

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Ballston Quarter (SP #193) SPRC Meeting #4 September 28, 2015**

**Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Steve Cole, Chris Forinash, Brian Harner, Erik Gutshall, Jane Siegel, James Schroll, Nancy Iacomini, Rosemary Ciotti, Ginger Brown**

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### **MEETING AGENDA**

This was the fourth SPRC meeting on the Ballston Quarter development proposals. The meeting began with an introduction by the SPRC Chair including an overview of the agenda for the meeting and the proposed agenda for the fifth meeting scheduled for October 12. The applicant presented updates on the following outstanding issues and comments from the community and committee members:

- Curbside Management and Streetscape;
- Lower West Plaza/Elements for Children;
- Glebe Road;
- Randolph Street Connection; and
- Residential Parking Ratio.

After presentation on outstanding issues, the committee gave comments followed by presentations and committee comment on the following topics:

- Review of the Residential Building;
- Review of the Office Building Renovation; and
- Construction Phasing.

### **SPRC COMMENTS**

#### **Applicant Response to Comments/Questions from SPRC #3 –**

- The refinements presented to the entrance for the Randolph Street connection were generally well received.
- Several clarifying questions were asked about:
  - The location of elevators shown in the Randolph Street connection;

- The temporary installations shown for interactive lighting in the west plaza and where it would be located;
- Anticipated hours that the mews will be accessible as well as the bridge, plaza and amphitheater;
- TDM being considered/discussed with the request for a .7 parking ratio for residential.
- With respect to the reduced parking ratio for residential, the civic associations, Ashton Heights, Bluemont, and Ballston Virginia Square expressed continued concern for the potential for overflow into the neighborhoods. Several SPRC members expressed support for the reduced parking ratio given the availability of the adjacent parking garage and that more parking did not need to be built. It was requested by the neighborhoods that more details be provided regarding utilization of the Ballston Common garage at various times and there be a complete parking study undertaken on the proposed parking ratio.
- It was noted that there was a greater need for a bike parking facility.
- It was generally thought that the plaza design was inviting and made sense and it would be a people pleaser. Landscaping proposed for the plaza and in particular the amphitheater style stairs was clarified by the applicant. In addition, clarifications were provided of the lower plaza grade. It was asked that there would be consideration given to allowing flexibility for the design to continue to evolve and change by site plan condition after County Board approval. It was also suggested that a string of lights be considered over the plaza as well as lights up from the lower plaza to the street. One committee member noted their doubt for the value of the second plaza. Clarifications were asked about the size of the plaza and the number of people that would be able to occupy the lower plaza.
- A request was made that the curbside management plan be provided with dimensions and cross sections on all sides of the project to better understand how space is managed from face of curb to face of curb.
- A question was asked about the standard for the walk score and the bike score data presented by the applicant.
- It was requested that the applicant consider providing a transit screen in the residential building lobby as well as somewhere in the plaza.
- A question was asked about where people get dropped off at the residential building and the adequacy of signs to direct them. It was mentioned that the handicap parking spaces would be required to be at street level at the leasing office.

### **Residential Building**

- Clarifying questions were asked about:
  - Connections between the garage, residential and mews spaces
  - Outdoor space for residents
  - Commitment to the retail space on the corner of Randolph and Wilson
  - Materials, in particular the type of glass
  - Determination of unit mix and the ability to combine units in the future

- Provisions for bike parking
- Outdoor seating capacity
- Applicant's intent to meet the County's standard for In Building Wireless
- How noise will be abated in the residential building
- The provision of on-site ADUs
- Loading operations for move-ins
- Whether or not there is a pedestrian bridge on the second floor that connects with the mall.
- Ashton Heights Civic Association reiterated their objection to the requested height of six additional stories.

### **Office Renovation Above Macy's**

- Clarifying questions were made about:
  - Macy's agreement for tenant signs for the office building
  - Use, access and design of the interior courtyard
  - Commitment to providing In Building Wireless
  - Tenants envisioned for the space given the current state of the office market
  - Whether the road of the surface parking lot was on the MTP/County-owned
  - Treatment of the entrance at grade on Wilson
- Generally there was appreciation for the improvements shown to repair and replace the stucco on Macy's but concern that more cannot be done. It was noted that Macy's provide display windows and further that there was a need for trees on the frontage to cover Macy's.
- There was comment about the lack of a cohesive aesthetic between the mall tower and office building, etc. It was requested that all four elevations of the building be shown and that additional information be provided on the proposed green wall. One member of the committee noted that the elevation fronting onto the surface parking lot seemed to be the more interesting elevation and noted that if possible, that be the elevation for Wilson Boulevard.

### **Construction Phasing**

- Clarifying questions were asked about:
  - Whether Macy's would be closed during construction
  - The time period that the bridge will be out of commission and whether or not it can be shortened
  - Timing of when the blade would be built
  - Whether the path shown through the project would be available during the entirety of the construction period
  - Clarification regarding the impact of construction on Kettler
  - Explanation of the covered walkway shown on Wilson
  - Impact on the sidewalk in front of the site of the residential building at Randolph and Wilson

- The closing of Wilson Boulevard to pedestrian traffic on the site's frontage was identified as an issue to be further discussed. Further a request was made that truck routes and the number of trucks to be used be provided noting that there was limited opportunity for community input after approval. The BID expressed that they would work closely with Forest City during construction to communicate with and to the neighborhoods and provide information on construction.
- It was asked whether the applicant considered using the parking lane for pedestrian movement during construction.
- Lighting during construction was raised as an issue.
- It was asked whether the County garage would be part of the improvements.

**NEXT STEPS**

The next SPRC Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 12, 2015. The discussion for the meeting will include:

- Applicant Presentation in Response to Comments and Questions of September 28
- Signs
- Public Private Partnership
- Wrap Up