

Docket Item #9
Planning Commission Public Hearing
April 1, 2025

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of
March 4, 2025.

*** * * M I N U T E S * * ***

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

March 4, 2025 7:00 P.M.

Council Chamber

301 King Street, City Hall Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Melissa McMahon, Chair

Robert Dubé

Holly Lennihan

Jody Manor

Stephen Koenig,

Vice Chair

Vivian Ramirez

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz

Paul Stoddard

Kendra Jacobs

Christina Zechman Brown (via Zoom)

Tony LaColla

Rob Kerns

Maya Contreras

Margaret Cooper

Sam Shelby

Catherine McDonald

Ann Horowitz

Mavis Stanfield

Lanning Blaser

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

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Office of the City Attorney

Department of Planning & Zoning

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#1. CALL TO ORDER

Planning & Zoning Director Karl Moritz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All Planning Commission Members were present at the Call to Order.

#2. ELECTIONS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Department of Planning & Zoning Director Karl Moritz called for nominations for the Planning Commission Chair. Commissioner Koenig nominated Commissioner McMahon.

Commissioner Koenig commended Commissioner McMahon on her knowledge of the various ways which Planning and Zoning intersect with the quality of life for Alexandrians, her dedication to civic discourse on the issues that affect the future well-being of our city and stated that she is the most qualified among the Planning Commission to fulfill the role of Chair at this time.

By unanimous vote, the Planning Commission appointed Commissioner McMahon as Chair for a term of one year.

Chair McMahon opened the nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Brown nominated Commissioner Koenig as Vice Chair. Commissioner Brown stated that he nominated Chair McMahon for Vice Chair years ago because he believed she was the best Commissioner to serve in the role. He went on to say that Commissioner Koenig is the best qualified to serve as Vice Chair, just as he believed was the case for Chair McMahon many years ago.

By unanimous vote, the Planning Commission appointed Commissioner Koenig as Vice Chair for a term of one year.

Chair McMahon made the following announcement:

“If you wish to speak on a Docket Item and have not already signed up to do so, please fill out a Speaker Form online by following the “Sign Up to Speak” hyperlink present on the cover page of this evening’s Public Hearing Docket or in person by filling out a hardcopy speaker form, which can be found on either materials tables (located immediately outside the Chambers or at the back of the Chambers), and providing it to Ms. Jacobs, who has her hand raised.

Please note, comments from the public are limited to 3 minutes per speaker, with the exception of applicants and their representation. To make your public comment through the Zoom application, please click on the "Raise Hand" button located on the Zoom taskbar once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, in order to let staff know it is you who needs to be unmuted in order to make your public comment.

To make your public comment if you are dialing into tonight’s meeting via phone, please press *9 to execute the “Raise Hand” function once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, followed by *6 to toggle the unmute function. To make your public comment in person, please come up to either podium located at the front of the Chambers when you hear your name called upon to make your statement. Before starting your public comment, please first identify yourself by first and last name.

The City encourages and welcomes public comments from all residents on Planning Commission matters. In keeping with that principle, and with the principle of inclusiveness, this is a reminder of the shared expectation that the content and tenor of public comments always be civil and respectful. Thank you for honoring those principles. A reminder to all, including Commissioners, staff, and speakers in the Chambers to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner.”

Chair McMahon inquired as to whether there were any changes to the Docket. Ms. Jacobs announced Staff’s request to defer Item #8, Master Plan Amendment #2025-00001, amendment to add design standards for the AlexWest Small Area Plan.

Chair McMahon inquired as to whether there were Items to be removed from the Consent Calendar. Commissioner Brown removed Items #5 and 6, Commissioner Dubé removed Item #3, Commissioner Ramirez removed Item #4, and Chair McMahon removed Item #7.

All Items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

CONSENT CALENDAR

#3 Special Use Permit #2024-00089
1913 Mount Vernon Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit for a parking reduction for an outdoor garden center; zoned CL/Commercial low
Applicant: D. Jason Portlance

Discussion

Commissioner Dubé supported the application but removed it from the Consent Calendar to recommend that staff consider streamlining the review processes for small businesses.

