

Long Range Planning Committee, Meeting Summary

September 26, 2019; 6-9:00pm

Key Bridge Marriott Conference Room, 1401 Lee Highway

Subject: Key Bridge Marriott

(Meeting #1)

Planning Commission members in attendance: Nancy Iacomini (Chair of LRPC and SPRC), James Schroll, Jim Lantelme, Jane Siegel, Sara Steinberger, Kathleen McSweeney, Nia Bagley.

Staff members in attendance: Brett Wallace, Kris Krider, Walter Gonzalez, Laura Shaub, Dennis Selin.

Others in attendance: Leo Sarli, Benjamin Keeney, Scott Goodwyn, Renee Tucker, Robert Pillsbury, Torrey Law, Patrick Finucan, Stuart Stein, Ken Walton, Carol Rakatansky, Rick Shewell, Steve Sockwell, Jessica Mack, Bill Ross, Tom Korn, the Applicant, land use attorney, and consultants.

Agenda Overview

1. Walking Tour and Discussion
2. Project Introduction and Background
3. Site History
 - a. Previous Site Uses
 - b. Site Plan, GLUP and Zoning History
4. Planning and Policy History
5. LRPC Discussion

Meeting Summary

- (Agenda Item #1) Welcome and opening remarks provided by LRPC Chair at Gateway Park to begin walking tour.
- Staff led a walking tour of the site beginning at Gateway Park and ending on the 14th floor of the hotel to experience the views.
- There was a brief discussion immediately following the walking tour to gather first impressions /observations of the site. Comments collected are summarized below:
 - The site is example of nature joining urbanism.
 - The views of the Potomac River and the amount of green vegetation/mature trees are unique and impressive.
 - Invasive plant removal will be important, particularly on the north edge of the site.
 - The site is a symbolic gateway for those entering Arlington- not leaving D.C.
 - The site feels disconnected from Gateway Park, and the wall structures surrounding the park creates a barrier to central Rosslyn.
 - The RPA area and landscape presents an opportunity for hiking, trail uses.
- Following discussion of the walking tour, staff gave a presentation introducing the project and overview of site history (Agenda Items #2, 3, & 4).

LRPC Discussion (Agenda Item #5)

The LRPC Chair organized the discussion around three planning topics that included potential opportunities for (1) Circulation and Access, (2) Open Space and Natural Areas, and (3) Potential Building Placement. To help guide the discussion, the LRPC referred to slides with analysis diagrams provided by staff. The diagrams provided a visual analysis of site opportunities and constraints.

The LRPC Chair concluded the discussion with a summary of comments/considerations below:

Potential Circulation and Access

- The potential Nash Street location seems logical, but consideration will be needed of its overall function and design, including whether it's one-way or two-way, and how far it extends to the north. Fire and emergency access will also be important factors in the design.
- The bike/pedestrian route should be very clear and high priority if it connects to the trail in back, and ultimately Key Bridge.
- Intersections at Nash, Lee Highway, and Ft. Myer are problematic. There should be further analysis/ traffic studies prepared to provide a safe pedestrian/bicycle experience in these areas.
- The bike/pedestrian connections around the north edge of the site are desirable.
- The removal of the skybridge over Lee Highway is a good idea, but consideration will be needed to determine if it's the safest option for pedestrians and bikes.

Potential Open Spaces and Natural Areas

- Committee members agreed that there should be as much green space as possible provided.
- Members agreed that a partnership between the County and National Park Service will be critical towards any improvements on green space surrounding the site.
- Coordination with NPS is desired for invasive plant removal and/or restoration efforts.
- Public access to green space on rooftops with views would be a good idea.
- The crescent shape area in the back of site is very desirable as public space and should be designed with bike/pedestrian priority.
- There should be a public destination/space on the site to encourage more active use.
- The Colonial Branch tributary and landscape are unique features in Arlington that should be celebrated with views or potential access points.

Potential Building Placement:

- Members expressed there may be a potential for tapering of building heights to the adjacent George Washington Memorial Parkway, Gateway Park, and Rosslyn Circle. Consideration is needed on the visual impact of future buildings from sites identified by NPS and NCPC. Further discussion is needed.
- Members agreed that any design should celebrate the previous uses and history of this site, through design materials, site amenities, or uses, such as the previous brewery.
- Neighbors from the Potomac Palisades townhomes to the west (those represented at meeting) support the proposed building heights at 16 stories, which is allowed under the current zoning.
- Members were seeking clarification on the future phasing and redevelopment of the hotel building that is currently planned to remain at 12 stories. Some members suggested that

additional height might be at the center of the site, or that all three buildings could be at 16 stories under the existing zoning.

- Members noted that “bird-friendly design” limiting use of excess glass is important.
- Consideration of ground floor building uses is needed to create a synergy with adjacent public spaces.

The meeting concluded with the understanding that another LRPC meeting will be needed prior to beginning the SPRC review process. The details and agenda will be posted prior to the meeting.