

Environment and Energy Conservation Commission

Draft

Summary of June 22, 2015 Meeting
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Scott Dicke, Erwin Kim, Kari Klaus, Patrick Kenney, Mike Hanna, Alex Sanders, Claire O'Dea

Members Absent: Gabriel Thoumi, Noor Khalidi, Sarah Meservey, Christine Ng

Guests: Greg Miller, John Shieded, Eric Rasmussen, Christine Smith

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Russell Schroeder (CPHD)

1. Public comment

John Shieded asked questions about what Arlington is doing in terms of climate adaptation. Staff is putting him in contact with the correct folks that are working on this.

Greg Miller is a local resident and works at Georgetown. He raised the issue of light pollution and trespass in Arlington County. He noted a DES document that agreed to adhere to International Dark Sky thresholds. Is the County still following the standards? What compliance methods are in place?

John Seymour noted that Arlington had not adopted an ordinance dealing with lighting and that it may be time, in light of community concerns, for the County to establish uniform standards in this area. He noted that the time was right for such an action as an increasing number of other jurisdictions have taken this on successfully.

Eric Rasmussen and Christine Smith attended to represent the Old Dominion Civic Association. The issue at hand is the relocation of Fire Station 8. Ms. Smith asked that the site be reviewed by the Commission. The station that is proposed involves underground fuel tanks under a four bay garage. Claire asked if an EA had already been performed or if one was in process. Scott agreed to pick this conversation up offline and to receive documents and photos offline.

2. Affordable Housing Master Plan

Russell Schroeder provided and updated and review of the proposed Affordable Housing Master Plan and Implementation Framework that the County board will be considering in July of this year.

Mr. Schroeder noted that housing has become less affordable in Arlington. Over the past 15 years Arlington has seen a dramatic loss in housing affordability in the private market. Arlington lost over half of the housing affordable to families at 60% of the area median income (AMI) since 2000. By "lost", Russell clarified that that housing is no longer affordable due to rent increases. About 10% of the loss was due to condo conversions.

At the same time the number of households with incomes below \$60,000 diminished by 10%. If this trend continues it is likely that Arlington will not have any significant supply of market affordable units (MARKs) in the not too distant future

John Seymour asked if the number of MARKs will actually hit zero. Russell noted that the trend line shows a zero baseline over time, however that isn't a sure thing. Some other buildings will be aging over this time period and could provide other MARKs that aren't in the inventory currently. This is something that can't be forecasted. This leaves committed affordable units (CAFs) as the only housing affordable to households at this income level.

Russell detailed the County's statement which guided the vision.

Affordable Housing is essential to achieving the County's Vision

- In order to be a diverse, inclusive and sustainable community we need to have housing that supports the full range of household income levels

Housing affordability is vital to the social and economic sustainability of our community.

Supports our people at all ages and stages of life, such as young families who are just starting out; seniors who wish to securely age in place; families with children who are looking for stability; and hardworking employees who deserve opportunity and choices.

Improves our neighborhoods by promoting stability; maintaining diversity; assuring the quality of the built environment through investments in new buildings and renovations to aging buildings; and reinforcing efficient transportation and land use policies.

Strengthens our economy by enhancing our market competitiveness; assuring employers access to workers they need for a variety of jobs; providing better access for workers to homes near their jobs; attracting the best employees; and connecting business owners with a stable customer base

Details of the study were reviewed which included information on housing supply, the affordability gap, housing forecasts, and the proposed master plan. Mr. Schroeder iterated that there are housing needs for people along the income spectrum but lower-income households face the biggest affordability challenges

The Affordable Housing Master Plan will establish the County's long range policy for affordable housing.

The Master Plan is proposed as an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. This will be an important milestone in the evolution of the County's affordable housing policy. It will lay a solid foundation for the County's future and ability to achieve its vision of a diverse, inclusive and sustainable community.

Staff plans to take this item to the County Board meeting in July for adoption of this Element after broad community consultation.

Kari asked if this would impact the River House development that is being discussed. Mr. Schroeder was not able to give a definitive answer since he has not been involved in the project.

Mike Hanna asked if there is concern that this would cause stacking of density with weighted priorities for specific incentives, such as LEED. Russell noted that the framework doesn't create weighting for any of the items. The framework would be administrative guidance to staff. In no way does the plan or framework weight items.

John Seymour expressed that he was pleased to see the Civic Federation vote to endorse the plan. He is pleased to see that given the fiscal climate that the Civic Federation supports the program. John expressed support for the plan as it is.

Mike Hanna asked what information staff could provide about these targets and the associated costs to achieve the specific targets. Russell noted that there are many tools with differing County financial impacts such as County land usage or tax credits. The specific financial impact has not been detailed since there are too many variables.

Mr. Hanna also asked if there would be or if there has been economic analysis of the benefit of community diversity. Russell noted that AED and the Chamber support the plan that recognize the need for a spectrum of housing types.

Mr. Schroeder noted that if the Commission is so inclined, staff would like to have the Commission support when this is brought to the Board.

The project is in the review and comment period. Comments can be submitted to housingstudy@arlingtonva.us

John Seymour volunteered to draft the letter.

3. WRAPS Letter Review and Approval

The WRAPS letter was approved as amended and shall be sent to the County Board.

4. Ashlawn Letter Review and Approval

The Ashlawn letter was approved as amended and shall be sent to the County Board.

5. Rosslyn Sector Plan Letter Review and Approval

The Rosslyn Sector Plan letter was approved as amended and shall be sent to the County Board.

6. Work Plan Update

This item was postponed due to time constraints. The Commission agreed to take the item up at a future date once new members were on board.

7. Meeting Summary Review – May 2015

Approved as amended

8. Old/New Business

Kari noted that there have been issues with some of the Neighborhood Conservation (NCAC) projects. Kari is going to attend the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to make them aware of the E2C2's concerns. She noted that this is something that should be discussed at future meetings

Claire O. noted that the Public Spaces Master Plan is still in the initial stages.