Commissioner Brown stated he originally had concerns about the six-space parking reduction, however, after meeting with the applicant and reading the letters of support, he was in favor of the Special Use Permit (SUP) request.

Chair McMahon acknowledged that the following people completed speaker forms but declined to speak because they supported the proposal: Jay Portlance, the applicant; Dan Roth of 2503 Main Line Blvd.; Gayle Reuter of 110 S. Del Ray Ave.; Darlene Duffett of 115 W. Alexandria Ave.; Lauren Fisher of 329 Ashby St.; Pat Miller of 3301 Commonwealth Ave.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of SUP #2024-00089, subject to all conditions, code requirements, and ordinances. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Director Karl Moritz thanked Commissioner Dubé for his comments and highlighted that Staff is preparing proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance intended to streamline the approval processes for small business and plan to bring those amendments to the Planning Commission for consideration in the Fall.

- #4** Special Use Permit #2024-00091
2701 Cameron Mills Road
526 Monticello Boulevard
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit for a cemetery and lot modifications; zoned R-8/Residential
Applicant: Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, Inc.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez removed Item #4 from the Consent Calendar so that she could recuse herself due to her affiliation with the applicant.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of SUP#2024-00091. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1. Commissioner Ramirez recused herself.

- #5** Subdivision #2024-00018
29 E Reed Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide an existing lot into two lots; zoned RB/Residential
Applicant: Classic Cottages, LLC

Discussion

Commissioner Brown asked Mary Catherine Gibbs, the applicant's representative, to confirm the purpose of the Subdivision request, Ms. Gibbs stated that it is the applicant's intention to develop a two-unit semi-detached dwelling in accordance with the zoning standards.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to approve SUB#2024-00018. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

- #6** Development Site Plan Amendment #2025-00003
3830 Seminary Road
Public Hearing and consideration of a Development Site Plan for a religious building to modify the front yard setback and to construct a fence (amending SIT68-010); zoned R-20/Residential
Applicant: Beth El Hebrew Congregation

Staff gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speaker:

Elizabeth Bayer, Executive Director of Beth El Hebrew Congregation, represented the applicant and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Discussion

Commissioner Brown expressed concern about allowing drastic changes to front yards for a 6-ft fence and found that the allowable 4-ft fence height is compatible for the area. Additionally, Commissioner Brown did not find that a 6-ft fence would provide the additional security the applicant is seeking. He noted other nearby properties with 4-ft-high wrought iron fences, which he finds more appropriate for the area.

Vice Chair Koenig agreed with Commissioner Brown's concerns. He noted that the justification given for the modification seems broad and undefined, and the request seems to be an open-ended precedent that would encourage similar requests from other homeowners.

Commissioner Lennihan noted that the applicant received a Department of Defense (DOD) grant for the new fencing and asked to hear from the applicant as to why the modification is required. Ms. Bayer discussed the rise in threats to religious buildings, specifically synagogues, and stated that the goal is to deter someone with bad intentions from being able to enter the property and cause harm.

Commissioner Manor inquired if the fence would be installed on the entire perimeter and if there would be a gate. He asked about the plan for controlling access to the building once inside the gate. Ms. Bayer confirmed that there is an additional fence at the back and side of the property and broadly discussed security at the entry of the building.

Vice Chair Koenig stated that we live in a City where there's a tremendous effort to ameliorate security concerns and to foster a sense of community that provides a potential innate safety factor. While he understands and respects the applicant's desire to create a secure environment, he shares Commissioner Brown's skepticism that the proposal is not an effective deterrent.

Commissioner Dubé found that the threat to houses of worship, particularly synagogues, is concerning and the requested modification would serve as a deterrent.

