

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**Joint Public Hearing Meeting
Monday, June 24, 2002 - - 6:00 p.m.
Charles Houston Center
905 Wythe Street
Alexandria, Virginia**

Present: Mayor Kerry J. Donley, Vice Mayor William C. Cleveland, Members of Council William D. Euille, Redella S. Pepper, David G. Speck and Joyce Woodson. Chair A. Melvin Miller, Vice Chair Carlyle C. Ring, Jr., Commissioners Antoine Cobb, Carter Flemming, Fletcher S. Johnston, Judith S. Seltz, Ruby Tucker and Thomas B. Jones.

Absent: Councilwoman Claire M. Eberwein and Commissioner Shirley M. Marshall.

Also Present: Mr. Sunderland, City Manager; Mr. Pessoa, City Attorney; Ms. Evans, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Jinks, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Davis, Director of Housing; Ms. Steele, Special Projects Coordinator; Public Information Officer Gordon; Ms. Smith-Page, Real Estate Assessor; Mr. McCobb, Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services; Urban Planners Farnier and McLeod; Ms. Oviatt, Director of Office on Women; Mr. Dearman, CEO, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA); Ms. Lennox, Director of Development, ARHA; and Deputy Police Chiefs Cook and Hilleary.

Recorded by: Susan K. Seagroves, Deputy City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

(It was noted that a Notice of this Special Joint Public Hearing Meeting had been previously served upon each Member of Council pursuant to a provision of the City Charter, a copy of the Notice certified by each Member of Council present being on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council.)

The Meeting was called to Order by Mayor Donley, and the Deputy City Clerk called the Roll; all Members of City Council were present except Councilwoman Eberwein. ARHA Chair Miller called the Roll; all Commissioners were present except Commissioner Marshall.

ARHA Director of Development Lennox gave the background on the selection of the proposed scattered sites. She introduced Steve Tise, the consulting architect, who made a presentation on the three sites proposed for scattered site housing in relation to the redevelopment of Samuel Madden (Downtown) Homes. The proposed sites are: 1706 Braddock Road, 423 South Reynolds Street, and South Whiting Street.

Ms. Lennox reviewed important dates scheduled through March 15, 2003, which is the low-income housing tax credit application deadline. She reported that the estimated occupation date of the first new units, contingent upon receiving all the governmental approvals, is May 2004. Ms. Lennox thanked, on behalf of ARHA, the Working Group which assisted ARHA through this process, including Mayor Donley, Councilmen Euille and Speck, City Manager Sunderland, Chair Miller, Vice Chair Ring, CEO Dearman, and Planning Commission representative Fossom.

The Mayor stressed that all these sites will require further public hearings; therefore, there will be other opportunities for citizens to testify before the City Council and the Planning Commission regarding the land use applications.

In response to Council's inquiries about the timetable, Ms. Lennox advised that all the documentation has to be to the City by September 1, in order to be heard at the November 2002 Planning Commission meeting.

2. Public Hearing on Potential Scattered Sites for the Samuel Madden Homes (Downtown) Redevelopment Project.

Site Number 1: 1706 West Braddock Road

Site Number 2: 423 South Reynolds Street

Site Number 3: 325 South Whiting Street

(A copy of the memorandum of the City Manager and ARHA CEO dated June 21, 2002, is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 2; 6/24/02, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.

A copy of the handout from the Office of Housing dated June 2002, is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 2 of Item No. 2; 6/24/02, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.

A copy of the handout from the Police Department dated June 24, 2002, is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 3 of Item No. 2; 6/24/02, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.

Correspondence received on this item is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked collectively as Exhibit No. 4 of Item No. 2; 6/24/02, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference.)

The following persons participated in the public hearing:

Ann Dorman, 2724 Kenwood Avenue, spoke in support of the Braddock Road site, as long as residents are required to work at whatever level they are capable to contribute to their housing costs;

Amy Rose, 205 Yoakum Parkway, #1806, chairman of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, reported that the committee voted unanimously to endorse the three proposed scattered sites, and that all sections of the City should share the responsibility of providing affordable housing for the poor;

Stephen Neal, 250 South Reynolds Street, a resident of Templeton Condominium, speaking on behalf of a number of area residents, raised points of concern: density and overcrowding, no infrastructure in place for children, no parking, trash and litter, and the amount of section 8 housing. He requested that City Council postpone its vote for 90 days;

Nancy Rase, 22 South Cherry Grove Avenue, Annapolis, of Homes for America, the nonprofit organization involved with the section 8 housing at Essex House, addressed the steps it has recently taken and is proposing to take in order to work with the neighbors in the area to be a better neighbor;

Dorris Taylor, 205 Yoakum Parkway, #1222, a nurse case manager who works with people who are physically and mentally compromised, explained that some residents of public housing cannot work. She addressed her concerns about moving these residents from the Berg, and of the increased crime, the lack of facilities for children and lack of infrastructure at the proposed sites;

