

Seminary Hill Association Board  
February 15, 2005

Meeting called to order at 7:30 by Joe Gerard.

Joe Gerard, President and Vice President  
Laura Vetter, Secretary and EHS  
Cindy Gurne, Communications Officer  
Lilian Patterson, Area 1  
Tom Kerester, Area 2  
Dick Hobson, Area 3  
Dick Hayes, Area 5  
Pat Lidy, Area 7  
Richard Dressner, Area 8  
Bruce McCarthy, At-Large  
Frank Putzu, Past President  
Mary Lewis Hix, VTS

Cindy and Mary Hix were thanked for their work on the Strategic Planning Meeting.

**No Area reports were given, due the presentation by Deputy Police Chief Blaine Corle.**

**Deputy Chief Blaine Corle-on the proposed police headquarters to be built off Duke Street on Wheeler Avenue**

Deputy Chief Blaine Corle stated that this is not related to a potential Eisenhower Connector. He distributed a drawing showing where the new facility will be built. Planning for the new facility began in 2001-02. The building will be 130,000 square feet. 6 1/2 acres of land are needed for this site. This site was selected from nine potential sites. \$16.9 million has been allocated for site acquisition, which would not be enough money to acquire a site by purchase. Another potential site was off of Seminary Road at the Winkler Center, but the developer of that site wanted the facility to be too small. The Winkler site was the number two choice. Deputy Chief Corle assured those in attendance that the location would not cause a noise increase, because officers work out in the city and are dispatched from their areas of coverage not from the police facility site. Dispatching will not happen out of the new building. This centrally located site facilitates community accessibility. Deputy Corle sees this site as offering the potential for community center type uses. The anticipated occupation date is 2010. This site offers the advantage of being convenient to other city services, such as car service and fuel. The anticipated cost is \$65 million. This site will serve as the single facility for police services, whereas currently the police department works out of 6 sites around the city. The current main facility is built on top a landfill and is falling apart and lacks the space to accommodate all its current needs. Deputy Chief Corle anticipates that the

current building will become the new site for the sheriff. There are 320 police officers for the city of Alexandria.

Joe Gerard asked about parking. According to Corle, the site will accommodate parking for approximately 80% of the people, who will use the building.

Dick Hayes asked about police and fire stations for Eisenhower Valley. Corle said there are plans for a fire station, but regarding police he described the police satellite sites.

Bill Dickinson inquired about moving other city services in this new building. Joe Gerard asked how long should this facility meet the police department's needs.

According to Corle, the Police Department plans to share this building with other city uses, despite the rumors to the contrary. According to Corle this facility should meet the city's needs until 2014.

Bill Dickinson inquired about why this building will be expensive to build. Corle explained that it requires a steel vault for guns and drugs, special equipment for hazardous bodily materials, security, etc. necessitated by police functions, unlike a standard office building. Bill Dickinson expressed concerns about the efficient use of space and the cost, raising the concern, will this be the largest city project of the decade with the exception of TC Williams High School. According to Corle, there will be no helicopter services. Tom Kerester inquired about whether the facility should be bigger and cost more. The site will include a gym, locker and shower facilities. Space will also be allotted to accommodate the Police Youth Camp and its volunteers. This site is surrounded by city property on three sides.

### **Strategic Meeting Review**

Joe Gerard described the Strategic Planning Meeting for those attending tonight's meeting, but who did not attend the Strategic Planning Meeting. His comments are reflected in the minutes from the Strategic Planning Meeting.

Joe Gerard described Richard Dressner's organization of block captains, which started with the Varsity Park parking issues.

Bill Dickinson explained that frequent communication is the key to growing the membership.

Joe Gerard stated that the monthly board meetings will be called simply "monthly meetings" to encourage members to attend.

Bill Dickinson described the CERT program and its compatibility with developing a block captain program. Joe Gerard described the local neighbors work with INOVA Alexandria Hospital for community building, as well. Joe Gerard wants SHA to notify the community SHA members' involvement with these community programs.

The issue of the use of SHA funds for community programs (i.e. Alexandria Scholarship Fund) was raised. Frank Putzu supports such a use of SHA funds to "put that money to use for SHA." Others have expressed concern that SHA funds should be reserved for potential litigation. According to Joe Gerard, SHA funds will be used for social functions. Cindy Gurne supports use of SHA funds for community programs

Joe Gerard put forth a proposal to form a committee of Frank Putzu, Dick Hayes and a non-board member to study the issue of committing SHA funds for community issues. The motion was seconded and passed.

Frank Putzu suggested that at each monthly meeting we review our progress on the top three goals:

Membership  
Leadership  
Social Events

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian property development**

The site plan for 2nd Presbyterian has been filed. The groundwater study is currently being conducted.