Chair McMahon stated the request is a modification to the required front yard setback. In this instance, she considers if the nature of the front yard modification is substantively in conflict with its context. She explained that if the applicant were proposing to construct a building six feet from the street, it may not be appropriate for the area. However, the requested modification is to facilitate a six-ft fence that allows a view into the property and not against the sidewalk, unlike other closed six-ft fences already at homes in the area. Chair McMahon stated that given the proposed design, the location of the building and size of the property she does not share the same concerns of other Commissioners regarding incompatibility. Chair McMahon stated that she is skeptical that approving this modification will set a precedent because not all houses of worship will require a six-ft-tall fence for security and that the Commission will be able to evaluate the validity and compatibility of any future requests.

Commissioner Ramirez noted that the proposed fence provides a level of visual protection for the synagogue but does not detract from the openness of the property itself.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to deny DSP#2025-00003. The motion failed on a vote of 3-4. Chair McMahon, Commissioner Ramirez, Commissioner Lennihan, and Commissioner Dubé, voted against the motion to deny.

On a counter motion by Commissioner Ramirez, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to approve DSP#2025-00003. The motion carried on a vote of 4-3. Commissioner Manor, Commissioner Brown and Vice Chair Koenig voted against.

#7

Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00001

(A) Initiation of and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to: (1) correct technical errors and unintentional omissions in Articles II, III, IV, V, VII, and XI; (2) amend Sections 4-500 and 6-700 to increase height and FAR limits for public buildings constructed prior to January 24, 1998 in the Commercial District (CD) and King Street Retail (KR) zones; (3) amend Section 7-200 to allow fences up to 10 feet in height in required side or rear yards when a subject property immediately abuts a lot developed with a nonresidential use and to clarify that wall mounted mechanical equipment may be located in a required side or rear yard; (4) amend Section 11-400 to allow additions less than 3,000 square feet to be exempt from Site Plan requirements; (5) amend Sections 12-200 and 12-300 to clarify that a public building constructed prior to June 24, 1998 is not a nonconforming use, that such public building is a noncomplying use, and that such use may be expanded without Special Use Permit approval; and (6) to amend Article XI to make the Director of Planning & Zoning responsible for certain activities and make other clarifications. Applicant: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

Discussion

Chair McMahon explained that the Commission regularly considers practical updates to the Zoning Ordinance. She highlighted that within this Zoning Text Amendment are items that pertain to a small number of public buildings constructed prior to 1998 and are designed to facilitate the process to renovate City Hall. Chair McMahon noted that practical updates do not usually include requests related to development projects. However, the proposed amendments are appropriate for a minor amendment in this instance because staff is being proactive about administrative barriers to getting a good project, and the Zoning Ordinance does not reflect the current City Hall conditions, the future renovations and the public process that is already underway.

Vice Chair Koenig agreed with Chair McMahon's comments. He appreciated Staff's work to proactively evaluate the Zoning Ordinance and make practical updates to ensure future planning processes are more efficient.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to initiate ZTA#2025-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of ZTA#2025-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

#8 Master Plan Amendment #2025-00001

AlexWest Design Standards

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to the AlexWest Small Area Plan chapter of the Alexandria Master Plan to add design standards for the plan area.

Applicant: City of Alexandria

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to defer MPA#2025-00001 until such time as staff is prepared to bring the item forward. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

#9 Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00002

Coordinated Development District Concept Plan #2023-00003

CDD #21 Amendment

1250, 1350, 1460-1470A, 1500, 1600, 1800, 1900, 2000 N Beauregard St. 5066, 5105, 5106, 5115, 5118, 5121, 5129 Fairbanks Rd. 2618, 2623, 2627, 2641, 2638, 2648, 2658 Foster Ave. 5741

Leverett Ct. 5650 Rayburn Ave. 5501, 5600, 5711, 5900A Sanger Ave. 5055, 5143, 5165, 5173, 5183 Seminary Rd. 5443A Sheffield Ct.

(A) Initiation of and Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend Section 5-602 replacing references to the Beauregard Small Area Plan with the AlexWest Small Area Plan and (C) Public Hearing and consideration of an amendment to Coordinated Development District Concept Plan #21, including for the Adams Neighborhood, to align with the AlexWest Small Area Plan, zoned CDD #21/Coordinated Development District #21.

