

## JUNE 24 COMMUNITY FACILITIES STUDY MEETING TABLE NOTES RELATED TO SITING PROCESS

**Question 1.** Could this siting framework be adapted for most or all facility siting processes?

### GROUP 2 – FACILITATED BY GREG, TANNIA, TYRA

- How do we include the community to make sure that multiple uses are considered early?
- Is there a way you can require a co-facilitation?
- How do you give due diligence to out of the box solutions?
- Phase 0 would create a list of needed facilities, and that would feed into the Phase 1 efforts.
- Where we acquire new sites, we could reverse the Phase 1 question. We would say, “Here’s a known site, so what facilities would be a good fit for this site?”
- The word “site” pre-supposes construction. Can we describe it in a way that opens up the non-building solutions? Could we emphasize the notion of program use, and the fact that most sites considered would have pre-existing programs?
- There’s clearly a need for a well-defined Phase 0, which we don’t have yet.
- It’s important to keep people from getting back into their “stove pipes”.

### GROUP 3 – FACILITATED BY LYNN, CHRISTER, SAUNDRA

- General agreement that the framework is generic enough to be suited for most siting processes;
- Specifically, it could be used both when a site exists and a suitable sought, and when a facility needs to be placed and a suitable site is sought;
- The lack of clarity due to the missing/unknown ‘phase 0’ was noted; it was explained that while the Siting Subcommittee work needs to be expedited, the Facility Subcommittee is still working on the inventory of current and future facility needs and the principles/processes for prioritizing those needs; this will sense be part of ‘phase 0’ and tie in with the proposed siting process/principles;
- It was noted that if there is a concept of a ‘primary’ facility in the siting process, then ‘phase 0’ must include the notion that, in some instances, the ‘primary’ facility may in fact involve a multi-purpose facility or co-location for a site; at the same time it was noted, one should not endeavor to ‘cram’ more usages into a site than what is reasonable;
- It was emphasized that the key to a successful siting process is the existence of a ‘master plan’, in the sense that there is a process or vehicle for long-term, coordinated planning of all facility needs;
- The facility planning for schools should be fully integrated with the planning for all other types of County facilities, instead of being handled separately by APS; the current approach does not allow for an optimal coordination and prioritization;
- This also relates to the issue of the advantages of having ONE Comprehensive Plan rather than having such a Plan simply consist of the aggregate of a multitude of plans;

- For a specific neighborhood to understand the full context of a proposed facility in their area, they must be able to appreciate the bigger picture in terms of the County's needs, so that the rationale for the proposed placement becomes clear;
- It is critical that all possible options are known and considered, before one goes too far in zeroing in on a specific site;
- Public-private partnerships are typically negotiated in secrecy, with no insight from the community; this can become a handicap when community support is sought in a siting process;
- Returning to the topic of co-location, it must be recognized that all permutations are not feasible or desirable; certain types of facilities may go well together, and others not; this may also depend on the site;
- About the proposed framework as a useful tool, it was pointed out that it consists essentially of a lot of text; increased utilization of graphics may help facilitate its correct understanding; but Facility Subcommittee member noted that, from their work, it was clear that going too far in that direction could also cause confusion;
- It was noted, apropos Fire Station #8, that for certain facilities there are overriding criteria, such as the vital importance of responding with EMS services within a four-minute limit;
- Given our space limits, it is important to consider the possibility of collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions, if a suitable site cannot be found within Arlington's borders;
- In the case of schools, it is critical not to resort to piecemeal planning, thinking just about one school at a time;
- The case of the Wilson site points to the risk of sub-optimizing by insisting on limiting the height; we must get away from this traditional thinking which results in self-imposed limitations;
- There have been instances where the impression is that 'it is a done deal' from the beginning, and then there is no process that will help achieve legitimacy;
- One must recognize that the existing use of a site will often influence what is realistic and appropriate to achieve on that site;
- The CIP is not always a reliable or sufficient tool for understanding relative priorities among a spectrum of different needs; the school planning is more one-dimensional;

#### **GROUP 4 – FACILITATED BY KATHLEEN AND KIRIT**

- For a first pass, it seemed comprehensive.
- How could this be adapted for a rush or emergency process? Is there a way to make the process more fluid and flexible?
- How can the County be nimble in acquiring property?
- Set aside pool of money for opportunistic acquisition of land
- Does the County have needs identified, and potential sites?
- What are the criteria for "potential sites?"
- Phase I: Criteria for siting is scoped. That was intent of siting committee.
- Important that siting not be made with this specific site in mind

- Do we currently have an effective mechanism for determining what projects are included in the CIP? Area jurisdictions do it differently – could we look at what is working?
- Who gets to set priorities? Who gets to choose, in a way that reflects the diverse need of our County?
- Make sure processes reflect diversity of the community – otherwise the community participation is already flawed.
- Educating the greater community about the needs is an important first step. You will never have all groups participating, but educating people about the issues is important.