Marcia Wilkins, 203 Yoakum Parkway, speaking on behalf of a group of concerned Watergate residents, requested a delay of 60 to 90 days to adequately explore the concerns that have been raised both tonight and at the community meeting;

Rosemary Wolfe, 309 Yoakum Parkway, #1009, property owner at Watergate at Landmark, shared her concerns about placing additional public housing in a dense area and urged Council to delay any decision until other alternative plans are looked into;

Mike Oliver, 3113 Circle Hill Road, spoke in support of the Braddock Road site and stated that this is a very good fit on this piece of property;

Susan Welch, 250 South Reynolds Street, spoke in opposition to the location of the proposed Reynolds Street housing and asked that Council delay any decisions until solutions are found for the concerns raised this evening; a copy of her statement is on file in the office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 5 of Item No. 2; 6/24/02, and is incorporated herewith as part of this record by reference;

Abed Benzina, 203 Yoakum Parkway, #1011, PTA president at Tucker Elementary School, addressed the four criteria used by ARHA to select the proposed sites and spoke in opposition;

Maggie Williams, 203 Yoakum Parkway, #1011, spoke against the Reynolds Street site and the lack of consideration for the quality-of-life issues of families in the community;

Joe Bowman, 2415 Taylor Avenue, president of North Ridge Citizens' Association, stated that the Association's executive board voted to support the proposed housing on the Braddock Road site, and he asked that they be allowed to participate in the ongoing design for that project;

Barbara Gilley, 145 Century Drive, #5101, chair of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, addressed the Commission's points of concern: (1) the number of accessible sites and mix of bedroom sizes, (2) the topography, particularly at the South Reynolds site, (3) the safety of South Reynolds Street, and (4) the lack of recreational facilities for children. Of personal concern to her was the lack of opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in the evaluation of the sites.

Ludmila A. Foster, 307 Yoakum Parkway, #1214, spoke in opposition;

Gregory J. Flemister, 414 East Glendale Avenue, Apt. 3, responded to some of the arguments that have been raised and voiced his support of the proposed sites;

Joseph S. Bennett, 5022 B Barbour Drive, Cameron Station, spoke in opposition;

James Crowley, 250 South Reynolds Street, #1509, spoke in opposition and asked that this item be tabled until the requested data is provided and analyzed;

Gwen Menefee, 3835 Duke Street, representing Friends of Public Housing Tenants, spoke in support;

Andrew Thompson, 429 Stanton Place, spoke in opposition and suggested that more time needs to be spent concerning the impacts to surrounding communities of the South Reynolds and South Whiting sites;

Mike Caison, 4827 West Braddock Road, #101, spoke in support of the project;

Ramona Hatten, 4652 Kirkpatrick Lane, spoke in support of the scattered sites;

Larry Stansbury, 6101 Edsall Road, #1503, spoke in opposition to the density of the proposed housing and for a reduction in the number of residences on the two parcels because of the lack of parking in the South Reynolds Street and South Whiting Street sites;

Joyce P. Rawlings, 327 Wesmond Drive, spoke in support of the project;

Paul Fiscella, 247 Tennessee Avenue, suggested the solution to the concerns raised tonight would be to rehabilitate Samuel Madden Homes in its current location;

Darryl Whitehead, 5 West Glebe Road, spoke in support;

Allen Lomax, 5021 Seminary Road, #730, chair of the Alexandria Economic Opportunities Commission, spoke in support of the scattered sites, and he encouraged increased dialogue among ARHA Commissioners, ARHA staff and residents of the West End to address many of the issues raised tonight, especially recreational opportunities for children on the West End;

Aaron Chang, 430 Stanton Place, spoke in opposition;

Wendy Campbell, 301 South Reynolds Street, #403, spoke in opposition;

Thomas Jones, 43 South Bragg Street, president of the Alexandria Resident Council, spoke in support of the scattered sites;

Audrey Waters, 413 Ashford Lane, spoke in opposition; and

Marian S. Clarke, 400 Madison Street, #709, spoke in support.

Mayor Donley gave a recap of the issues raised during the public hearing. He received clarification from CEO Dearman about the sufficiency of 1.5 parking spaces per unit, from City Manager Sunderland regarding the possible impacts of a number of new students at Tucker School, and from Director of Development Lennox about opportunities for the community to participate in the final design of the sites. Director Lennox concurred with Mayor Donley's suggestion that ARHA and its consultants work with a task force on a regular basis, and she anticipated establishing two, one task force for the Braddock Road site and one for South Reynolds and South Whiting sites together.

The Mayor related that City Council will take up at its Regular Meeting of Tuesday, June 25, 2002, the selection of the three properties discussed this evening, and he stated that he would be supporting these three proposed scattered sites.

Chair Miller announced that the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board of Commissioners would be convening its regular meeting at 9:30 p.m. this evening at Ladrey High-Rise, and this item will be on the docket for consideration tonight.

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