Applicants: City of Alexandria (Text Amendment); 1900 Beauregard Property Owner, LLC, represented by Kenneth W. Wire, Attorney; Alexandria Development Associates, LLC, represented by Kenneth W. Wire & Megan Rappolt, Attorneys; 5021 Seminary Road (VA) Owner, LLC, represented by Kenneth W. Wire & Megan Rappolt, Attorneys; Morgan Properties Management Company, LLC, represented by Matthew J. Allman, Attorney

Speakers

Ken Wire, Attorney for Applicants Monday Properties and Alexandria Development Associates, LLC, thanked Staff. He noted that the Beauregard Area Plan made sense at the time, but it didn't age well because few projects moved forward. Coordinated Development Districts (CDDs) made more sense when there were fewer owners, but one set of rules does not necessarily fit neatly with every neighborhood. He said that Upland Park has an approved CDD Concept Plan and a Townhouse Development. They support the amendments but also want to reassure investors that

the project is still viable. He asked Staff to confirm that the approved Open Space Plan for Upland Park is appropriate. Staff confirmed Mr. Wire's interpretation.

Regarding the Adams neighborhood, Mr. Wire said that the concept is a product of three years of negotiations with Staff, in advance of the AlexWest Small Area Plan. The two-acre open space next to the school was a priority for Staff. Roughly 19 percent of the site would be open space not counting the blocks.

Staff confirmed that 1900 North Beauregard would proceed as designed and would not require a modification for open space. Staff also confirmed Mr. Wire's interpretation that the Upland Park Townhouse Development would not need to provide additional open space beyond what was approved with their Development Special Use Permit (DSUP). Mr. Wire referred to the other remaining Adams Neighborhood blocks and said the applicant will need to figure them out in the future but feels that they are in a good spot now although they have a few areas to work out with Staff before City Council.

Megan Rappolt, Attorney for the Applicant CIM, the owner of Southern Towers, noted that one corner of Southern Towers is zoned for CDD #21 and that future DSUPs would include a rezoning of the entire property to CDD #21, which the plan refers to as the Crossroads neighborhood. She noted the one-acre open space and four other public open spaces shown in the Small Area Plan plus a new road network, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station, and sidewalks that will not count towards the 25 percent required open space. She said many public amenities are coming forward with Southern Towers, and she anticipates needing a modification for open space. They are largely happy with the streamlined conditions that staff worked on.

Matthew Allman, Attorney for the Applicant, Morgan Properties, noted that his applicant does not have a pending development application, so their interest is more future looking. They would like to ensure that the CDD text is sufficiently future proofed to accommodate development well into the future as market conditions change. Overall, he feels that they have worked successfully with staff and is grateful for the collaboration. The remaining area of concern is the open space and the 25 percent requirement. He anticipates that it could be difficult to implement in certain areas of their property, particularly in areas with significant public open space or roadway needs. He believes a simpler solution is to allow for public open space to be considered towards the 25 percent requirement. He referred to a letter with some suggested condition revisions. He said they are not requesting a change of the Master Plan. He noted that the applicant felt concerns about the language during the Master Plan process, but it may not have risen to the level when considering all the other items of the Small Area Plan, as codifying the language into the zoning text is also more concrete than just the recommendation of the Area Plan.

Discussion

Commissioner Brown asked if there were any changes to Attachment #3, the revised CDD #21 Zoning Table. Staff said they recommend removing the word "Town Center" and revising the phrase "Garden District" to "Garden Neighborhood" to reflect the changes of the AlexWest Small Area Plan.

Vice Chair Koenig discussed the questions Staff answered in a memorandum that was sent prior to the Public Hearing regarding open space. He noted the boundaries, parcels, and public open

space in the Adams Neighborhood. He said that the public open space locations are a product of the Small Area Plan. He said that the parks are required to be assembled from elements of the existing private parcels and that how much of a piece of property will be dedicated to the public open spaces will vary. Each development parcel has an additional and separate requirement to achieve 25 percent open space when that development comes forward as a DSUP. In that case, the 25 percent is comprised of at- or above-grade open space and all of the open space could be private.

