

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission**  
Draft

Summary of April 27, 2015 Meeting  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Scott Dicke, Kari Klaus, Claire O’Dea, Christine Ng, Alex Sanders, Gabriel Thoumi, Noor Khalidi, Patrick Kenney, Sarah Meservey

Members Absent: Terry Whitehead, Mike Hanna

Guests: Scott Miles, Irwin Kim

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Chris Somers (DES), Jason Beske (CPHD), Rich Dooley (DES)

**1. Public comment**

The Commission welcomes Kari Klaus, a newly appointed member of the Commission. She is the CEO and Founder of [www.VivaGreenHomes.com](http://www.VivaGreenHomes.com), a MLS (home listing) website dedicated to sustainable homes including certified homes both locally and nationally such as LEED, Energy Star, Net Zero while also marketing in a unique way uncertified sustainable homes that feature green and eco building techniques and products. She is also a LEED Green Associate and EcoBroker and licensed real estate agent in Virginia.

Kari worked with several members of the Arlington Board over the past 2 years changing a zoning ordinance that pertained to accessory structures and buildings as well as an outdated noise ordinance. Her past experience also includes a cum laude BA degree from American University in International Studies with a focus on sustainable development, an Outstanding Scholar position with the EPA and a writer/volunteer with Conservation International. She lived abroad in Mexico and Spain and speaks Spanish fluently.

**2. Courthouse Square Planning**

Jason Beske and Chris Somers provided an update on the Envision Courthouse Square project. Envision Courthouse Square is a community planning effort to reimagine the County’s civic center and create a great public destination.

The goal of the process is to update the vision outlined in the 1993 Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum, which identified a state-of-the-art government center and signature public space as critical to the area’s development. The update will create a visionary plan, strategies, policies, development standards and implementation steps.

The project scope addresses:

Open Space - location and use of public open space, an integral component of the County’s government center.

Building Use – the uses of public and private buildings in the study area, including types of

public resources (if any) that would be best fit to the site.

Building Location and Design - the location, height, and density of buildings in the study area. The study will incorporate the consideration of a future ~400,000 square foot County office building(s).

Circulation and Parking - the overall pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular network, as well as connections to the surrounding neighborhood. Objectives to guide the future development of a detailed parking program will be defined with existing parking supply and demand considerations.

Cultural Resources - the treatment of cultural resources, including historic buildings, the "Memorial" and "Mother's" trees, public art, and a potential cultural facility.

Sustainability – the incorporation of building and landscape technologies, district energy, and an integrated energy master plan.

Jason noted that this should be the heart of the community and the center of the Government. The goal is to weave the spaces, open space, hard scape, and markets, and more in this area. He also noted the importance in the plan of the Metro access canopy and the connection to the square. Jason noted several circulation proposals as part of the plan. Some of these included shared streets, farmers market areas, possible stage and concert uses, and possible tree planting areas.

A symbolic government building is being proposed at the south end of the square. In order to accommodate the ~400,000 square feet of needed office space, this building would be the public face of the Government. It would include a place that residents come to pay tickets, get permits, attend Board meetings, and more.

Christine asked why the low building is located at the south side of the square and not in the main building. Jason clarified that the building was kept low to minimize the shadows. It was also land that the County owns and can use. He clarified that it was being broken out from the main building to highlight the County services and be the 'face' of the county to citizen needs.

The funding for these elements would come from current or future Boards, but that hasn't been determined yet. Scott asked if Vornado was considering the development next to Court Square West since the County didn't have development rights to it currently. Jason clarified that it is up to Vornado to decide and the Board to allocate funding.

Jason noted that the park isn't designed yet but is noted in the renderings. Comments have been collected by the community. There was feedback to create a grove of trees that would shade from the summer heat and obstruct views of the jail. The Farmer's Market is also very important for the community and has a place noted on the Plan.

Chris Somers provided an update on the Courthouse Square development sustainability elements. District energy is being envisioned for this square. An integrated energy master plan (IEMP) was undertaken to study feasibility and utility options on the square. Chris noted that if combined heat and power and district energy are applied to the site, the efficiency could

be upwards of 80%.

