

Advisory Council Notes

Date: February 12, 2020 4 P.M.
Location: Main Library, 101 E. Franklin St



Members Present: Mr. Rodney Poole, Chair
Mr. Max Hepp-Buchanan, Vice-Chair
Mr. Jonathan Bibbs
Ms. Mayda Colón
Ms. Cyane Crump
Ms. LaToya Gray
Mr. Bernard Harkless
Ms. Joyce Knight
Mr. T. Preston Lloyd
Ms. Louise Lockett Gordon
Ms. Monica Lozano
Mr. Jer'Mykeal McCoy
Ms. Jennifer Mullen
Ms. Gray O'Dwyer
Mr. Damian Pitt
Ms. Olivya Wilson
Mr. Ted Ukrop
Mr. Jeff Eastman on behalf of Ms. Meredith Weiss

Members Absent: Ms. Ashley Hawkins
Ms. Kendra Norrell
Mr. Burt Pinnock, Vice-Chair

Staff Present: Mr. Mark Olinger, Director for Department of Planning and Development Review (PDR)
Ms. Kimberly Chen, PDR
Ms. Anne Darby, PDR
Mr. William Palmquist, PDR
Ms. Maritza Pechin, AECOM/PDR
Ms. Marianne Pitts, PDR

4:07 PM Call to Order

Mr. Poole called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Mr. Poole thanked the Advisory Council (AC) and audience for attending. He alerted the public to two opportunities for public comment.

Director's Report

Mr. Olinger reviewed the revised AC meeting schedule with the AC. He announced the next Greater Scott's Addition public meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2020

from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M. at Diversity Richmond, 1407 Sherwood Avenue and that the purpose of this meeting is to receive input on the conceptual plan.

Public Comment #1

Mr. Robert Balster, a resident of the Hermitage Road District, shared that he and members of his association have only recently heard of Richmond 300. He shared following concerns with the AC:

- The new plan calls for placing the homes on the east side of the 3800, 3900 and 4000 blocks into the Single Family Medium Density category, despite the fact that all of these homes between the Holton School and Bellevue Avenue are detached single family residences now zoned R-1. Dividing the Historic District into two residential zoning categories -- Low Density and Medium Density -- makes no sense to us. There is nothing different about these three blocks and the rest of the District that would suggest they should have a greater housing density.
- The new plan calls for placing the properties at 4211, 4213, 4215, 4217 and 4219 into the Institutional zoning category. These properties are currently designated R1. All but one of these five properties were single-family residences until they were purchased by the New Community School which obtained a special use permit to allow them to be used as part of the school. Although the Association supports this special use of these properties, we can still envision the day when the school may outgrow its presence in these homes and move to a larger facility. In this case, we would strongly prefer to see these homes returned to single family low density residential use. Thus, we would urge you to retain the residential zoning designation rather than changing the designation to Institutional, which is intended for “major institutional presences in the city.” The school could continue to utilize these properties under a special use provision. The Richmond 300 plan would seem to immortalize institutional uses for these properties in the Historic District. Their eventual return of these properties to residential use will help address the housing shortage.

Mr. Brian White, the president of the Shockoe Partnership, stated that he was disappointed that Shockoe was not included as a part of Downtown in the Nodes map.

Mr. Mark Chang, a resident of Shockoe Bottom who attended the last Advisory Council meeting, shared that he informed his leasing company of the Shockoe Small Area Plan. He recommended that the City share information about the Shockoe Small Area Plan with other property management companies so more residents can become informed.

Presentations & Discussion

Nodes Update and Big Moves Discussion

Mr. Olinger provided an update to the Nodes Concept and Map. He discussed the changes from previous versions noting that the Activity Centers will now be called Nodes and that some of the Nodes are designated Primary Growth Nodes. Mr. Olinger stated the purpose of the Nodes are to examine areas that need focused attention over the next 20 years. He noted that some work may be completed sooner.

Ms. Crump expressed concerns about Arts District being noted as part of the Downtown Primary Growth Node and Monroe Ward not being included in the Primary Growth Node. She stated that calling the Art's District, which has limited vacant land, a Primary Growth Node will encourage demolition of historic structures. Mr. Olinger noted that there are many vacant storefronts and upper stories in the Arts District, and the intent of the Primary Growth Node is not to encourage demolition of historic structures. Ms. Crump stated that new incentives for leasing up vacant storefronts should be explored especially since the City's tax abatement tool has been modified.

Mr. Poole asked how the plan addresses Stony Point Fashion Park which is an existing struggling mall. Mr. Olinger stated the plan designated Stony Point Fashion Park as a Primary Growth Node.

Mr. Olinger shared the Big Moves of Richmond 300 with the AC. These Big Moves are five items that the city would like to advance over the next 5-10 years as we seek to reach the city-wide vision outlined in Richmond 300.

Community Consultation #3 Plan

Ms. Pechin shared the plan for Community Consultation #3 which includes Leadership Dinners organized by the Richmond 300 Engagement Team and larger public meetings. Ms. Lockett asked how the invite list was established for the Leadership Dinners. Ms. Pechin responded that the Engagement Team generated the invite list. Ms. Pechin asked the AC to share names of individuals to invite who typically do not come to meetings about planning.

Economic Development Plan Workshop

TIP Strategies, the consultant hired by the Dept. of Economic Development to create an Economic Development Strategic Plan for the City as required by Council Ordinance 2016-090, led a discussion with the AC, the Economic Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group, and members of the public. The Workshop included:

- TIP Strategies Research Findings (Qualitative and Quantitative, benchmarks),
- Discussion of Themes (competitiveness, inclusivity, organizational capacity)
- Preliminary Strategies (TIFs, Public-Private Partnership, Minority Business Enterprises, Corporate expansion/recruitment, innovation, workforce and education)
- Key Project Sites (Greater Scott's Addition, South Side Plaza, Navy Hill, Stony Point Fashion Park, Manchester, Industrial sites near the port)

Public Comment #2

No public comment was provided

Adjournment

Mr. Poole adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.