



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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February 17, 2015

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT: 1. **Cherrydale Neighborhood Conservation Plan Update**

RECOMMENDATIONS: **Planning Commission recommends the County Board adopt the attached resolution to accept the Cherrydale Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan Update, subject to staff comments specified in the Plan with the following amendment:**

Direct staff to work with the NCAC in order to develop a uniform set of survey questions that could be used by any civic association preparing or updating a Neighborhood Conservation Plan.

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard this item at its February 9, 2015 public hearing. Katie Brown-Henry, Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development (CPHD) Neighborhood Services Division (NSD), introduced Maureen Ross, former president of the Cherrydale Citizens Association and Chair of the Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee, charged with development of the NC Plan Update. Other neighborhood representatives present included Sarah Cruley and Debbie Cook, co-editors of the Cherrydale Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan. Also present was Tim McIntosh, CPHD, Neighborhood Services Division.

Ms. Ross gave a presentation that included a brief history of Cherrydale, a timeline of development of the NC plan with details on the neighborhood survey. She also discussed a number of neighborhood walking tours that had included residents, County staff, and staff from local utilities. These walks provided details on neighborhood dissatisfaction with infrastructure issues such as the Lee Highway undergrounding, sidewalk obstructions created by utilities, lack of maintenance for trees in the neighborhood, the complexities of the Five Points intersection, and lack of practicality with siting of crosswalks. Ms. Ross said that the community loves its library and bike paths, and highlighted recent community "wins" such as working with the Virginia Department of

P.C. #26.

Transportation (VDOT) to install art in the median of Lee Highway at Monroe Street North, working with local businesses to bring life to vacant storefronts, and recent successful community events such as Discover Cherrydale Day.

Ms. Ross stated there is a desire among residents to make Cherrydale more bike friendly and for increased traffic calming in various locations. She also noted there is great interest in the creation of a farmer's market. Other neighborhood amenities that are seen as desirable are perhaps a neighborhood pub, new trees for canopy that are actually maintained by the County, a pedestrian crosswalk at the fire station stoplight, and inexpensive Cherrydale Maywood flags along the Lee Highway commercial area. There is a need for the County to support the neighborhood in discussions with VDOT over various parking and signal and sidewalk issues. Cherrydale has been a village historically, and they would like Cherrydale to be a destination for others.

Public Speakers

There were no public speakers on this item.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cole thanked Maureen Ross for her service and supported her suggestion of a standard survey for all Neighborhood Conservation (NC) plans with questions that could create a comparative data set across the County. He asked staff why there are not standard survey questions. Ms. Brown-Henry responded that staff provides a basic template that neighborhoods are allowed to personalize, and neighborhoods are allowed to share the surveys. Commissioner Cole responded that if the survey is not uniform, it precludes comparisons across the community. A unique section is important for each neighborhood and they could create such a section in addition to the standardized set of questions. He asked if such a set of across the board questions is something that NCAC could do, rather than using a template. Ms. Brown Henry responded the Cherrydale representative could take it to NCAC who could direct staff to use a standard survey for all communities.

Commissioner Ciotti thanked the neighborhood and noted her shared frustration of impassable sidewalks. She asked if the majority of obstructions are placed by VDOT. Ms. Ross responded that it is utility companies that create many of the problems. Commissioner Ciotti responded that Dominion Power is not allowed to violate the Americans with Disabilities Act and they get away with it because no one stops them. Cherrydale should feel free to reach out to the Department of Justice and Lawyers Group of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs in Washington D.C., which are both pro bono.

Commissioner Forinash asked if there has been any recent update on the status of improvements to the streetscape at the Five Points intersection. Ms. Ross said there is a plan for a sidewalk on the fire station side of Old Dominion but is unaware of other improvements or the related timelines. The last update from the County was probably supposed to happen last November but the civic associations' meeting agenda was full and they did not receive a report.

Commissioner Iacomini thanked Ms. Ross for her work and the community's work, especially as a resident of Cherrydale. She said it is a wonderful place to live, and that the plan before the

Commission reflects the neighborhood's rich history and also articulates their aspirations for the future to continue the vibrancy of the area. The focus on historic preservation by residents as noted in the proposed plan is heartening. Commissioner Iacomini commented that Cherrydale is involved with the Lee Highway Planning group. Cherrydale had been an urban village in the early 20th century and continues to retain some of that character. Clearly the updated NC plan seeks to further enhance the Lee Highway portion of the neighborhood as a village and not a blip along the road.

