

Advisory Council Notes

Date: August 8, 2018, 4 P.M.
Location: Main Library, Basement
101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23219



Members Present: Mr. Rodney Poole, Chair
Mr. Max Hepp-Buchanan, Vice-Chair
Ms. Cyane Crump
Ms. Latoya Gray
Mr. Bernard Harkless
Ms. Elyana Javaheri
Ms. Joyce Knight
Ms. Louise Lockett
Ms. Monica Lozano
Mr. Jer'Mykeal McCoy
Ms. Jennifer Mullen
Ms. Gray O'Dwyer
Mr. Damian Pitt
Mr. Ted Ukrop
Ms. Olivya Wilson

Members Absent: Mr. Jonathan Bibbs
Ms. Ashley Hawkins
Mr. T. Preston Lloyd
Ms. Kendra Norrell
Mr. Burt Pinnock, Vice-Chair
Ms. Meredith Weiss

Staff Present: Ms. Tasha Chambers, Justice and Sustainability Associates (JSA)
Ms. Anne Darby, Planning and Development Review (PDR)
Mr. Mark Olinger, PDR
Mr. William Palmquist, PDR
Ms. Maritza Pechin, AECOM/PDR
Ms. Marianne Pitts, PDR
Ms. Yessenia Revilla, PDR
Mr. Josh Son, PDR

3:30 PM Room opens

4:01 PM Call to Order

Mr. Poole called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Mr. Poole thanked the Advisory Council and audience for attending. He alerted the public to two opportunities for public comment. He asked for comments on the July 11, 2018 Meeting Notes.

Ms. Pitts noted that the corrections received via email have been incorporated into the notes before the Advisory Council (AC). No other corrections or edits were presented by the AC.

Director's Report

Mr. Olinger noted that the Insights Report will be finalized by 8/31/18. He stated that staff will be taking a tour of the City to explore potential focus areas. Mr. Olinger stated he will be giving AC members a similar tour on 8/21/18 and 8/22/18. Mr. Poole asked if the focus of the tour is the south side of the city. Mr. Olinger noted that it can be anywhere; but the south side is not as connected to the city, and several AC members have previously stated they did not know much about this area. Ms. Pechin noted that sign up for AC members to attend the tours will be through email.

Mr. Poole advised the AC to get comments on Insights Report to Ms. Pechin as soon as possible. Mr. Olinger noted that at Mayor's office hours, people commented on the Insights Report. Mr. Poole encouraged the public to read the Insights Report.

Public Comment #1

Susan Miller, a resident of the Fan, asked about Richmond 300's coordination with the City's Office of Sustainability.

Ms. Pechin stated she is coordinating with the Office of Sustainability and its director, Alicia Zatcoff. She stated that Ms. Zatcoff is on the Richmond 300 Technical Team, and Mr. Olinger and Ms. Pechin met with her two weeks ago. Ms. Pechin noted that there will be more coordination during working group portion of Richmond 300 and that Ms. Zatcoff will have information to share about RVA Green 2050 at the Richmond 300 open houses.

Mr. Pitt stated that he has been hired to help the city on the RVA Green 2050 project. He stated that the project is focusing on data analysis and modeling now and has not started the public engagement process yet. Mr. Pitt has contacted Ms. Pechin to make sure the information is consistent between the two plans.

Ms. Miller asked if the RVA Green 2050 will have a similar engagement process as Richmond 300. Mr. Pitt said that was his understanding from speaking with Ms. Zatcoff.

There was no additional public comment.

Engagement Effort Update:

Ms. Chambers provided an update on JSA's engagements efforts on Mr. Edwards's behalf. She noted that staffing from JSA includes Don Edwards as the principal, Sebastian Henry managing the Ambassador Program, and Tasha Chambers managing the media relations and the Youth Summit.

She noted that there are 113 ambassadors with 17 added this month. She stated that there are currently 55 ambassadors trained as educators, and there will be a training tomorrow at the East End Library.