## GROUP 5 – FACILITATED BY MOIRA, TOBY, AND CAROLINA

- Key Challenge of proposed siting process – in Arlington, we have to be sensitive to siting on top of something that already exists.
  - As an initial step, we need to prioritize uses of a site – what is the process for doing this?
  - Requirements for sites need to be clear – step 0 – so that you can prioritize needs.
  - County-wide challenges are hard to negotiate against challenges of specific neighborhoods or communities.
- There needs to be more community involvement in step 0. This needs to be a robust county listening process where people are able to express the needs that they have in their respective area.
- Phase 1 – needs to be better defined.
- There are so many things happening and the County has got to find more ways to communicate with communities. People have a hard time breaking through the noise and don't know what to focus on.
- Arlington needs a “citizen's guide”.
- County and School CIP's should be combined to improve transparency.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE

- I think the framework is excellent and reflects good common sense. I would strike the part shown in slide 14 - check in after Phase 3 - redundant to Phase 4.
- One problem is where a new property is added to the county pool of land. When the Quincy industrial space (5 acres) is added I imagine that \_\_\_ like the best spot for anything under consideration, so siting becomes too path-dependent.
- One strength of this process is that it acknowledges that part of these decisions is political and leaves that explicitly to CB/SB

## Question 2. What should the community's role be during Phases 1 – 4 of the siting process framework? Consider spectrum of public participation.

### GROUP 2 – FACILITATED BY GREG, TANNIA, TYRA

- The community should have a role in Phase 0. They should be involved from the outset.
- There should be similar dynamics in all four phases. All the different constituencies should be represented.
- Many steps in Phase 1 would be done by staff, but which need community involvement to be effective?
- Could Phase 0 be a master plan? We don't have a real master plan for Arlington – we have a lot of little plans. There are some elements of master plans in some of the sector plans, but those are not comprehensive.
- Two things we thought would be addressed in Phase 0 would be an institutional way of coordinating between County and Schools (and between County departments). Also, some way of having a group with community input that would have an on-going responsibility for strategic development of County and School facilities.

### GROUP 3 – FACILITATED BY LYNN, CHRISTER, SAUNDRA

- A key issue is what constitutes the relevant 'community' in each siting process; in some instances the focus may be more on a local community, whereas in other cases it may be important to involve also a broader community;
- The mix staff vs. community is always important; one must avoid the appearance of 'stacking' a group in favor of the staff perspective;
- But beyond mere numbers, the precise selection of community representatives is important and can have an impact on the outcome;
- Generally speaking, one should recognize that there is typically a distribution of roles, with the staff providing technical expertise and the community reps providing the understanding of 'the situation on the ground' and the local perspective;
- The perceived effect on the community should determine the extent of the community involvement; there will be no sense of legitimacy unless those who are genuinely affected will have a role;
- One needs to keep in mind that there is a 'cost' involved, as a large community involvement may make the process more complex and time-consuming; and it is also demanding for the community;
- It needs to be clarified/agreed what degree of influence the community reps should have on the final outcome; there is a danger of giving the impression of a greater role than what is realistic;
- Efforts have to be made to ensure that participants with the necessary expertise are involved;
- For the community involvement to be effective, one needs a very clear 'charge' and then solid communication throughout the process;
- It may often be useful to have a small core group of community reps and then broaden the group if and when necessary;

## **GROUP 4 – FACILITATED BY KATHLEEN AND KIRIT**

- Use an entire issue of the Citizen to review findings of this group. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for communication is the Citizen.
- Use PTAs and Civic Associations
- Talk to churches and Condo Boards
- ECDC, Nauck, Faith Community, BRAVO, REEP Affordable Housing
- Libraries and Community Centers
- Millennials - how to engage them
- Latino Roundtable
- When a decision is made, what about those that don't get the amenity? There is always a trade-off.
- Comment that the framework is very logical.
- Major issue is communication.

## **GROUP 5 – FACILITATED BY MOIRA, TOBY, AND CAROLINA**

- Civic engagement needs to be included in each phase of the siting process:
  - information needs to be widely available and consultation should be welcomed throughout the process
  - information resource – website needs to be more easily accessible – search functions
- Public participation spectrum – siting should lean on the side of being a collaborative process. People will decide to engage at different levels at different times
- Have an open meeting that is not guided by presentations – free-form – open forum.
- Every process should include a public forum – at the outset of the process.
- John has started going to Civic Associations to do presentations and should do more.
- How do we get county departments to communicate/coordinate?

## **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE**

- Phase 1 - 2 more like Collaborate, Phase 3 like Involve.