



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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**City of Falls Church  
Economic Development Authority Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 4, 2019; 6:30 PM  
Viget Labs, 105 West Broad Street,  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, Falls Church, VA 22046**

- I. A tour of the improved downtown City Park took place from 6:30 – 7:00 PM**
- II. Call to Order** – Chairman Bob Young called the EDA meeting to order at Viget Labs, 105 W. Broad, 5<sup>th</sup> floor at 7:16 PM

**EDA Board members present:** Mr. Young, Chairman; Mr. Pelton, Vice Chairman; Mr. Novotny, Mr. Coyle, Mr. Saltzberg, Mr. Williams

**City staff present:** Mr. Snyder, Ms. Witsman, Ms. Shaeffer, Ms. Walker,

**Other attendees:** Mr. Stevens, Ms. Hardi, Ms. Sturtevant, Ms. Hockenberry, Student reps: Mr. Tarter, Mr. Jones and Mr. Hoak

- III. Review of May 7, 2019 Minutes of EDA Meeting** – approved without changes.
- IV. Petitions from the Public (5 minutes per petitioner)** - None
- V. Petitions from the Board (5 minutes per petitioner)** - None
- VI. Comprehensive Plan review of 3 (of 10) Chapters – Demographics, Housing and Natural Resources**

Ms. Lisa Sturtevant of LSA, a consultant for the City, briefed the **Demographics Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan**. She explained that the demographics chapter sets the stage for the other chapters and that it is interwoven into those chapters. She reviewed and highlighted several demographic trends including:

- a. One of every three households in the City is a single person
- b. The number of households with children has declined
- c. The population is aging (1 of every 4 residents is 55+)
- d. Households with income between \$50K - \$100K has surged in recent years

She explained that some of the trends highlighted are related to the stock of housing that is available in the City. One in every three housing units in the City are now studio and one bedroom apartments, where vacancy rates are low. City residents tend to have jobs in high paying professions and tend not to work in the City. Most of the jobs in Falls Church are in lower paying industries, such as retail and hospitality-related sectors. Also reviewed were the population, housing and job projections for the next 25 years, when by 2045 there are expected to be 20,549 persons living in the City, 19,652 households in the City and 9,311 jobs in the City. Recommendations for “Connections and Strategies” related to the City’s demographics include:

- a. Managing growth (via zoning and the Comprehensive Plan) and guiding development

- b. Utilizing policy tools to support affordable housing to a range of household incomes, sizes and ages
- c. Encouraging the availability of multiple transportation options
- d. Planning public facilities for both the needs of the current population and the anticipated needs of future populations

EDA members acknowledged and reacted to the demographic changes highlighted in the presentation. A demographic focus for the future that was mentioned by EDA members is the need to attract more office development and thereby increase the daytime population in the City, to help balance the City's tax base. More office workers would translate into more eating out and shopping at lunchtime, especially by customers who are not City residents.

Ms. Shaina Schaeffer, a Planner on the City staff, briefed the **Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan**. During her presentation, she explained that the Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for land use, natural resources, community facilities and housing. The Plan provides an overarching vision for the future, to help guide planning efforts, review private development proposals, public investments and help inform the budgeting process. Since the last update of the Plan occurred in 2005, it is now time for an update. The process begins with the staff providing drafts of the updated chapters, based on public feedback, other City plans and policies and current trends and best practices. Content for each of the Comprehensive Plan chapters also includes an evaluation of existing conditions, a vision for where the City wants to be in the future, a needs analysis to determine where there might be gaps in providing community needs and finally, recommendations for strategies and actions to accomplish the vision. Then, each of the 10 comprehensive Plan update drafts begin an extensive public review process, such as occurred at this night's EDA meeting.

