

Seminary Hill Association
Strategic Planning Meeting
January 30, 2005

Joe Gerard President
Jack Sullivan, Treasurer
Gindy Gurne, Communications Officer
Tome Kerester, Area 2
Dick Hobson, Area 3
Damon Wright, Area 4
Dick Hayes, Area 5
Pat Lidy, Area 7
Bob Coulter, Area 9
Bruce McCarthy, Director At Large
Charles Ablard, Director At Large
Mary Lewis Hix, VTS
Laura Vetter, Secretary and EHS

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM. The following items of business were discussed before proceeding to the Strategic Planning segment of the meeting.

Business Items

Reception for the New City Manager

Jack Sullivan requested a motion for SHA to contribute \$50 toward the new city manager reception, which will be held on Feb, 20th from 1-3. Motion passed.

Foxchase Shopping Center

On Tuesday the Planning Commission will meet to discuss building a new Harris Teeter grocery store at Foxchase shopping center. This plan will require tearing down the pornographic movie theater, Magruder's grocery, and other stores. Jack Sullivan is concerned, because the parking will be reduced, requiring a variance. The employee parking will go behind the shopping center. SHA is concerned that the employees will not actually park in the back. This issue will go before the city council by the end of the month. Joe Gerard explained that according to the police there have been incidents believed to be related to the pornographic movie theater. Other neighborhood associations are concerned that there will not be enough parking. Cindy Gurne had been under the assumption that the redevelopment would attract artsy type stores. Joe Gerard's motion that that SHA support the Cameron Station Association's concerns about parking passed.

Historic Property Survey

Dick Hobson raised the issue of hiring a consultant to perform Seminary Hill's historic property study. Richard Dressner had been concerned about using SHA's money for this project. Charles Ablard explained the consultant's fees would be paid out of city grant funds with the matching portion coming from SHA volunteer time. Charles Ablard will

monitor the consultant's hours to ensure that they do not exceed SHA's volunteer time. A motion passed that Charles Ablard be authorized to hire the consultant.

Strategic Planning

Mary Hix initiates the Strategic Planning session.

The goal is that we think clearly about SHA's goals.

Ground rules: all voices be heard. Mary Hix will watch the time to ensure that we keep moving forward. Mary Hix made the point that sometimes it is hard to distinguish between an idea that is outlandish and one which is visionary.

What are SHA's successes of the past 3 years:

- Thwarting the Connector
- Traffic Calming on St. Stephen's Road and Janney's Lane
- This Association is well respected and has influence
- Participation
- Controlling Alexandria Hospital Expansion
- Burke Library
- Controlling development (i.e. Second Presbyterian and Quaker View)
- Preserving Open Space (Buzzard's Gap, Battery Height's/Goodman Property and property purchase along Ivor Lane)
- Wilson University
- Partnership with INOVA Hospital for Emergency Preparedness
- Grant Partnership

Learning Experiences/Failures

- We need partners (i.e. other neighborhood Associations)
- Membership participation starts with communication to get more people involved. We need to both increase our membership and the members' participation level. How to find those members who will take on responsibility. Enlist the person for the right job.
- We need to ensure that SHA is not blind sided by issues which affect Seminary Hill.
- Some feel that SHA is a closed organization, which lacks inclusiveness. Questions have been raised about the process at SHA.
- SHA needs to communicate the value of SHA by publicly claiming our accomplishments
 - Solution: not calling our monthly meeting a "board meeting"
 - Solution: to publicize the meeting agendas in advance for all to be aware of the issues
- Our time is not always effectively managed (i.e. 2nd Presbyterian)

Assumptions for Alexandria for the next 3 years:

- The connector issue will present itself again
- More people and cars will result in more pressure on open space
- Development pressures
- Increasing property taxes and less affordable housing
- strong housing market

- TC Williams High School renovation cost overruns, which will drain funds from other city programs
- School board election
- Increase in immigrant population and the resulting impacts on housing and schools
- Pressures on the reputation of the city

Assumptions for the neighborhood served by SHA:

Positive Attributes

- Suburban vs. urban assumptions - SHA has no commercial enterprises in our boundaries SHA will maintain its suburban character.
- Impacted by urbanization
- Profit by the open space at EHS and VTS and St. Stephen's/St. Agnes School
- Maintain parks
- SHA is served by both private and public schools, which is a plus
- Proximity to jobs is a plus
- Served by public transportation
- Very little crime and quick police response
- The hospital

Areas of Concern

- Infill development
- Knock downs
- Rezoning toward higher density

Assumptions about SHA for the next 3 years:

- Change of membership and leadership of the Association and resulting challenge to replace leadership and challenge to maintain vitality and influence.
- Maintain mission to the residents
- Decision to focus on civic or political projects
- SHA will continue to exist

3 year goals for SHA:

- Raise membership to 400, because power is found in our numbers (7 votes)
- keeping the neighborhood informed (5 votes)
- Impact and monitor neighboring commercial areas (i.e. Landmark and Eisenhower) (1 vote)
- Grow and expand leadership (6 votes)
- Identify people resources on issues for SHA's battle roster (3 votes)
- Produce a historical survey of the area (3 votes)
- Long term traffic plan (4 votes)
- An open space issue active with the city(3 votes)
- Partnering with other neighborhood associations and building strategic alliances. (1 vote)
- Active participation in the Federation of Neighborhood Associations (0 votes)
- become more political (i.e. City Council report card on issues of importance to SHA) (4 votes)
- help members with city process and staff (1 vote)

-maintain institutional relationships(i.e. with EHS and VTS) (1 vote)
All present submitted four votes to prioritize each of the above issues.

One year goals:

Goal #1: Raise membership/Keep members informed

By implementing the strategies below:

- Investigate the cost of mailings
- Communicate with lapsed members
- Get area representatives more involved. Bob Coulter suggested that we review the lapsed and potential members by address at future meetings by circulating a list.
- Develop a membership development plan
- Include a return envelop in the appeal
- Newsletter
- Personal appeal
- Quarterly open/general membership meetings and link these meetings with social activities
- The agenda should go out in advance to the members
- Joe Gerard, Dick Hobson, Bob Coulter and Cindy Gurne will work on this issue.

Goal #2: Grow and expand the leadership

- Tap the SHA volunteer list
- Personal calls
- Review minutes for interested folks by issue to create a battle list
- Look at specific needs, areas and issues
- Each board member should recruit one individual
- Joe Gerard, Bob Coulter and Cindy Gurne will review the membership roster
- Prepare a membership directory

Goal #3: Become more politically active:

- invite a City Council member to attend all meetings and the annual meeting
- keep track of the voting records
- reconsider the format of annual meeting

Goal #4: Increase opportunities for social and community networking

Fort Ward picnic

-Cindy Gurne, Bob Coulter, Pat Lidy, Bruce McCarthy, and Dick Hobson will work on this

Jack Sullivan is very concerned about redevelopment of the Landmark Shopping Center.
An alert will be sent out on this issue by the Seminary Hill Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura F. Vetter
Secretary

