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**Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Wednesday, December 18, 2024**  
**7:00 p.m.**

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*This meeting was a virtual public meeting held through electronic communications means.*

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**Planning Commissioners in attendance:**

Devanshi P. Patel  
Tony Striner  
Peter Robinson  
James Lantelme  
Tenley Peterson

**Planning Commissioners absent:**

Leonardo Sarli  
Sara Steinberger  
Daniel Weir  
Denyse "Nia" Bagley  
Erik Berkey  
Karen Guevara

**Other invited LRPC members in attendance:**

Karen Serfis, Housing Commission  
Sohail Husain, Transportation Commission  
Jill Barker, Park and Recreation Commission  
Scott Barton, Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association  
Bob Braddock, Lyon Village Citizens Association  
Stuart Stein, Radnor-Fort Meyer Civic Association  
Tad Lunger, Applicant's Attorney  
(Absent: Colonial Village Civic Association)

**Staff in attendance:**

Margaret Rhodes (CPHD – Planning)  
Matt Mattauszek (CPHD – Planning)  
Kris Krider (CPHD – Urban Design)  
Brett Wallace (CPHD – Urban Design)  
Angie de la Barrera (DES – Transportation)  
Walter Gonzalez (DPR – Park Planning)

**1320 North Courthouse Road Special GLUP Study Tier I LRPC Meeting**

Chair Patel opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Patel recognized members of several other Arlington County boards and commissions and civic leaders in attendance, as well as staff members and the applicant.

Margaret Rhodes, Kris Krider and Brett Wallace presented background information, an overview of the site, a staff analysis, 3-D computer modeling and suggested discussion questions. The applicant then provided a brief presentation on the requested amendment.

Following these presentations, Commissioner Patel solicited comments and feedback from LRPC attendees.

Key comments and summary points raised during the LRPC discussion on the three main discussion topics included the following:

1. Is the applicant's request to amend the Courthouse Special District boundary in the realm of consideration, or should the applicant pursue redevelopment under the existing GLUP and zoning designations (building height up to 180')?

- There was a request for more modeling of the view of the site from the National Mall.
- What would being in the Courthouse Square district provide from a zoning perspective that the applicant does not have now?
- At what height would a building on this site appear above the Lincoln Memorial?
- There are other views from DC beyond this view.
- Several LRPC members thought that considering an amendment to the Courthouse Square boundary to include this site is in the realm of consideration.
- Was this site originally going to be a part of the Courthouse Square study area?
- One member said that extending the boundary to include this site would only be in the realm of consideration if there is a form-based code approach with real specifics like the rest of the Courthouse Sector Plan addendum. The boundary should not be amended if there is just a vague notion about what the site should be – the site needs to be planned. There should be a Tier II Review and an appropriately amended Courthouse Sector Plan addendum.
- Several members agreed with the above approach that more details/study are needed if the site is to be included in the district boundary.

2. If amending the district boundary is potentially appropriate, is it reasonable to assume that the general recommendations of the Courthouse Square addendum should be applied to this site for consistency?

- What are the maximum community benefits we could get here?
- The applicant said that if there is not enough density, they cannot redevelop the site. The applicant said that the more density accorded the site, the more that can be done for Courthouse Square. The applicant says that they want 10.0 FAR and currently have 3.8 FAR.
- Staff shared that no one site can provide the square given the high costs.
- The chair reminded everyone that this is a land use study, not a project evaluation.
- What would the physical/tangible goals for this site be?
- How is height measured here given the slope?
- Staff clarified that there are other sites that can redevelop around the square in addition to this one, not just this one as the applicant had said.

- Additional height could potentially be explored, but not without a thorough evaluation and form-based code type guidance. The sector plan addendum set a maximum height for each individual site. Height is one of the most important considerations in the Courthouse Square plan.
- There should also be urban design recommendations/goals (ex: the promenade, shared streets).
- Would we extend the promenade? What should the nature of the facades be?
- We should extend guidance for the streets from the sector plan (pedestrian access, bike access, transit access, etc.) Maybe 13<sup>th</sup> Street North or Veitch Street should also be shared streets. Pedestrian/bicycle access is important. These needs should be top of mind. We must be very careful how we address transportation needs. There is an opportunity for a lot of transportation benefits. South Courthouse is a sort of transit desert with no bus routes. Are there opportunities to extend County bus routes to South Courthouse? Increased bus routes and frequency should be prioritized, while shared streets should be prioritized.
- About half of the members agreed that the guidance of the sector plan should be extended to this block, while half agreed that this should be done only with additional planning for how this guidance could be applied to this block/additional study.

3. If the Courthouse Square guidance is applied to this site, could the District's maximum building height of 210' (previously only reserved for the Landmark Block) also be appropriate for the 1320 and 1310 N. Courthouse Rd. properties? Does the LRPC have sufficient information to provide this feedback? If not, what additional information would be needed?

- One member said that to get multimodal, tree canopy and green space benefits, we should do whatever it takes to maximize community benefits, even if it means no height limit.
- Others said that 210' might be ok, but coordination with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and additional research on the views are necessary.
- This is a backdrop to the nation's capital. We have a responsibility as citizens. Rosslyn had some very negative impacts on the skyline. This elevation is very important. There is a real skyline impact, as this is the backdrop to the Lincoln Memorial. Height has to be very carefully considered. We also have to think about what is the right backdrop, in terms of height on this site, for Courthouse Square? Do we want a huge building here?
- 210' is ok and no other information is needed. We do need to look at trip generation, pedestrian traffic generation, traffic impact, etc. for a building of this size.
- We should not establish the height based on community benefits.
- What are the community benefits? What would the amount of open space be? We can't determine the height without knowing more. I don't think we want an open-ended height. I don't want them to be able to negotiate a higher height.
- The applicant said that they do not want an arbitrary maximum height cap. They want for 210' to be ok, but then we should let the County Board decide if we should get additional height.
- When do we decide what the building height should be?
- The chair asked if people had the information they need to determine what the height should be.

- Staff indicated that the addendum sets the heights for each site in the district and that the County Board cannot modify the height for the buildings in the district. Having no height limit on a site would be a new precedent with ramifications. The square is not currently in the CIP.
- Staff said that the Courthouse Square plan acknowledges that no one project will be able to deliver the square. There are too many variable to say that a certain height would deliver a certain result.
- The height could be up to 210', but I can't imagine it over 210'. I am concerned about the discussion of community benefits. We need to work with closely with NCPC to discuss viewshed impacts.
- We do not have enough information tonight. We need more information.
- Provisionally 210' could be ok because the site is down in a hole. 210' here is not necessarily the same as 210' on the Landmark Block. I would like more information in a Tier II Review and at SPRC. We need appropriate height sensitivity to the National Mall, as this site is directly behind the Lincoln Memorial, whereas the Landmark Block was to the side of it.
- 210' is ok.

Can this go straight to an RTA/Site Plan Review Committee or do we need more information?

- Would the County do the 3-D modeling or would the applicant do the modeling?
- What is the precedent for an SGLUP Study going straight to SPRC without a Tier II Review?
- The applicant said they will not be here for a Tier II.
- Tier II is necessary because we need to decide how the block should be handled.
- I need more specific information on the building, but this can move forward.
- More members seemed to express a need for a Tier II Review than the members who suggested that this might be able to advance directly to SPRC review.

### **Public Comment**

None.

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Chair Patel adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.