



**4MRV Working Group Meeting
December 21, 2016
7 – 10:30 PM**

The purpose of this Working Group Meeting was to discuss the County responses to the Working Group and community's questions, discuss the major themes gathered at the Community Forum and Visioning Workshop and discuss the location of a potential fieldhouse and potential arts district.

Meeting Documentation – There was a question about why meeting minutes are not provided. Two members noted that it would be useful to have more detailed documentation and/or to have the meetings videotaped. Another member said that the breakdown of significant issues is sufficient. Another expressed concerns about recording a group like this because it is intended to be more informal. Another said that if the concern is that some members are not able to be at all meetings, they should be working with their alternates.

Listserv – There was some interest in having a listserv, but staff noted that there is a legal issue with regard to online conversations between elected or appointed officials. Staff pointed out that contemporaneous online communications between three or more members become a de facto “meeting”, which may violate Virginia’s open meeting statutes.

Matrix – One member expressed concern about some of the responses in the matrix being too general. On response number 26 of the Comment/Response Matrix, it states that Workshop attendees were given the opportunity to give input on Shirlington Bridge improvements, but not all of the tables were invited to do so. The Working group member stated that no subjective comments belong in the matrix. On response #8 of the letter, the 4MRV name came as a surprise to some and they attend the Nauck Civic Association meetings. Staff indicated that Jessie Boeding and Portia Clark (Nauck) and Edie Wilson (Shirlington) were involved in the naming discussions.

Four Mile Run Drive/Walter Reed Drive Intersection – One member asked about the plans for the intersection of Four Mile Run and Walter Reed Drives, noting that she had only heard about the addition of handicap ramps. Another member said that the improvement plans are much more expansive and that the plans had been sent to Douglas Park and Nauck. The first member said that no one directly affected knows what the plans are. The second member noted that whoever the Nauck letter was addressed to should have shared it with the neighborhood. Staff informed the Working Group that it will send the plans to the Working Group.

Visioning Workshop – One member noted that the workshop was, for the most part, helpful. Several members agreed that the area west of Walter Reed Drive was not addressed in sufficient detail during the workshop. Another member said that she was thrilled with the workshop, its free flow of ideas, the good turnout and how it was an energy building moment. Another member said that she

understood things better after the workshop and that it was well done and well organized. She noted that the area near Barcroft will likely not be developed until later than the area closer to Jennie Dean so there may have been a temporal reason to focus less on this area, which is also primarily in private hands. Can we wait 10-20 years to control this land?

Another member said that the area near I-395 was also ignored to some extent, but that this area also has a longer redevelopment horizon and an acquisition challenge. The Chair noted that time will be set aside for a discussion of Allie Freed Park, which is not in the parks planning boundary, but is in the larger study area boundary. Another member said that the Crescent area really does deserve some attention from the group.

A Working Group member noted that staff should remove the self-congratulatory comment for the matrix regarding the walking tour as she had heard negative comments about the tour that were not included. [No negative comments were directly communicated to staff.] She said that the walking tour did not go as far as the Barcroft area. *[There was an option for people to join the walking tour group that would walk all the way to Barcroft – 12-15 people did so.]* She said that a lot of people got positive energy at the workshop, but that there were more people at the launch event, organized by neighborhood representatives, that was held a year ago and that a lot of people did not show up for the workshop.

One member asked if the workshop should have happened after the Working Group had discussed the ideas first. Staff noted that there were over 100 people that signed in at the Saturday workshop. One member asked who the people were that did not participate and if we know that they were not present, then presumably we know how to reach them and could reach out to them now to include them in the process moving forward? A Working Group member noted that there is a difference between advertising and marketing and that there were few people from Nauck at the workshop. Though they knew about the workshop, they chose not to attend. Another member said that it would be good to have an opportunity for more Latinos, including day laborers to have input during a daytime meeting.

Another member said that the workshop was legitimate and that people gave up their weekend and nights and that it is unfair for people to delegitimize what happened because those who were in attendance should be able to provide their input. Another member said that he acknowledges the difference between marketing and advertising but he was pleasantly pleased with the workshop which provided some valuable insight and input. He said that the surrounding neighborhoods are some of the most diverse in Arlington and that the Working Group and staff have to work hard to engage people that might not be comfortable in a public forum/working with government. Another member said that the workshop was a very helpful step forward, but that there were not many Latinos or African-Americans in attendance. She said that the diversity of this area is precious to us and that there is an enormous need for a community center which could have offerings that may be of particular importance to those who were not in attendance.

Another member said that the Working Group itself needs to do outreach and that because someone had mentioned the need to include teens, she herself reached out to Wakefield High School students

to get input from teens. DPR staff reiterated its offer to meet with members of the Working Group and the public in any location at any time. One member said that she was astounded to see how many people at the workshop were from outside of Arlington – some indicated that they only come for the dog park or the bike trails or the tennis courts. She felt that they had a lack of understanding of the issues. The Chair noted that these were open meetings and that the Working Group will weigh the input of all groups. Another member said that the parks belong to all of us and are for everyone.

