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Minutes 12/15/2010

Arlington Scenic Byway/Tourism and Economic Development Committee

Wednesday, December 15, 2010, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room

Minutes

The Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Roly Chaput, JoAnn Robinson, Carol Kowalski, Howard Winkler, Clarissa Rowe, Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Angela Olszewski, Tom Davison, Sharon Shaloo, (arrived at 7:15 p.m.), Dan Hodge (arrived at 7:20 p.m.)

Absent: Bob Bowes, Diane Mahon, Mike Ginns

Observing: Laurence McKinney

I. The minutes of the November 17, 2010, meeting were approved with amendments.

II. Updates on Projects in/around Town:

Carol Kowalski:

The special permit for apartments at the former Brighams site has been modified. The proposal originally included retail but is now changing to office space because of expressed interest. The medical offices at adjacent 22 Mill St are outgrowing their space. The plan for the development is to be focused on the Bike Path, with public access to a pocket park.

Fresh Pond Seafood has been permitted for the new Summer St location.

A new Argentine restaurant has been permitted.

Clarissa Rowe:

The Capitol Theatre would like permission to serve alcohol as they do at the Somerville Theater. The service would be limited to one drink per person per night. All servers would undergo training for alcohol service. There is now planned outreach to Regent theatre, ACT (?), and Arlington Friends of the Drama about this proposal. The expectation is that this might make these venues more attractive entertainment options.

Symmes Property: A new developer (Beacon Communities LLC) is interested. They did a presentation on their plans to the Town on Monday. They have an "excellent reputation," i.e., a good track record of completion and of working with community concerns. Other developers are also circling if Beacon Communities does not come through.

Roly Chaput:

Mill Brook Linear Park: The path along the brook is challenging, and the current plan involves a route that will bring pedestrians close to the water in some places but lead them away from the water at other areas. Work is ongoing and he will update the committee as it reaches certain milestones in completion.

Dallin Museum: 2012 will be 150th anniversary of Dallin's birth and the Museum Trustees are starting to plan

programming in support of the anniversary. Sharon noted that Mass Humanities has awarded grants to celebrate sesquicentennials in the past (most recently that of Margaret Fuller) and the Museum may wish to explore their guidelines.

Laurence McKinney asked to be recognized from the floor to report that there will soon be a light on the Uncle Sam statue in Arlington Center.

Carol Kowalski and Clarissa Rowe then responded to an inquiry from the Committee about the Arlington Land Trust purchase of Elizabeth Island. The island will be used conservation purposes - kayaks could land there but no building will be planned for the site. There may be a need for a sturdier pier/mooring, but that is not imminent. Neighbors around Spy Pond are working to tackle the invasive weeds problem. Spy Pond, as a "Great Pond," is owned by the state and it is mandated that there be public access around great ponds. The Town is now in a process of re-educating abutters.

III. Committee Projects/Assignments

Town Day Booth

The Committee agreed to have a booth at Town Day 2011 and will begin plans for that in the near future.

Economic Development Subcommittee:

Dan Hodge introduced an economic self-assessment tool that he is working on in concert with the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University. The Committee agreed that bringing this analysis to bear on Arlington would be useful because it would identify current strengths as they relate to the needs of particular businesses

Action: The committee moved and passed a motion to find funding (\$5000) for this project because it believes that the Economic Assessment Tool will be an important enhancement to the Koff Study on the redevelopment of Arlington's business districts and that the outputs from the assessment will provide important

Dan Hodge will find out which cities/towns are currently using the tool. Clarissa will develop budget language for the project.

A subcommittee was formed to undertake these and related tasks in economic development. Members: Angela Olszewski, Dan Hodge, Kirsi Allison-Ampe, JoAnn Robinson, with Clarissa Rowe and Carol Kowalski assigned ex officio to receive all communications of the subcommittee.

Focus Groups/Survey

The Vision 2020 Committee did not include the Committee's questions in its annual survey to the Town. The Committee agreed that a survey of the community was a high priority and formed a subcommittee to create the survey and develop an electronic mechanism for distributing it and collecting results.

Members of Community Input Subcommittee: Tom Davidson and Sharon Shaloo

Special (Seasonal) Programming

The Committee supports the idea of developing special programming and agreed that a summer music festival in Menotomy Rocks Park was worth exploring. A road race along the new Battle Road Scenic Byway ought to be considered for the future, ending in Arlington where race participants and spectators would have available dining options.

Subcommittee on Special Programs: Tom Davidson, Angela Olszewski, and Roly Chaput agreed to serve. Other committee members will be invited to participate.

Web Site

Sharon Shaloo and Kirsi Allison-Ampe will research web domain/hosting plans and take the lead in developing a committee website. They have been asked to review the following site as a possible model: <http://BostonBID.org>

Additional Projects/Plans Actions

Clarissa Rowe reported that there are plans to restore the chapel at the Mt Pleasant Cemetery so that it would be available for small services and cultural programs (on the model of the more extensive cultural programming/services sited at Mt Auburn Cemetery and its chapel). She encouraged committee members to visit the Chapel to assess its potential.

Sharon will create a spreadsheet that collects all the ideas the committee has reviewed to date so that plans can be made for implementing them in the future.

Carol Kowalski's report on the results of the Public Art Survey will be distributed for the committee's information.

IV. Other Business

Committee Name

The Committee agrees that its current naming: Arlington Scenic Byway, Tourism, and Economic Development Committee is unwieldy. The Committee heard from two members with proposals for shortening the name to "Tourism and Economic Development (TED)" or for moving to a name such as "Advance Arlington" Committee. Discussion will continue on this subject at the next meeting of the Committee.

ZIP Code Information from Merchants

Angela Olszewski will contact Bob Bowes to arrange for delivery of the collected customer ZIP code information from Chamber members. The Committee will arrange to enter the information into a database for analysis.

Future Meetings

The Committee will meet Weds, January 19, and Weds, Feb 15, at 7 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Town Hall Annex. Sharon will book the room for those meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.