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Redevelopment Board Minutes 04/09/2007

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of April 9, 2007

Members Present: Christopher Loreti
Roland Chaput
Edward Tsoi
Andrew West
Bruce Fitzsimmons joined the meeting at 8:20PM

Also Present: Kevin O'Brien
Joey Glushko
Laura Wiener

Roland Chaput called the meeting to order at 7:00 and asked the Board to review the draft Report to Town Meeting. The Board made some suggestions which will be incorporated in the final version.

The Board next discussed the representative to serve on the oversight committee for the first phase of the Mass. Ave. corridor reconstruction. Ed Tsoi nominated Andy West to serve on the committee. Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

Ed Tsoi moved that the Board approve the minutes of its March 26, 2007 executive session as amended. Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

Chris Loreti moved that the Board approve the minutes of its March 26, 2007 meeting as amended. Andrew West seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

Next the Board discussed the "Planning Dialog" process and the report to Town Meeting. Board member Bruce Fitzsimmons arrived during this discussion.

Roland Chaput then recognized Jake Upton of Symmes Redevelopment Associates (SRA) who asked that the Board confirm several things about the Symmes project. He asked that the Board state that SRA was in compliance with the Neighborhood Protection Plan. Kevin O'Brien recounted the activities to date that were completed in order to comply with the plan and recommended that the Board issue a statement to that effect. The Board felt it should hear from the Symmes Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNAC) and from Michael Byrne the interim Designated Town Representative.

Chris Loreti moved that the Board authorize Roland Chaput to sign a letter indicating that the Board thought that SRA was in compliance with the Neighborhood Protection Plan after staff received a favorable review from Joe Curro of the SNAC and from Michael Byrne.

Jake Upton explained that he was going to ask the Board to designate the affordable units in the development, but that the rental possibility meant that both he and the Housing Director had to develop more controls to accommodate the rental possibility. He will return to that topic later.

Jake Upton then asked that the Board acknowledge that at this time the medical office building (MOB) is not financially feasible. Kevin O'Brien explained that the LDA requires the Board to make such a finding at closing of the sale of the Symmes property in order that Symmes Redevelopment Associates may defer payment of the MOB portion of the site. He continued to say that in the discussions about changes to the Land Disposition Agreement, he had agreed that such language should be placed in the next version of the LDA. Jake asked if the Board could vote its approval of the particular language at this time.

Andrew West moved and Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded a motion that the Board endorse the following language and intend to include it in the next version of the LDA. "The parties acknowledge that the Redeveloper has made good faith efforts to market the MOB through the date of this Agreement, and despite such good faith efforts has not been able to secure a medical services provider as a tenant or purchaser for the MOB that would make the MOB Component a financially feasible enterprise." The Board voted 5 to 0 to approve the motion.

Jake Upton asked that the Board state the expiration date of the residential special permit. Kevin O'Brien explained that the determination of the expiration date would better be made by Town Counsel and he would ask John Maher to do so.

Jake Upton next asked that the Board extend the term of the special permit for the medical office building (docket 3260) for two years because despite all their efforts to locate a medical provider that would enable them to finance the building, they have not been able to do so.

Andrew West moved that the special permit be extended two years so that it would now expire on June 22, 2009. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Joe Curro joined the meeting so Roland Chaput asked him if in his opinion Symmes Redevelopment Associates was in compliance with the Neighborhood Protection Plan at this date. Joe Curro replied that as far as he knew they were in compliance.

There followed some discussion with people in the audience about the project and the possibility of it being a rental project at least for a time.

At 9:30 John Maher joined the meeting to discuss Warrant Article 12 with the Board. John was concerned that the ARB which is a body which might recommend the exercise of eminent domain be aware of the article which proposes to limit the Town's ability. The Board told John Maher that they had discussed the article with John Belkis at an earlier meeting and had serious concerns about the article. After a brief discussion, Ed Tsoi moved that the Board express its opposition to the article. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Roland Chaput then recognized Andrew Fisher who encouraged the Board to reconsider using the Symmes site for hospital use.

The Board adjourned at 9:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien

