


City of Alexandria, Virginia

11-14-06

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO ADD A FOURTH BAY TO THE PROPOSED POTOMAC YARD FIRE STATION

ISSUE: Proposal to add a fourth bay to the proposed Potomac Yard Fire Station.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve the addition of the fourth bay to the proposed Potomac Yard Fire Station. Funding for the fourth bay and the "green" elements of the station would be included in the FY 2008 Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which will be presented to Council in February as part of the City Manager's Proposed Budget.

DISCUSSION: As we discussed with Council at its November 4 retreat, the planning for the Potomac Yard Fire Station and Affordable Housing Project is ongoing. The Planning Commission and City Council are expected to consider the Master Plan Amendment, CDD Amendment and Development Special Use Permit in February so that the project can proceed on schedule. The developer submitted the project site plan this week. The Planning Commission held a work session on November 9 to discuss the project and its schedule. City staff continues to work cooperatively with the developer and meets regularly with the developer's representatives to work out project details.

I believe it is in the best interest of the City to include a fourth bay in the new fire station at Potomac Yard. We need to think strategically and plan for the future growth of the City looking out ten to fifteen years. Many of our existing fire stations were designed decades ago, can barely accommodate current fire equipment, and are located on property that leaves little room for expansion. Designing and building a four bay fire station at Potomac Yard also enables us to provide space to store important fire equipment acquired for emergency and disaster response and to address future demands as they arise. It is also important to note that once the design of the fire station is finalized and the station is constructed, the fourth bay cannot be added later.

We are very sensitive to the concerns expressed by individuals and neighborhood groups about the Windsor Avenue Fire Station, including its future use and the type of fire/emergency medical service to be provided there now and in the future. Over the coming months we will be working with the citizens and responding to the issues raised at the Council public hearing.

The citizens task force appointed by Council last June recommended that Council build a four bay station. As we discussed at Council's retreat, the developer is making a substantial contribution and is not willing to pay for a fourth bay. I believe that the City should include the fourth bay in its capital budget, and that we should advise the developer to proceed with the design of a four bay fire station.

We would also include in the proposed capital budget the cost of any "green" elements as they relate to the fire station.

FISCAL IMPACT: The cost of a fourth bay and the green elements of the Fire Station would be approximately \$1 million. Funds would be included in the City Manager's FY 2008 Capital Improvement Program Budget that will be presented to City Council in February.

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Gary Mesaris, Fire Chief

Edward Mandley, General Services Director

Jeremy McPike, General Services Capital Projects Division Chief

John North, Battalion Chief

Jeffrey Farner, Planning and Zoning Division Chief