Ms. Chambers stated that there have been 12 pop-up events conducted since July and that PDR and JSA staff attend 11 National Night Events and collected over 200 email addresses.

Ms. Chambers noted that the Richmond 300 twitter account is now active.

Ms. Chambers stated she is moving forward with the youth summit which will be a mini community consultation/open house. She noted it will be hosted by 6PIC in late September or early October.

In regard to media, Ms. Chambers noted that Richmond 300 has been in Goodmorning RVA and on NPR and Open Source RVA. She noted that she is scheduling an upcoming interview with the Cheats movement and has drafted a press release to announce open houses.

Mr. Hepp-Buchanan asked what the specific role is for the AC to play at the open houses. Ms. Pechin reviewed the draft open house design document and open house flyer with the AC.

Ms. Pitts requested that the AC members fill out the ambassador activity log when they attend events to discuss Richmond 300.

Ms. Mullen asked if the flyer is on the website, and Ms. Pechin responded yes.

Ms. Javaheri asked if there will be laptops at festivals and if we have talked to the libraries about partnering to allow citizens to use the computers to complete the online open house and survey. Ms. Pechin stated that these are good ideas, and we are partnering with and handing out flyers at libraries and schools.

Ms. Pitts stated that Ms. Revilla, PDR staff, has been leading the Spanish outreach effort.

Ms. Pechin stated that there is a Facebook event for each open house, and she can send text for AC members to use to promote the open houses.

Maps

Mr. Palmquist shared with the AC the online map booklet. He noted that it is intended to accompany the Insights Report and to allow the viewer to drill down on neighborhoods and parcels. Mr. Palmquist showed the Richmond 300 website and the 7 different groups of maps.

Mr. Olinger asked if steep slopes are included on the environmentally sensitive map, and Mr. Palmquist responded no.

Mr. Olinger asked if the layers can be turned on and off in the maps, and Mr. Palmquist responded no.

Ms. Crump complimented staff on all of the work.

Mr. Olinger mentioned that the vacant building registry only has 300 properties. For a week in February, Mr. Olinger had code enforcement inspectors note every vacant building which resulted in many more parcels. Mr. Poole asked what vacant in violation means, and Mr. Olinger said he would confirm the definition.

Mr. Poole asked if the maps are static or will be updated. Mr. Palmquist stated that they are static and will be updated every couple years. Mr. Poole asked from what date was the data generated. Mr. Palmquist stated that the base data is current with data from a couple of months ago, and if the data is from a different date, the title of the map will tell the date.

Ms. Mullen asked that if there is a map for roadway capacity. Mr. Palmquist stated that traffic engineering has something. Ms. Mullen stated that it might be interesting to show this to show that we do not need to expand roads. Ms. Pechin said that we might be able to have this during the working groups when drafting recommendations and that VDOT has a list of road diets.

Focus Area Map

Mr. Olinger introduced the focus area map. Mr. Olinger noted that the City is limited to 62.5 square miles, and we need to figure out how do we do an internal set of priorities. He noted the map shading is the existing land use. He stated that he is not anticipating land use changes as a part of the update in areas that have been recently updated including the Pulse Corridor and the VUU/Chamberlayne area. The circled areas on the map include areas with potential land use conflicts, areas that City Council members have issues including problems with B-3 zoning, areas designated at economic opportunity land use, and other areas that need further exploration.

Mr. Olinger noted that the stuff outside the lines has its own interest. He stated that these areas are mostly low density; and fundamentally, things may not change dramatically, but there are issues such as questions about corner commercial in small scale mixed use districts and increasing walkability by improving infrastructure including sidewalks and curb and gutter especially in the south side. He noted that 10% of the city's land area is industrial, and there needs to be a discussion about economic development and industrial land.

Mr. Olinger asked the AC if there are there other areas on the map we need to think about or areas that should not be circled.

