



Town of Vienna

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Work Session

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Monday, November 6, 2017

7:30 PM

Charles A. Robinson, Jr. Town Hall, 127
Center Street, South

Work Session

1. Regular Business

Present:

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Council Member Linda J. Colbert
Council Member Pasha M. Majdi
Council Member Douglas E. Noble
Council Member Carey J. Sienicki
Council Member Howard J. Springsteen

Council Member Tara L. Bloch participated electronically from another location.

Staff present:

Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager
Steven D. Briglia, Town Attorney
Michael Gallagher, Director of Public Works
Patrick Mulhern, Planning and Zoning, Director
Hyojung Garland, Planning and Zoning, Deputy Director
Lynne DeWilde, Public Information – Communications & Marketing Manager
Carol S. Waters, Legislative, Deputy Town Clerk

A. [17-639](#)

VDOT Discussion about I-66 Improvements

This 7:30 work session was held in the main Council Chambers of Town Hall, as usual. Mr. Payton opened the meeting, reminded the audience that it was not a public hearing for receipt of audience commentary, listed the three agenda items, and confirmed that Council Member Bloch could hear the meeting and be heard as she participated remotely.

Mayor DiRocco welcomed Susan Shaw from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to update Council on Route 66 improvement plans. Ms. Shaw introduced VDOT Team members Nancy Smith, Outreach Coordinator of the Design and Build Team, Warren Hughes, traffic engineer, and Justin McNaull, who was helping VDOT's consulting team with outreach. Ms. Shaw listed upcoming VDOT open-house-format informational meetings and advised that their comment period would be open through November 29, 2017.

Ms. Shaw reviewed the improvement project timeline, mentioned that construction start-up was getting close, and stated that VDOT anticipated having their financing in place later that week. She further reported that VDOT expected to have a final noise study completed around February or March of 2018, and that would indicate the heights of the sound walls. If possible, Ms. Shaw said, they would build the new sound walls before doing other construction but the terrain and land features along

the corridor could make that difficult. Ms. Shaw also stated that VDOT had written a 240 day time-frame into the contract for the contractor to replace the walls after their removal.

Ms. Shaw reported that there were eleven new miles of bicycle and pedestrian trails, some going off the Route 66 corridor, and eleven different bridges were being improved with expanded pedestrian facilities across Route 66, including pedestrian fences with curved-in tops. Ms. Shaw said that the bicycle trail would stay on the highway side of the sound wall in sections where residences were very close, and that those sections were slightly more than three miles in total. Ms. Shaw fielded questions posed by Council.

The VDOT Team displayed plans for the Nutley Street interchange access to and from Route 66 and express lanes, and they continued to answer questions. They spoke of their meetings with neighboring residents and how VDOT was doing traffic counts and gathering data about origins and destinations in order to get a baseline of how traffic was travelling through the neighborhoods. VDOT's expressed goal is to minimize impact to neighboring roads and make traffic flow as smoothly as possible on Route 66 during construction.

Regarding right-of-way, Ms. Shaw reported doing outreach to properties along the corridor in Vienna to establish property conditions prior to construction. She said that properties located within 100 feet of the right-of-way received letters offering to have someone come out to establish the condition of their property, so that if there was construction impact there would be a baseline. This service was offered on a purely voluntary basis, she said; it would be done only if the property owners wanted it. Ms. Shaw noted that right-of-way acquisitions were a separate issue, and VDOT's private partner was getting ready to do appraisals and interviews with property owners. Ms. Shaw said that all of that information would be reviewed and approved prior to making offers (for property to be acquired). That process would begin just after VDOT has their design approval, and it would take several months. In the Town of Vienna, Ms. Shaw reported that all properties are currently anticipated to be partial takings, not any total residential relocations.

Ms. Shaw further discussed the final noise analysis and that VDOT had a requirement for a Visual aesthetic plan for the look of the noise walls. VDOT plans to begin some early construction activities towards the end of 2017, restricted to areas which are already within their right-of-way. Ms. Shaw stated that VDOT plans to work hard to keep the public informed through their website and all other methods available to them. They want to make sure that people have advance notice for construction and lane closures.

On a separate subject, Ms. Shaw announced that tolling on Route 66 within the beltway would begin in December, and she went over the details. Discussion continued about the new tolls and the Route 66 improvement project until 8:33 p.m. The Mayor, Council, and Town Manager thanked the VDOT representatives for keeping them informed.

Recommendations: No Council action required at this time.

B. [17-631](#)

Potential Rezoning and MAC Redevelop Project at 444 Maple Avenue West. The site currently houses the Wolf Trap Hotel and Tequila Grande restaurant.