Christine asked how maintenance and utilities are managed and billed if private buildings were connected to a DE system. Either the County or a third party could manage the utility. It would be an issue to be resolved once it becomes an option. The goal would be to create a system that reduces operating costs and environmental impacts.

Chris talked about the solar potential of the study area. He noted that there is some potential but it won't be a huge component of the overall plan given space constraints and current pricing of renewables.

The briefing included information on the costs associated with various courses of action (COAs). Scott asked what the displayed "Net Present Values" indicated for each COA, and Somers indicated that a positive value shown represented a net cost to Arlington County to implement the COA. Scott pointed out that convention is for net costs to be displayed with negative signs in an NPV context, indicating the economic costs are larger than the economic benefits. The Commission suggested that the briefing be amended with negative signs to more clearly convey that larger numbers indicate higher cost COAs and to provide additional information on inputs to the NPV calculations to enable a proper evaluation of the COAs.

A variety of sustainability elements are under investigation and all options are on the table. The DE options are being evaluated to scope out what might be the most advantageous, in terms of technology and buildings.

Christine articulated that there was concern that the building eats up the park and plaza area. She noted that there is concern that the County had preexisting plans. Participants claimed that the community process occurred just to validate the behind the scenes county plan for the site.

Jason noted that most of the greatest parks in the world are an acre or smaller. He noted that the project was trying to create a living room space that isn't sprawling, but rather compact and usable.

Claire noted that there is a continued concern that a green park is shown here but that much of it may be eaten up by paths or paved plaza area. Jason confirmed that he heard the feedback on this and has heard it before. He will continue to provide updates as the planning process occurs at a separate time.

The Commission agreed that a letter should be drafted for approval at the June meeting. Gabriel offered to draft the letter and circulate it in advance for Commission feedback.

**3. Meeting Summary Review – March 2015**

Approved as amended.

**4. Old/New Business**

Christine asked for volunteers to track the PFRC projects. She noted that there are several

schools in process. Noor volunteered to be an alternate in the process. Christine also noted that she met with Claire and Joan Kelsch regarding the EA process. E2C2 does not consider elimination of the EA process a viable option given that there isn't any other process by which to review projects and achieve E2C2's mission in this regard. She expressed the importance of getting a handle on what updates are happening in Parks. One idea is to have someone from Parks come and speak with the Commission. She asked staff to look into a June meeting with Parks on the topic of EA process, the overall design and community process, definitions about what constitutes replacement or maintenance, and more.

Alex proposed that the Commission sign a letter that the Urban Forestry Commission is drafting to the County Board in support of the efforts of Delegate Patrick Hope to get the Commonwealth of Virginia to adopt stronger regulations on the sale and spread of invasive species in our state. A motion was made to include the Commission on the letter. It was approved unanimously.

Alex also noted that the WRAPS project has changed significantly. There was a concept plan that was put together and offered to the board approx. 6 weeks ago. Several Commissions had an issue with the plan and drafted a letter noting that there was discontentment. The Board did hear the feedback and directed staff to revise the plan. There was a letter of intent between Penzance and ACG to allow for an exchange of County space for payment of a new fire station. This was a shock to all in the process. The Commission asked staff to include WRAPS on the May agenda so a letter could be drafted for review and approval at the June meeting.

Noor noted that there was a Solid Waste subcommittee meeting in March. The big item discussed was the budget and year round solid waste collection. The rates in the budget are too high if yard waste is included, but too low if it isn't included. The rates and code would need to be amended and a vote is planned for June. Illegal dumping continues to be a concern in the County. Multifamily housing and illegal dumping are areas that were discussed as specifics where the County may need to take legal action with offenders. There was also renewed discussion around solid waste and a zero waste goal.

Patrick provided an update from the Site Plan Review Committee meeting for the Pentagon and Crystal City area. They presented a series of 4 buildings. It appears that it is a mixed use development that includes retail, office, and residential. The buildings proposed LEED Silver certification. The community expressed concern about parking decks being built above ground. There was a desire for below-grade parking to preserve open and green space. There is another meeting on May 11th regarding open space and landscaping.