Mr. Olinger stated that in the 2001 plan, the city was divided into 9 planning district, but no one uses these names. Mr. Poole asked if Mr. Olinger would see this plan dividing the City to a definite number of neighborhoods. Mr. Olinger said there are 100+ civic associations and 40 neighborhood statistically areas. He said that the plan will have to break the City up some way, but he is not sure how.

Ms. Pechin stated a goal of master plan update is to limit the number of land use categories. She noted that the highlighted areas of the map are areas that a change in the land use designation should be considered. Ms. Pechin oriented the AC to the map. She noted that some of the areas are based on discussions staff has had with community members.

Mr. Poole asked if the roads can be delineated better for the purpose of the homework assignment. Ms. Pechin said you can zoom in on the online version. She noted that the AC does not need to comment on all areas, just the areas of which you know.

Mr. Pitt asked why the Devil's Triangle and Strawberry Street areas highlighted. Mr. Olinger responded that some areas that were highlighted were areas that are working well and can be replicated elsewhere in the city such as at the Boulevard site. Mr. Olinger noted that for these areas function well with very little parking and maybe can be used as an example of parking working well.

Mr. Poole asked Ms. Pechin to clarify the homework assignment. Ms. Pechin said the AC should look for areas where they think the land use should change or stay the same.

Ms. Crump noted that she is having a hard time thinking about looking at this quickly at a granular level. She noted that presenting this in this way looks like it is a fully fleshed out plans.

Mr. Olinger noted that these are focus areas and are not all changes in land use. Mr. Pitt clarified that some areas that are circled are areas that we may want to replicate in other areas of the city, and Mr. Olinger agreed.

Mr. Pitt noted that part of the confusion is the heading of the map.

Mr. Poole asked how the AC should give input on this map.

Ms. O'Dwyer asked for a simplified explanation of what changes would look like for those AC member who do not have a planning background.

Ms. Pechin asked the AC to provide input on the areas of the city that should be focus areas in the master plan.

Mr. Poole noted that it is an extremely important topic for the AC to get their arms around. He asked the AC if it would be more valuable to continue this discussion rather than move on to a discussion of the Insights Report.

Ms. Pechin stated that one of the most important documents of the master plan is the future land use map, and it is a critically piece for each working group. She asked what areas need change over the next 20 years.

Mr. Pitt stated that certain types of areas circles such as several underdeveloped commercial corridors, small neighborhood commercial nodes, and mature commercial corridors characterize the areas; and the AC should think about what they want them to look like. He also agreed the current list of future land uses should be consolidated.

Ms. O'Dwyer asked if the AC can talk about where they do not want development to occur, such as the river front. Mr. Poole cautioned that it could be a taking. Ms. Mullen noted that what has happened in previous master plans is alternative ideas are shown that show both development and also a plan if the city has money to buy the land and develop as a park.

Ms. Crump stated that input at the community conversation should include areas where the community wants parks. Ms. Mullen noted that it is also important to include this in the discussion points rather than just labelling areas as green and noted that the mixed use development should have open space. Ms. Javaheri stated that designers sometimes only design for minimum open space requirements.

Mr. Poole asked if staff will provide the AC with a different key and categories. Mr. Pitt said that the AC should do this exercise without the key and believes it is too early in the process to be doing this.

Mr. Poole liked Mr. Pitt's suggestion to look at the circled areas for areas that should be focus areas in the Master Plan. Mr. Pitt stated that the AC should try to find a way to talk about future land use in broader categories including areas that density should be increased or decreased.

Public Comment #2:

Sarah Stumpo, a representative from AIA RVA's the government and community affairs committee, stated that members of her organization do not know about Richmond 300. She asked for a Richmond 300 representative to be on panel in September. Ms. Pechin said she went to AIA Women in Design in the past, and a representative will come to a meeting.

Cynthia Sherman said that the kid coloring area should be highlighted on the open house flyer.

Susan Miller, a resident of the Fan, asked which open house residents of the Fan should attend. Ms. Pitts noted that all open houses are the same and citizens can attend whichever is the most convenient.

There was no additional public comment.