Attachments: [Wolf Trap Motel - Information for Town Council \(A0787226\) \(1\)](#)
[REV Economic Impact Form_Finance](#)

Director of Planning and Zoning Patrick Mulhern introduced Chris Bell of Hekemian & Company, Inc., the developers and managers representing the property owners, Vienna Development Associates, a single purpose LLC. The subject re-development project had not yet been formally submitted for approval. Mr. Mulhern remarked that some developers had been proactively meeting with Council, the Board of Architectural Review, and in some cases the Planning Commission to present and review their proposed MAC (Maple Avenue Commercial Zone) projects, in efforts to address any concerns that the Town might have before final submittal to Council for approval. With that, he turned the presentation over to Chris Bell, who recounted that the property was purchased in 2006 and the hotel and restaurant had been operated since then with the intent of redeveloping at the right time. Mr. Bell introduced Chip Baker with KTG, architects and planners based in Tysons, Karen White with civil engineering firm Walter Phillips, and Sara Mariska with Walsh Collucci.

Mr. Bell stated that their goal has been to do a project which fit the MAC zoning ordinance without asking for any variances, modifications or waivers, and they think this one does it. It is a mixed use project with retail on the ground floor and three floors of residential above. Mr. Bell said it was actually an assemblage of three properties and they planned to close one of the three entrances and expand the other two. Slides of the site plan were presented. On the 2.79 acre site, they proposed 160 apartments above 19,237 square feet of retail space with one level of underground parking to serve just the residential units. Residents would access that parking with key-fobs or car-fobs. Retail parking would be at-grade. Mr. Bell stated that they wanted to create a village-type architecture with high quality materials and nice amenities, and they tried to fit the Town and its scale. He commented that there had not been a new apartment project built in this Town in a long time.

The apartments would be one and two bedroom units with rents starting around \$1,400 and going up to \$3,000 per month, Mr. Bell noted. He described the layout while pointing to display boards. The surface parking lot would provide roughly 137 spaces with about 85 spaces covered under the building. The existing brick wall on the back of the site would remain as is. There would be three structures separated by plaza breakthroughs over 20 feet wide that extended to the sidewalks surrounding the buildings. Access in and out would accommodate fire trucks and other large trucks.

Businesses could have covered outdoor seating and sidewalk seating as well. An Uber drop-off area was included. There were elevators and a two story lobby which connected to the apartments above.

Architect Chip Baker spoke on "breaking the building down" in form with a variation of textures, bump-outs, awnings, and bay windows. He said it was all about creating a pedestrian experience along Maple Avenue so that it would be very walkable. He pointed out that the entrances into retail were designed to physically and aesthetically pull you through from Maple Avenue into the outdoor dining spaces and back into the parking areas. Mr. Baker reported that building materials would include a combination of brick, stone, and pre-cast, bell courses, and cornices on the roof and the parapet. Mr. Baker called it a pretty traditional design which complied with the MAC plan. He compared the style and architectural

elements to other “Main Streets” where people could enjoy window shopping on wide sidewalks with wide planting areas and outdoor dining opportunities.

The height of the structures on Maple Avenue would be 54 feet at the roof line, Mr. Baker indicated. He then explained that an extra 15% in height was allowed with the parapets. The proposed total height of 60 feet at the top of some of the architectural features fit the MAC guidelines. Mr. Mulhern said the objective was to avoid a flat, monolithic look. Council asked questions and offered feedback on parts of the design. Mr. Baker noted that the designs were conceptual, the materials shown were representative, and they were still in the first stages. When asked about public art, Mr. Baker said they would create some wall areas for murals.

Also of note, Mr. Baker said, the water table is very close up to the top on this site. However, water would be pumped out and there would be full storm water management throughout the site. The developer said it would not affect neighboring sites.

Per Mr. Baker, a full traffic impact analysis, scoped with VDOT, was completed last year for an even larger potential project on this site with three times as much retail space, and the numbers looked fine. It was reviewed that retail use creates more vehicle traffic than residential use. Also, MAC zoning, with more opportunity for residential use, would generate less traffic than C-1 zoning which limits residential use to less than 50%. It was further noted that C-1 does not require any type of pedestrian walkway. Furthermore, C-1 zoning would be by-right, meaning that the Town's governing body would have less influence than with a MAC project.