As specifically relates to housing, there has been significant change in the City, such as new residential and commercial development, which has increased demand for public facilities, including parks and schools. This has also led to decreased affordability of housing, the loss of more affordable housing units and the lack of socioeconomic diversity in the City. Future housing supply in the City is expected to follow recent trends whereby there are 650 to 720 new residential units added every 5 years. Only 27% of the City's existing housing supply is affordable for households at or below the Area Median Income, while in the future, 45% of City households are expected to at or below Area Median Income. This housing gap suggests that City housing policy might be guided by:

- a. Incentivizing the maintenance and provision of more workforce, moderate and low-income housing
- b. Increasing entry-level homeownership opportunities
- c. Supporting aging in place
- d. Reviewing development regulations to allow a wider variety of housing types, such as cottage housing and accessory dwelling units
- e. Creating policies to foster greater neighborhood stability
- f. Providing housing for people with disabilities
- g. Promoting fair access to housing
- h. Monitoring regional and local housing markets to identify pressures and opportunities

With regard to the Housing Chapter, there was EDA member discussion about the policy implications and housing challenges presented due to the demographic changes occurring the City. The lack of both housing and affordable housing supply translates into increased demand for housing units, which translates into higher prices for housing in the City and thus fewer affordable housing units. There is also an existing lack of sufficient resources to adequately fund all City services and initiatives, such as wanting to address needs such as affordable housing. Creative ideas were offered by EDA members, such as possibly increasing the hotel/transient occupancy tax and/or meals tax(es), to provide a source of dedicated funding for affordable housing, could be explored further.

Workforce housing was another topic in particular where there was felt to be a need to elevate the lack of supply issue, which needs to be addressed. Workforce housing could/should possibly be included the City's Vision Statement. Other housing discussion focused on the need to preserve housing units at the Fields and very seriously exploring and implementing options to do so. Retaining other existing affordable housing stock in the City should also be a high priority and strategy, where possibly fewer homes in the City are tear-downs, replaced by \$1 million + homes. Not all affordable units need to be NEW units, as it is probably more cost effective to preserve existing affordable units, beyond the Fields units. Affordable housing preservation also has the added benefit of saving trees.

Accessory dwelling units and cottage housing units (many units on smaller lots) were also discussed as targeted topics of further discussion that need to be investigated more. A challenge in the cost considerations associated with affordable housing was surfaced, acknowledging that there tend to be higher City service costs associated with strategies that might best incentivize more affordable housing. Mr. Snyder also mentioned the possibility of encouraging lower scale housing (i.e. townhouses) resulting in fewer units per acre, but these units would better transition and cause less impact to adjacent neighborhoods. The EDA requested that EDA staff schedule a speaker and/or include an agenda item for a future EDA meeting, to further explore how to address some of the fiscal and other challenges associated with affordable housing.

Ms. Kate Walker, Environmental Coordinator for the City, briefed the **Natural Resources Chapter** of the Comprehensive Plan.

Regional climate change and higher utility costs have resulted in the need for more focus on ways to be prepared for changing environmental conditions and to enhance community resiliency to weather and climate change via energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption. She briefed the EDA on four goals including:

1. Reducing emissions and greenhouse gases
2. Protect the City's water resources and the Chesapeake Bay
3. Protect and enhance the City's trees, green spaces and naturalized land on public and private property throughout the City.
4. Reduce solid waste to zero and expand the City's composting program to include 75% of residential properties.

Mr. Pelton mentioned the need for more walkability and bike ability efforts in the City, to help reduce emissions. Mr. Snyder mentioned the possibility of the City enacting a "transfer of development rights" policy. Also mentioned was that recycling and composting need to be publicized more; and, that both the schools and residential communities should be encouraged to recycle and compost. Several creative ideas were mentioned, like taxing plastic bags, encouraging more use of electric cars and creating a utilities (undergrounding) master plan, with focus on priority streets. Loss of electricity is particularly a problem for City businesses.