Commissioner Brown thanked Ms. Ross and said there is a grant for a consultant led multi-modal study from Spout Run to Lexington that will come to the Lee Highway Alliance in May and she would give the Cherrydale Plan to the consultant.

Commissioner Sockwell thanked Ms. Ross for the survey suggestions and noting that Cherrydale is in direct talks with VDOT and if there is a way to institutionalize relationships between the County and asked Ms. Brown Henry how VDOT or Dominion know about neighborhood level concerns. Mr. McIntosh responded there are monthly meetings among County staff and VDOT representatives and utility companies. The problem is that follow-up does not happen. Staff is in a constant battle to follow up with the concerns of the communities in the County. Ms. Ross responded that an important method she found is to set up a timeline and publicly post who is responsible for what and when. Commissioner Sockwell thought making timelines and issuing public information is a good idea. He also asked for an explanation of the County's new soil compaction standards for tree planting areas and inquired if it will help with tree maintenance issues highlighted by Ms. Ross. Mr. McIntosh responded the County is incorporating two years of watering instead of one into its maintenance standards and is aware more maintenance is needed for trees. There is internal work to make improvements moving forward.

Commissioner Gutshall asked if there have been discussions of a plan for a severe drought year at any point in the lifetime of the tree, especially in the first ten years of its planting. Mr. McIntosh responded he was not sure of discussions related to drought but there is a focus on trying to increase the amount of watering. It has to be incorporated into the Neighborhood Conservation Program and the County maintenance budgets.

Commissioner Gutshall asked about the shortcut crossing from the west side near the new fire station to the Cherrydale Library and why it is not possible to co-mingle a pedestrian sidewalk with the fire station ingress. Mr. McIntosh said the Department of Environmental Services (DES) would have a response.

Commissioner Ciotti asked about the artwork desired for the VDOT wall at I-66 and asked if there was an answer for not allowing work on that wall and whether the success in Crystal City with beautifying highway walls was due to the existence of the Crystal City Business Improvement District (CC BID). Ms. Ross responded the Cherrydale point person on this issues was likely overwhelmed and would continue to pursue it, although she asked for advice on how Crystal City managed to install artwork on VDOT property. Commissioner Ciotti suggested talking to the Crystal City BID for guidance.

Commissioner Siegel reassured Ms. Ross that the Planning Commission reads the neighborhood plans and it helps Planning Commission members paint a picture of the neighborhood. She stated

support for the idea of enlarging the pool of possible recommendations that other communities can use and asked what appears on the County website with respect to NC reports. Ms. Brown-Henry responded the NC plans are posted online. Commissioner Siegel asked if the survey questions could be stripped out and reviewed separately.

Commissioner Siegel stated that it would be good to know how helpful the staff responses are to the neighborhood. Ms. Ross indicated she had not seen the matrix, but staff noted it had been sent to the new (as of January, 2015) President. Ms. Ross indicated she would follow up with Mr. Todd.

Commissioner Siegel asked for clarification on school walkability and Ms. Ross responded that 51 percent of families drive their kids to school several times per week.

Commissioner Cole noted that the population of Cherrydale has grown by 200 households and asked where in Cherrydale those households have been added. Ms. Ross responded the Bromptons was responsible for most of the increase, and a few old houses were torn down and replaced with more homes.

Planning Commission Motion

Commissioner Iacomini moved the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the resolution to accept the Cherrydale Neighborhood Conservation Plan. Commissioner Gutshall seconded the motion.

Commissioner Cole sought unanimous consent that the Planning Commission recommend to the County Board that it direct staff to work with the NCAC in order to develop a uniform set of survey questions that could be used by any civic association within Arlington and that could be augmented with its own questions. There were no objections and the amendment was added to the main motion.

The Planning Commission voted 9-0 to support the main motion as amended, with Commissioners Brown, Ciotti, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall, Harner, Iacomini, Siegel, and Sockwell in support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Forinash". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Christopher Forinash
Planning Commission Chair