The developers addressed the power line issue. They established that one power line comes up Nutley Street on one side, crosses the street on poles and goes back down Nutley on the other side. A second power line goes all the way down Maple Avenue from end to end. The power poles at the subject site are in the Town right-of-way. Chris Bell stated that they had been looking at this issue for a year and a half, they had a consultant working on it with them and they had met with Dominion Electric many times. The developers proposed to underground the electricity on their entire frontage, which would come all the way down to a pole on the other side of the Purple Onion (the property just to the north-east on Maple Avenue). Mr. Bell noted that it was around 500 feet and their actual frontage was around 380 feet, and that it would cost them about \$1.5 Million. He reported that they had looked at Town Staff's request to underground everything including the Nutley Street poles, but it would be financially unfeasible for them. Their best cost estimate at this time to underground all the poles, boxes, switches, conduit encased in concrete and everything at that intersection is \$3.5 to \$4 Million.

Mr. Bell answered Council questions and explained some of the technicalities which made undergrounding the Nutley Street – Maple Avenue intersection so difficult and expensive. Mr. Bell reiterated their proposal to leave the Nutley Street power line as it is.

Recommendations: No Council or Staff action required at this time.

C. [17-629](#)

Strategic Planning Process

Craig Gerhart, former accounting executive for Prince William County, attended to discuss strategic planning. Mr. Gerhart had been working with various communities to develop their strategic plans, and he spoke of the benefits of utilizing such a plan.

Addressing the Mayor and Council, Mr. Gerhart stated that a strategic Plan is an opportunity to step away from the issues of the moment, the day-to-day problems and deadlines. Mr. Gerhart spoke of looking at what is happening out there in the community and what will be happening out there if they don't do anything, what is going to be happening if they try to do some things to guide the community to a desired future, and articulating what that future looks like so that they are beginning this work with the end in mind. As he said, that is really the community benefit of the strategic plan. Mr. Gerhart suggested that next steps would be to use the desired vision of the future to identify some areas of focus, which would become the marching orders for the Town Manager and the Town Staff.

An even more important benefit that comes out of a robust strategic planning process, as stated by Mr. Gerhart, is the development of the folks inside the Town organization and giving them the tools and the clarity about what is important to the governing body and what is important to the community so that they can begin to see the relevance between what they do every day on the job and making that community needle move in the direction that Council has said they want it to move.

Mr. Gerhart reiterated that it is a powerful motivator when you can make it very clear to employees what they are supposed to accomplish, why it matters, why it is important, and then give them some opportunity to make decisions about the work that they do, and in the course of that have both the requirement and the opportunity to learn some new skills. He then detailed a Gallop survey and analysis which indicated that only 28% to 30% of employees are truly engaged in their work, i.e., emotionally and intellectually committed and really working to figure out how they can contribute to the overall success of the entire organization. Mr. Gerhart referred to the point at which an organization provides the right product and service, provides it with a sound process, adds to the customer value, and achieves sound financial results at the same time.

Mr. Gerhart went on to discuss writing goals in the visioning process (goals which define higher performance for the community), and determining ways to measure those goals. He also talked about the difference between leadership and management, saying that leaders tend to think longer term and managers tend to focus on getting to the end of the next project. He elaborated that leaders tend to look beyond the things that they can control and beyond the immediate issue of the day and try to see where they want to be long term, and to look at the relationship between all of the forces that are going on in our Town and their potential consequences.

In short, Mr. Gerhart's message was that strategic planning is all about exerting leadership; it is all about helping to define the future, helping to look for ways that we can influence what is going on in our community and in our organization in a way to make it more likely that we will achieve what we want to achieve.

Council pointed out the importance of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the survey that the Town did as part of the branding exercise. It was commented that the survey contained some powerful community perspectives. Mr. Gerhart called the branding study a real, solid base of community input into the Town's strategic planning process.

Mr. Gerhart opined that it was very important for Council to set the vision and begin that process of strategic thinking that kicks this off. At a minimum, he said, Council

should approve the goals and ultimately adopt the plan, but he encouraged Council to stay engaged much more than that. Mr. Gerhart stated that Mr. Payton is responsible for coordinating this work with Council in a way that is meaningful and useful and doesn't take too much of their time.

It was affirmed that strategic plans are not absolutely binding; goals may be adjusted and other things may be added.

The Town Manager suggested that Council have a planning session on the evening of Tuesday, January 16, 2018. The group decided to meet at the Community Center from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., and to have some food provided. One Council member suggested involving citizens. Mr. Gerhart recommended involving the community members in putting strategies and objectives together after Council, as part of their legislative responsibility, has set the goals.

Recommendations: Conduct a planning session for Council on Tuesday, January 16, 2018.

2. Meeting Adjournment

The Town Council Work Session of November 6, 2017 adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco

Signed / Dated: _____

Attest: _____
Deputy Town Clerk

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.