

Bayfront Advisory Committee
Thursday, March 17, 2011
Bayside Recreation Center – 4500 First Court Road
MINUTES

BAC members present – Kal Kassir, Scott Ayers, Jim Arnhold, Norm Carrick, Judy Connors, Gee Faison, Charlie Malbon, Stacey Patrick, Joe Bovee, Dave Redmond (Planning Commission Bayside), Brian Ballard (Little Creek / Fort Story)

STAFF present – Faith Christie – Current Planning, Phil Roehrs – Public Works, Dave Jarman – Public Works

Meeting called to order at 3:30pm by Chairman, Kal Kassir. Mr. Kassir welcomed the members of the committee, guests, and staff. Delegate Stolle asked the Chair if he may speak for a just a moment to the Committee regarding recent HB1692. Mr. Kassir introduced Delegate Stolle to the room. Delegate Stolle advised the Committee members that HB1692 which “allows the City of Virginia Beach to set variable speed limits on highways within its jurisdiction to be effective under conditions such as darkness, traffic conditions, atmospheric conditions, weather emergencies, and like conditions that may affect driving safety” was approved. He also talked about funding for the Lesner Bridge which was approved by the conference committee as part of the budget bill. Mr. Kassir thanked Mr. Stolle for his report.

Mr. Kassir then reported that he and Mr. Bovee met with City staff to discuss the process for neighborhood signs and encroachments along the corridor. He also stated he has requested a meeting with Councilmen Jones and Wood to discuss the encroachment issues as well as the recommended improvements for pedestrian safety along the corridor.

Mr. Kassir advised the Committee that he had recently become aware of several design modifications to the proposed Lesner Bridge. He stated that the lookout on the southeast and northwest portions of the bridge had been taken out of the design to accommodate the adjacent landowners at the Pilots Association and 3556 on the Bay. Mr. Kassir felt that these modifications take away from the proposed “Signature Bridge” concept that the residents of the Bayfront were promised. The Committee members agreed with his assessment and voiced their concerns and disappointment.

Mr. Kassir then asked for everyone to review the minutes and a motion to approve. A motion was made by Charlie Malbon and seconded by Joe Bovee to accept the minutes of the February 17, 2011 meeting. Mr. Kassir asked for staff and subcommittee reports.

Faith Christie had nothing to report. Randy Wallace was absent.

Phil Roehrs, Coastal Engineer, Public Works, then proceeded with his update on the proposed dredge spoils transfer area adjacent to Marina Shores. Mr. Roehrs advised the Committee that there are two applications pending – one from the City for dredging and transfer and one from Marina Shores to expand the marina. He stated the site has always been a dredge site and that the request is to add a 70-foot bulkhead and crane pad to accommodate the barge, trucks, etc. The City is actively seeking sites around the City for dredge transfer stations. A permit has been issued for the western branch of the river (the recording studio on Virginia Beach Boulevard near Thalia). The City is still seeking sites at Linkhorn and on the eastern branch of the river.

Mr. Roehrs stated that an alternative site, the area between the Great Neck Road bridges, was explored and is not viable for the operation. He stated there are issues with the water current around the bridges and that the area is heavily travelled, and the bulkhead was not built to support the staging area for the operation. Additionally the grade is too steep for the dump trucks.

Mr. Kassir then asked Committee members for any questions. Mr. Carrick asked how this operation would affect Bay Island. Mr. Roehrs responded there is already an approved dredging permit. Citizens can make application for a “use agreement” to visit the site and offload their dredged materials. Mr. Roehrs stated dredging makes a property more valuable with respect to having deep water. Mr. Carrick then asked about the use of the site. Mr. Roehrs responded that there would be 8-10 projects a year in the watershed using the site, maybe up to 20 projects, but that was the practical limit. He stated the project is not currently funded but that they are working with the adjacent property owner.

David Jarman, CIP projects, Public Works, then updated the Committee on the Lesner Bridge Project. He stated they are working on the Coast Guard permit, and co-coordinating with Virginia Dominion Power. He stated the proposed overlooks presented had physical limitations with regard to location on the Duck In side – too close to the proposed parking garage; on the Pilots Association side there are security issues; and on the 3556 side there are quality of life issues – the residents do not want citizens looking in their pool area and homes. He stated there will be a 10-foot wide multi-use path and a lookout on the City marina side. Mr. Kassir stated he really wanted to make an issue of this. He stated the project was sold to the community that there would be a “signature bridge” replacing the Lesner Bridge. Elimination of the overlooks makes it just a deck bridge set on pilings. When everyone met on the bridge no one thought it imposed on 3556. Mr. Carrick stated he thought the City’s action was arrogant and agreed with Mr. Kassir. Mr. Malbon stated it was sold as a signature bridge. Ms. Connors stated it was a very exciting and beautiful project. Mr. Kassir stated he wanted the City to know that BAC is opposed to the design changes.

Mr. Dave Hansen, Deputy City Manager, stated that concessions needed to be made to the neighborhood, the building, that 3556 is being impacted. He stated he has been charged by City Council to move forward with the project. Mr. Kassir stated it was not the consensus of the community, just concessions to one building.

Joe Bovee, Design Subcommittee, reported we had met with Kevin Hershberger, Planning / Zoning and James Lawson, Public Works / Real Estate to discuss the sign program for the neighborhoods. We also discussed the encroachment issues along Shore Drive.

Scott Ayers, Communications Subcommittee, reported we are exploring the flag / banners idea. He also reported we will be submitting an article to Pipeline for distribution.

Charlie Malbon, Transit, Parking & Pedestrian Access Subcommittee, reported on the progress made along the Corridor with reference to the safety recommendations.

David Williams, Shore Drive Community Coalition (SDCC), reported that the SDCC is working on disaster preparedness, more involvement with the military, and members’ goals / visions for 2012 and 2020.

Mr. Kassir then opened the floor for a briefing on the proposed use permit at the former Duck In site. Mr. Tuck Bowie with Terry – Peterson homes explained that the site is approved for a multi-family project of mid-rise buildings (7-10 stories) of 158 units, as well as a two deck parking garage. The new proposal is for 114-144 units with individual garage parking. There will be a total of nine buildings, seven of which will be three stories over first level parking and two will be six stories over first level parking. Mr. Redmond commented on the village feeling of the new proposal, and Mr. Bovee complimented Mr. Bowie on the concept, however asked how close the buildings were going to be to the bridge.

Mr. Paul Schmitt requested permission to address Mr. Roehrs regarding the proposed dredge operation. Mr. Schmitt stated he represents homeowners on Bay Island. Mr. Schmitt asked several questions regarding the proposed operation on the site. Ms. Kay Wilson, Associate City Attorney, advised Mr. Schmitt that he needed to submit his list of questions directly to Mr. Roehrs. Mr. Dave Williams, SDCC, stated he would not like to see the dredge materials taken to the site. Mr. Cunningham, homeowner in the area, stated an independent study needed to be done on the proposal. Mr. Rob Lawler, Bay Island, handed out a package that addressed his concerns. Lyn Hume, Bay Island, stated that this site and the site under the bridges needed to be evaluated for safety and quality of life issues.

Mr. Dave Hansen, Deputy City Manager, stated that this site has been analyzed and determined to be the best site. The neighborhoods in the Lynnhaven River basin have the ability to participate in the Neighborhood Dredging Program wherein they work with the City on dredging their waterfront properties to regain navigable waterways. He stated 80% of a neighborhood has to agree to participate, but the end product produces clean water with sandy bottoms and navigable waterways.

There be no further business Mr. Kassir adjourned the meeting at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Christie, CZA, CBO, Planner – Virginia Beach Planning Department.