

MEETING SUMMARY

**Virginia Hospital Center (SP#177)
Kick-Off Community Meeting
John T. Hazel, MD Conference Center
November 16, 2017**

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions – Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
2. Opening Remarks – Katie Cristol, Vice Chair, Arlington County Board
3. Overview of Option Agreement – Anthony Fusarelli, Department of Community Planning, Housing, & Development
4. Background on VHC Site Plan – Matt Ladd, Department of Community Planning, Housing, & Development
5. Proposed Hospital Expansion Plans – Jim Cole, Virginia Hospital Center
6. Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) Process and Schedule – Nancy Iacomini, Site Plan Chair
7. Q & A on Process
8. Wrap Up and Next Steps

PRESENTATION

The meeting started with opening remarks and introductions from County Manager Mark Schwartz and County Board Vice Chair Katie Cristol. This was followed by a series of [presentations](#) from County staff, Jim Cole (VHC President/CEO), and Planning Commissioner Nancy Iacomini. Matt Ladd invited attendees to visit the [project web page](#) for updates. Interested community members can also sign up for email notifications and project updates on the web page.

Q & A ON SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Matt Ladd (ML) and Nancy Iacomini (NI) answered questions from the meeting attendees about the site plan review process.

- *Question:* Each of the three nearby civic associations will have two representatives participating in SPRC meetings. If another SPRC member (representing a commission) also lives in one of these civic association, is that fair to the other civic associations?

- *Response:* NI responded that each group chooses its own representatives for SPRC projects. SPRC members' responsibility is first and foremost to commission or group that they are representing.
- *Question:* What drawings will be shared with the public?
- *Response:* ML responded that the project is still in its infancy and that the Hospital has not yet submitted final site plan drawings. He expects they will be filed in early December, and they will be posted on the [project web page](#). Staff posts everything that goes to the SPRC on the web page, and meetings materials are posted prior to the meetings. Meeting summaries are also posted.
- *Question:* Will the Hospital be presenting several alternative scenarios?
- *Response:* NI responded that in her experience, projects almost always change and develop over time from what was originally submitted.
- *Question:* Have all of the alternatives for this site been examined, including undergrounding the garage?
- *Response:* NI responded that alternatives will be explored during the SPRC process.
- *Question:* During the presentation it was said that the SPRC process does not typically allow for public comment, other than through civic association representatives. Is there another forum where community members can ask questions?
- *Response:* NI responded that she will try to leave time during the SPRC meetings for general public comments. We may consider an additional community forum as the project progresses. ML added that his email address is on the web page and on the feedback cards provided. Community members are encouraged to contact him, and, at a minimum, he will summarize the comments received for the SPRC.
- *Question:* How does the SPRC balance the economics of a development proposal and practical considerations with community benefits? The Hospital is going to say that it is too expensive to underground the parking garage, but is their budget what drives this?
- *Response:* NI responded that the SPRC grapples with this issue on every site plan. We have no way of knowing the detailed economics of any given project. The SPRC process is iterative, and the hope is that the process ultimately yields the greatest benefit to the community.
- *Question:* It seems that the process minimized public interaction. If the SPRC meeting is three hours long, do community members have to wait until midnight to have their questions answered?
- *Response:* NI responded that no one will have to wait until midnight to speak. She reiterated that she will endeavor to hear people.
- *Question:* Has the Hospital tested the bedrock to see if more of the buildings can be put underground to reduce height?
- *Response:* ML responded that this will be discussed the SPRC meetings.

- *Question:* Our Homeowners' Association (Tara Townes) is directly across George Mason Drive from the proposed expansion, and we will be uniquely impacted. Is there a way for our HOA to have a voice at the SPRC table?
- *Response:* NI asked the HOA to share their concerns with the civic association, which will have two representatives participating on the SPRC.
- *Question:* Will this project provide enough parking to dissuade hospital employees from parking on our neighborhood streets?
- *Response:* NI responded that this will be discussed at the SPRC meetings.
- *Question:* How do we reconcile the Hospital's expectations for parking with Arlington's philosophy about alternative transportation?
- *Response:* NI responded that Arlington has progressive and aggressive policies to encourage people to get out of their cars. Staff will be discussing these policies with the Hospital team.

NEXT STEPS

- The first SPRC meeting is scheduled for December 18 at Washington-Lee High School (7:00 pm).

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK CARDS

Staff provided feedback cards for questions and comments on topics other than the site plan review process. The following is a summary of input received.

Do you have any questions that were not answered today?

- Would like to know the estimated construction period. When will it start and end?
- Is it possible to have the SPRC meet one-on-one with the civic associations?
- What is the value of the VHC's Carlin Springs property? And what is the Buck site referenced in the presentation?
- Will the hospital have an outpatient mental health facility on the new site? It is really needed.
- The previous expansion's traffic calming funds were not all used due to County issues. What allowances will be made to prevent traffic/parking issues?

Do you have any comments or concerns to share with County staff and the SPRC?

- Commissioner Iacomini seems to have the right mix of diplomacy and efficiency for this project to balance stakeholder competing needs and passionate concerns.
- I like that this process is very open to feedback and thorough.
- Input from citizens who support the site plan should also be considered.
- Open space
- Have the community render drawings of what they would approve.

- There needs to be a planned community meeting for public comment, not tied to SPRC. This project is too big not to be.
- I am a community member and a nurse at the hospital. People need to hear about the effect of parking on their health care providers.
- Today is the first time the community is seeing the “pad site.”
- Concern about lack of buffers/setback shown along 19th Street and Edison
- This isn’t just some ordinary expansion. This is a vital resource to this County. No one wants something in their backyard. The renderings are beautiful and definitely better than what exists on Edison Street.
- The County should allow VHC to keep the Carlin Springs property for mental health needs.