### **Brief Updates**

#### **Proposed Redevelopment of the Foxchase Shopping Center**

The City Council has approved the redevelopment plan.  
Dick Hayes says that the big issue was parking.

#### **Status of the Quaker View Property**

Dick Hobson reported that the Quaker View property has been sold. He gave some background on this site. Dick Hobson reported that John Luria has sold the property and the new buyer wants to meet with representatives of SHA. Dick explained that SHA's position is for the site to be acquired by the city for open space. Dick Hobson explained that the acquisition would include a strip currently used for parking by the adjacent Apostolic Church.

#### **Status of the Fort Williams Parkway Traffic Calming Initiatives**

Cindy Gurne reported that the city has identified Fort Williams Parkway as a priority for traffic calming with a plan, which includes sidewalk extensions and speed bumps and adding bike lanes(which has since been removed from the plan). The neighbors do not want the additional sidewalks. The only element that the neighbors want from the city's proposal is the speed bumps. However, the speed bumps introduce the problem that there cannot be street parking within 20 feet of a speed bump. The objection to sidewalks are: due to the impression that no one walks on Fort Williams Parkway and that people do not want the street narrowed, because of the large size of their vehicles.

David Mowry expressed concerns about the loss of trees, if yards are encroached upon for adding sidewalks. Concerns were also expressed about a potential parking problem resulting. David Mowry and his wife expressed these concerns including precise measurements and suggested narrowing median and building the sidewalk in the current road, thereby maintaining the current yard sizes and road width. Regarding potential tree loss in the median they are small cherry trees.

John Repstock inquired about a 3-way stop sign at Colonel Ellis. Cindy Gurne explained that TE&S is opposed to adding stop signs, because they will not put stop signs at dead end streets and or place them too close to the existing stop sign at Tupelo.

Joe Gerard proposed writing a letter from SHA endorsing David Mowry's sidewalk/median proposal.

David Mowry will work with Damon Wright and Bob Coulter on a letter with his plan.

### **Varsity Park**

A meeting was held at Richard Dressner's house with Rich Baier to discuss a 6month trial period, limiting parking to 2 hours for cars without city stickers.

### **Seminary Forest**

Richard Dressner reported that Seminary Forest has been sold. It will remain an apartment complex, but with an attempt to go upscale. Safeway is closing and Magruder's will move into the shopping center nearby.

### **New Issues**

#### **Tax Assessments**

Carl Smith reported on a meeting at his house to discuss the issue of the significant increase in property tax assessments. He is concerned about the resulting property taxes from rising assessments. He explained that rising property taxes are proving to be a real windfall for the city. Smith believes that the proposed lower tax rate is insignificant and mere tokenism. Smith explained that rising property taxes far exceed inflation. This issue is related to concerns about the growing size of the city budget in relation to issues such as the new police facility. In a nutshell, by increasing revenue based on assessments, the city budget is growing out of control. The issue is that the tax rate should be lowered significantly to counter act the effect of rising assessments. Smith suggests supporting a Proposition to limit the increase in the amount of the property tax owed to a certain amount per year. Smith wants to bring in the other neighborhood associations on this issue. He does not want the city automatically raising the city budget, as opposed coming to the citizens for approval of major projects and the implementing one time assessments for big ticket projects. The impact of property tax increases on lower income people was discussed

On March 8th, the city budget will be presented to be approved the City Council in May. The plan is to build action on this issue before the budget goes before the City Council in May. Also, there was discussion to implement long term solutions, such as an amendment to the city charter limiting property tax increases to a create more predictability and balance in property taxes owed to the city.

A discussion ensued to bring other civic associations and organizations on board.

Bill Dickinson suggested that SHA move forward on this issue and share our plans with the other civic associations, but not to attempt to get the other civic associations to sign on before proceeding.

Motion for a letter from SHA to go out before March 8th to address this issue for the short and long-term property tax issues put forward and passed.

### **Seminary Road**

A letter from Jim Richardson regarding the degradation of the condition on Seminary Road around North Pickett Street was sent to SHA. Dick Hayes talked about the trash and the group homes from Wilson University toward the hospital on the North Side of the street.

An announcement was made that the leader of the group home for schizophrenics on North Howard Street will be retiring and will not be replaced. This leader lived on site.

Instead the group home will only be staffed by rotating staff. Concerns were expressed that long term concerns for the property will not be met, such as house and property maintenance.

Cindy Gurne encouraged the area representatives approve their lists.

Cindy Gurne announced ALIVE fundraiser.

Next meeting Tues March 15.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39

Respectfully submitted,

Laura F. Vetter  
Secretary