Vice Chair Koenig noted that the language in the Small Area Plan as translated to the conditions is explicit that the 25 percent requirement on the development parcels excludes the contributions for the public open space. He asked staff whether that was typical, and Staff said that it is the same process as before and is analogous to the process for other plans in other parts of the City.

Regarding modifications for when people can't meet the 25 percent requirement, he read from the Staff report discussion. He discussed the criteria used for modification determinations and referred to the Zoning Ordinance requirements and the opportunities for judgment to allow for good design and avoid negative impacts to neighboring properties. He noted that projects may come forward with modifications and is reassured that Staff would look at the Zoning Ordinance criteria when recommending whether to approve those modifications. Staff noted that 1900 North Beauregard is a different case because they applied for completeness prior to adoption of the AlexWest Small Area Plan. When it comes forward (anticipated in April 2025) the open space calculation will vary from the 25 percent.

Chair McMahon asked about the affordable housing memorandum shared with the Commission. Staff said that the first component is a change in the calculation of residential base density in CDDs from what was shown in the tables in the Small Area Plan. Staff determined that you continue to have rights to the base density as determined by the underlying Zoning District. In the case of the Adams Neighborhood the underlying Zoning District is OC/ Office Commercial zone and therefore the neighborhood has base density. The change is to refer to the Zoning Ordinance instead of the Small Area Plan in the conditions. Staff noted the clarification in the Affordable Housing section of the Staff Report and removals of a pair of conditions.

Commissioner Brown discussed his experience with the issue of vested rights in Maryland and DC. Rights are not vested until after commencement of construction and it's not fair to change the rules after that point. In his view, when the Master Plan is very specific about priority about public open space, that is cast in stone. For the future when the Master Plan goes into effect, we still have available all the tools and considerations to decide if the applicant needs to meet the obligation or not. The decision to put 25 percent open space in is justified by the Staff's memorandum and we need to regard it as a forward-looking requirement for any property that doesn't have vested rights.

Chair McMahon stated that she fully supports the Staff's recommendations. She understands the applicant's concerns regarding modifications from the perspective of the financing process. However, she views a modification as a transparent community conversation about how an actual project meets the vision of the Small Area Plan. She believes the Commission's role is to evaluate if the design achieves what the Small Area Plan is intended to achieve and, in doing so, it may not be able to provide the amount of open space originally envisioned. The goal of the item before them tonight is to ensure implementation of the Small Area Plan that was approved through a long and sophisticated process, while also recognizing that there are technical details that must be evaluated through a transparent process.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to initiate the Zoning Text Amendment. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of ZTA #2025-0002. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of CDD #2023-0003, including the modification to CDD Condition #37, deletion of Condition #38 as defined in the staff memorandum dated March 4, acknowledge staff's commitment to work with the applicant on refinements to acknowledging the status of the communication about the Upland Park and Adams Neighborhood in advance of submission to City Council, and the modifications to the Zoning Table as recommended by staff. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Conditions and Zoning Updates:

Staff Report Affordable Housing Revision (see page 15)

Any increase in ~~residential~~ density in the Adams Neighborhood would be subject to the 10 percent affordability requirement, ~~because all of it is a net increase over what is allowed currently.~~

Amend Condition #37 and remove Condition #38:

#37. CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF

Applicants shall provide 10 percent of any development above the base residential floor area/FAR, up to the maximum floor area/FAR per section 5-600 ~~as depicted in Tables 8.4, 8.5, 8.8, 8.10, and 8.11 of the AlexWest Small Area Plan,~~ as on-site committed affordable housing, or in amount consistent with City affordable housing contribution policies, regulations, and procedures in effect at the time of DSP/DSUP submission, whichever is greater. (Housing)

#38. CONDITION DELETED BY STAFF

~~An applicant may request an exception to modify the required mandatory contribution rates described above. In no case, shall the provision of affordable housing be modified to be lower than 5% of the increase in residential development. An exception seeking a reduction may be considered on a case-by-case basis for:~~

