have to be sure we are considering the larger mixed-use vision for the city in everything we do that will provide the balance we need.