## VII. Updates on West Broad Street EDA projects/Retreat matrix –

- a. Revised wayfinding scope from Kathy Frazier – A revised scope of work was provided, reflecting the discussion from the last meeting (\$30,000 cost specified at the end of Phase 1; an estimate for Phase 2, Tasks C-F for an additional \$35,000). Phase 2 has not yet been authorized; a decision to proceed to Phase 2 will be made at the completion of Phase 1 and in consideration of a cost estimate of the fabrication and installation of the wayfinding signs. Mr. Coyle created and distributed a draft of key study decision points/dates. There was discussion about having a large initial public kickoff meeting to discuss wayfinding, moderated by Frazier Associates and extending invites to the meeting to all City groups and the general public. In addition to the input received by the consultant at that meeting, the consultant will spend time in the City, observing how and where people need signs. An end of 2019

conclusion of the study (at least Phase 1) is anticipated, so that CIP funding decisions can be included in the FY 2020 budget discussion.

- b. Flower baskets on street light poles – planting of the flower baskets has occurred; regular watering of the baskets is also included in the \$14,000 contract (from Transient Occupancy Tax funds).
- c. Part time park coordinator hiring – the new position has been advertised and several good resumes have been received. It will be a priority to review the resumes, schedule interviews and make a decision on a candidate as soon as possible.
- d. Parking study scope – Mr. Saltzberg briefed his DRAFT “Parking Consultant Scope of Services” document, that also included a few revisions suggested by Ms. Hardi. The next step is to send the draft scope out to parking consultants, to get their feedback on both its content and an estimated cost for the work desired. Mr. Novotny suggested that the revised scope also include “Research and Review” of typical City standard proffers for development.
- e. Kaiser signage and temporary parking signs – Ms. Witsman mentioned that a meeting with Kaiser has been scheduled for the week following the EDA meeting. Mr. Williams advised that he is checking with Atlantic Realty about use of more signage for the public parking in their garage as well as the possibility of some public parking at the former BB & T bank building.
- f. Milling and repaving/restriping of public parking lots – Mr. Snyder reported that City Council had just the night before approved the expenditure of up to \$60,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to pay for the milling, repaving and restriping of the two City parking lots in the 100 block of West Broad Street. There was discussion about the restriping of the current parking spaces as well as the possibility of spending funds for brick pavers for the alleyway adjacent to the newly updated City Park.
- g. New benches, trash receptacles bike racks – 6 new benches and 3 new sets of trash receptacles are on order via the Transient Occupancy Tax fund. These items will be placed near the updated park as well as in areas west on Broad, beyond the 200 block.
- h. Directors and Officers insurance coverage status – Mr. Young advised EDA members that the City does have this insurance coverage for EDA members, but that it may be necessary to increase that coverage when the EDA becomes involved in the 99 year ground lease for the West Falls Church project.
- i. Progress/status of the updated City park project – Mr. Snyder briefed members that the ribbon cutting for the park is scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup> and that much progress has been made. He also provided a spreadsheet on the current known expenses realized and anticipated for the park; a few expenses are not fully known, such as the exact current and future staff time charges anticipated for the project. The building wall adjacent to the park has been painted white and a future mural of some sort is anticipated for this wall. Some sort of canopy or covering for the stage is also being considered. EDA members requested that no expenditures be incurred regarding either a mural or a covering for the stage until they have reviewed the options and expenses for those possibilities. Mr. Snyder requested permission to spend up to the total \$550,000 originally allocated for the park project, to enable flexibility to complete the park, such as for the cost of planters that will be planted and placed in the alleyway adjacent to the park, to close the alleyway to vehicular traffic. Mr. Pelton made the motion to approve those expenditures up to the \$550K limit, Mr. Coyle seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

VIII. EDA Member Reports - none

- IX. July & September EDA meeting dates- It was decided that the July EDA meeting will be cancelled and that the September EDA meeting date will be moved from the first Tuesday (9/3) to the second Tuesday (9/10), due to the Labor Day holiday.
- X. Other Business - Ms. Hockenberry, who has been a Planning Commission representative to the EDA for several years, advised that this meeting of the EDA would be her last meeting as the Planning Commission representative, as she will be stepping down from the Planning Commission. She said she would miss EDA members; EDA members responded that they would likewise miss her input. She was encouraged to come to future EDA meetings any time she would like.
- XI. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM