

Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2019

Present: Jacob Chesnut, Ric Gordon, Michael Lee, Marc Siegel, Lola Skolnik, Betty Sonneveldt, and Kristen Weaver.

City Council: Emmett Jordan, Mayor (PRAB Liaison) – ABSENT

Staff: Greg Varda, Assistant Director of Recreation; Molly Porter, City Planner

Guests: Matthew Tedesco, Principal, McNamee Hosea; Matthew Leakan, Principal, Rodger’s Consulting; Marc “Kap” Kapastin, Director of Government and Community Relations, Quantum; Arsalan Siddiqui, Chair, Greenbelt Youth Advisory Committee

Excused: Les Whitmer

Absent: Stephane Eding

The meeting was called to order by Jake Chestnut at 7:32 pm. Introductions of all in attendance were made.

Representatives for the Beltway Plaza conceptual site plan (CSP) presented the redevelopment proposal.

Matthew Tedesco, Esq.

- The Beltway Plaza CSP is an iterative, phased redevelopment plan focused on preparing the mall to respond to a future market demand, based on current (downward) market trends. The focus is construction of a mixed use center, and introduces higher density residential housing through a variety of housing types with amenities.
- Mr. Tedesco states this is an urban project that does not lend itself to ballfields, but open recreational space areas are included.

Matthew Leakan, Rodgers Consulting, Architect

- Mr. Leakan provided architectural maps and handouts, including: 1.) The Beltway Plaza DRAFT Master Development Plan’s Land Plan, 2.) site plans for other urban lifestyle development projects primarily located within the D.C. metropolitan statistical area (e.g., Bethesda Row, Fairfax Corner, Kentlands, Pike and Rose, White Flint Mall Redevelopment), 3. A “Mixed-Use Center Visioning” handout with examples of the envisioned types of housing and residential amenities.
- Mr. Leakan discussed current land use patterns in the region, and stated land-use retail is experiencing volatility: online retail is sapping energy out of regional malls. Mr. Leakan stated housing near a metro site provides a tremendous business opportunity. The

Beltway Plaza CSP redevelop plan is working with aging infrastructure that's served its useful life:

- The focus is on phased development: not a total tear down. Beltway Plaza is a quadruple frontage lot: with development divided according to priorities. The proposal incorporates a smart growth plan.
 - Considers diversification in housing: renters, buyers, age-assisted, et cetera.
 - There will be mixed use: will require (current) anchor stores, but also envisions destination stores, grocery, and pad use retail (e.g., coffee, burger)
 - The primary allure is distance to Metro and "qualitative attributes."
- Mr. Leakan provided an overview of the Gathering/Plaza Areas within the site plan that, when combined, cover approximately 3.3 acres. He compared the Beltway Plaza proposal with other regional development projects and stated these other projects provide vibrant, quirky, nightlife, but include quiet residential areas.
 - Mr. Leakan provided additional detail on the Beltway Plaza's Breezewood district proposal.
 - The focus is an Art Deco vernacular, but the final architecture unknown.
 - The developers recognize need for sideways and vehicular connections, including bike lanes to leverage location (e.g., go to metro, not all residents will own cars).
 - There are "Slivers of open space." These are intentionally distributed to comply with environmental site design: requirement is to decentralize, and is a qualitative aspect of the proposal. These will filter water, and includes trees and landscaping. Example: a half-acre open space, instead of residential yards, there is an acre on a steep slope that will require creative site design, and the plan has also allocated space (1/3 acre) that may include a dog park.

PRAB Questions & Responses:

- **Question:** Are you tearing down trees in the Indian Creek district? **Response:** the area is not part of this application.
- **Q:** Is the old garage coming down and if not, why? **R:** Structure parking is expensive. If this was a greenfield and needed to construct parking, need TIFs, pilots. The existing infrastructure is highly useful, can be improved, but can't scrap (It costs \$12 to \$40K per parking space). An initial proposal concern we heard was the focus on town houses in the back of the development; thus, the plan now includes a multi-family unit that will wrap around the back garage to mask the back garage. May consider wrapping front garage.
- **Q:** Pathway to Greenbelt Middle School? **R:** We anticipate so. We note the path will be steep, but it is important to the community.
- **Q:** When will Phase I amenities be locked down? **R:** The Detailed Site Plan (DSP) will define the actual components. We envision a smaller retail footprint with larger amenities, which is occurring around the DMV.

- **Q:** You indicated Indoor training facility where you learn tennis, where do you play tennis? **R:** We are exploring the issue.
- **Q:** Soccer, baseball, tennis doesn't fit into an urban lifestyle. Where do people go for normal recreational activities? **R:** In D.C., the housing developers are putting in what the market wants: roof top gardens, barbeques. My guess is the residential developers we partner with will figure it out and respond to this question.
- **Q:** Want folks to move in and they will have children, the schools are currently packed. **R:** The County requires a fee of \$8 to 9K per unit. The fee is not targeted to certain schools, but the project will provide a significant amount of money to the County.
- **Q:** Can we push job opportunities for hiring Greenbelters? **R:** It could be done.
- **Q:** Will there be parking? **R:** Parking will be representative of the market place.
- **Q:** It sounds like the mall is dying, so the plan is to redevelop the mall that caters to an urban lifestyle by first building townhouses in the back, and seeing what business decide to operate at the mall. After which, there will be a decision if future builds should occur but – at the same time - the types of housing, the impacts to schools and transportation capacity; as well as a lack of formal open spaces and recreation facilities remain as unaddressed concerns. **R:** We have lived and operated in Greenbelt for decades. Greenbelt Plaza is not dying, but it is a Class B mall, and 20 percent of Class B malls no longer exist, and projections indicate another 20 percent of Class B malls will cease to exist in the near future.

Beltway Plaza CPS representatives thanked PRAB for the time to present the proposal. PRAB recommended approval of the proposal understanding that we still have reservations that would be expressed to City Council.

Memo due on proposal by January 28, 2019.

Mr. Chesnutt introduced the draft minutes from June 20, 2018 and October 17, 2018 for review and approval. The Minutes were unanimously approved with amendments.

Greg Varda, Assistant Director of Recreation, gave his report, which highlighted the following:

- City Manager reviewing approximately 60 resumes for the Director's position; no set hiring date.
- Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan: will propose the Council consider and potentially adopt at the Jan 25 meeting.
- Budget preparation: no anticipated new projects, but for new pool white coat and a new Department of Recreation Van. The movie theater was a significant capital project. Update to tennis courts will probably not occur in the next fiscal session.
- Mr. Varda asked if PRAB appreciated the packet drop off and he volunteered to continue to drop off large packets when needed.
- Buddy Attick parking lot construction may begin after Labor Day.
- Greenbelt Station Central Park dedication in June. Discussion of procedures to determine the park's actual name. Greg to contact City Manager and Planning Director.

PRAB unanimously agreed to have Mr. Chesnutt contact the City Manager to ask the City Manager to consider having the PRAB Chair participate within the interview process.

PRAB meeting schedule for 2019 – various housekeeping items.

- PRAB meeting schedule for 2019 reviewed and unanimously agreed upon.
- PRAB unanimously agreed to hold annual elections in September
- Maintaining PRAB meeting minutes is an issue: Mr. Varda proposed that Ms. Debbie Coulter begin to draft minutes beginning the next meeting.
- Discussed moving the PRAB meetings so the Mayor can attend.
- Setting the agenda: Greg can send out an agenda, items proposed for agenda go the PRAB Chair for consideration.
- Service pins to Betty 10 and Marc 35 years.

Action Items/Follow up Items

Mr. Varda responded to PRAB's questions concerning Greenbelt West. He stated there is tremendous pressure to program in Greenbelt West with little space to provide services. The city's saving grace is to work to turn Prince George's County schools into after-hours opportunities. Mr. Varda also stated discussions are also being undertaken with Board of Education to upgrade lighted field with Greenbelt maintaining.

New Business

- Topic of Social Media tabled.

Old Business

Meeting Adjourned