- ~~i. For sale projects. Factors to be considered may include the size and type of the project (condominiums and single-family detached and attached residential development) and the level of the additional density requested;~~
- ~~ii. Redevelopment projects that have current income-generating uses. Factors to be considered may include the size, nature, estimated revenue and operations of the business(es); the proposed use(s); and the level of additional density requested; and~~
- ~~iii. Projects in which the developer can demonstrate, through a third-party review, that financial or market conditions have changed since the effective date of this policy in an unforeseen, unique or unknowable manner, external to the developer's control, and which would negatively impact the economies of the development and make it infeasible, if the mandatory affordable housing contribution were required to be provided in full.~~

- ~~a. Requests for an exception modifying the Affordable Housing Contribution requirement, along with a narrative explaining why such a request is justified, must be submitted no later than at the time of the Concept 2 submission. The request for exception shall not take into account ordinary or industry standard factors. The City shall select an independent expert to review the request and relevant financial documents pursuant to a scope of work established by the City, however, the applicant requesting the modification shall pay for the costs of the third party review and shall provide its proforma financials for the project (as well as other documentation deemed necessary by the consultant to support the developer's assumptions). The findings and conclusions of the third party review will be shared with City Council as part of its overall consideration of the matter. However, the findings and conclusion of the third party review shall not be binding on City Council's determination whether to grant the modification.~~

CDD #21 Zoning Table (see attachment 3)

Remove word "Town Center" and revise phrase "Garden District to "Garden Neighborhood"

#10 Other Business

Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions

Chair McMahon welcomed new Planning Commissioners Robert Dubé and Holly Lennihan.

Vice Chair Koenig provided background on the George Mason Elementary School Redevelopment project and his assignment to the George Mason Elementary School Redevelopment Advisory Team. He also provided an update on the Planning Commission's letter to the Alexandria City School Board and City Council outlining concerns regarding the community engagement process. Vice Chair Koenig asked Director Moritz for an update on creating opportunities for the Department of Planning & Zoning and Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) to collaborate early on and before issues rise to a higher level. Director Moritz said that Staff have been engaging in discussions about the process generally and how to address specific concerns that were raised in the Planning Commission's letter.

Commissioner Brown stated that at times he will have a different viewpoint on issues than other Commissioners that are based on his own experience and professional backgrounds. He wanted to assure Commissioner Dubé and Commissioner Lennihan that when there is disagreement with his viewpoint, such as the case with Docket Item #6, he does not view it as disrespect. Commissioner Brown also stated that, in his opinion, the applicant for Docket Item #6 would have benefited from being represented by counsel. He felt the application overly generalized the requests and did not discuss the security and safety concerns.

Commissioner Brown also gave an update on a concept proposal for a museum in the North Potomac Yard area that was targeted for the Monumental Sports and Entertainment complex. Commissioner Brown and Vice Chair Koenig continued the exploratory efforts that were discussed at the Planning Commission

Retreat. They held several Zoom calls with leaders in science, technology and museums. Commissioner Brown stated that the concept proposal has been well received. Funding remains a challenge, so the focus has shifted to engaging elected officials and candidates in concept of a technology center, owned and operated by one or more private corporations, that have the resources to bring it to fruition more quickly.

Chair McMahon discussed Commissioners' assignments on other advisory groups. She stated that there seems to be a shift away from the typical working or advisory group model for gathering diverse viewpoints on Small Area Plans and other planning processes. However, it is important that Commissioners have a mechanism to be engaged in large planning processes. Chair McMahon stated that she did not have a solution but thinks the Planning Commission can work with Staff on other ways to participate. Commissioners discussed the logistics for filling the current Planning Commission representative roles on other advisory or working groups and attending other meetings where a Planning Commission representative is not assigned.

Director Moritz provided an update on the farewell festivities for former Planning Commissioners Nathan "Nate" Macek and Melinda "Mindy" Lyle.

MINUTES

- #11** Consideration of the minutes from the February 4, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of February 4, 2025. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0-2. Commissioners Dubé and Lennihan abstained.

- #12 Adjournment**

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to adjourn. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.