Fieldhouse – The Chair asked if there should be a fieldhouse and whether it should be within the parks planning area or within the area plan study area. One member asked what a fieldhouse is and another asked how the group can think about the building without knowing the functions that it would house. A building should follow its functions and the group should first understand the physical constraints of the floodplain.

Another member said that he does not want a fieldhouse at the expense of open green space, as this would be detrimental to the neighborhood and the County as a whole. The fieldhouse should not be located in an existing or potential park area. The traffic and environmental impacts will need to be evaluated and the fieldhouse should be located in the Crescent area or closer to Barcroft.

Another member said that a fieldhouse was a need identified during the Long Bridge planning process and in the POPS survey. Only one of the three potential locations shown at the 4MRV workshop was County-owned, so for two of the three locations there needs to be a recognition of the need for land acquisition, which is costly and time consuming. The Chair said that this is a 20-year study and the group should be thinking long term. One member said that the Barcroft and Crescent areas are best. The Barcroft area already has athletic programming, infrastructure and parking which would allow for good synergy. The Crescent area has nothing to draw people there and if the fieldhouse was located near the stream it could transform this area into a more attractive and pedestrian friendly area. Another member noted that the group has to plan for success. Where will people park? Only the Crescent is a viable location, as the Barcroft garage gets full and would not work unless it was expanded. It is a responsibility of the group to maintain useful green space.

Another member added that the group can never take its eye off of parking. She said that she is not sure if the land swap will actually occur. She said that the group needs to think about building up and co-locating uses. She suggested that the building where the 4MRV open studio was located [2700 S. Quincy Street] could be a good community center. There is only one civic room in Shirlington, which is located in the library, and there is a need for space for GED classes and other programming. By locating some of the civic uses [in the Quincy Street building], more room could be available in the park area for athletics.

Another member said that during the Long Bridge process they visited different fieldhouses and there are many different possible configurations, including some with elevated interior tracks. One member said that he does not want to see a fieldhouse here that brings lots of people and traffic to this area, as people here want natural green space. He said that Long Bridge was different as no one lives near Long Bridge and it was expressly developed as a destination. Another member said that the consultants should be asked to look at what the traffic and parking impacts of a fieldhouse would be.

One member said that the Working Group should discuss whether a fieldhouse here would serve the valley or the County as a whole. She said it is a blank slate at this juncture, so the Working Group can decide what uses it should have and that would impact whether or not the local community would use it.

The group then took a straw poll and voted 16/3 in favor of further study of a fieldhouse. When asked if a fieldhouse should be located in the Phase I area of Jennie Dean Park, no Working Group members were in support of this idea. With regards to a fieldhouse in another portion of the park study area, the group voted 6/14 against this. To summarize, the Chair said that the Working Group would like the consultants to continue to explore the idea of a fieldhouse, but that there is no real support for a fieldhouse within the park planning area.

Arts Hub – One member said that the term “arts hub” is better than “arts district,” as there is a legal definition to an arts district in Virginia and there is currently no enabling legislation for such a district in a County. The Chair noted that Arlington could work to change the law.

One member said that there are already so many arts groups in this area and all they would need is a roof and plumbing to make a great area. He thinks that the arts will bring in people, but he wants to make sure that the area does not become overpriced so that artists are forced to leave down the road by developers. Another member said that no green space should be sacrificed for buildings, but that an arts district in the valley is a good idea. Another member said that the green space in this area should be maximized and increased. Sustainable land use and building upwards are important. The consultants should consider the entire area for arts.

Another member said that the 4MRV visioning session was great. He said that the group needs to consider employment. If the current businesses are lost, hundreds of people who are currently employed could be displaced, creating a job vacuum.

Another member said that he was in favor of an arts district that would be linked to Shirlington. One member said that there are acquisition issues and that as properties and funds become viable, an arts hub could be gradually developed. Another member said that her table at the workshop wanted a parking garage near South Oxford Street and a walkway to Shirlington. She said that the County could provide something better for the arts than the building at 3700 Four Mile Run Drive. Another member asked what can be done to encourage the arts here. How can the County mandate private uses?

Another member said that the arts flourish in urban areas and that the arts district should be located near the bridge to Shirlington. Another member said that the ABC/Cube Smart site should be acquired for an industrial car repair area and that the area near Oakland, Nelson and Oxford Streets should be an arts area. The Chair indicated that the dog park has brought dog-related businesses to the area and arts-related business could similarly be encouraged if the County developed an arts building. One member asked what the incentive would be for an arts gallery to locate near a theatre, for example.

One member said that sometimes the temptation is to legislate your way towards utopia, but that business is extremely powerful and the businesses in this area want to talk about improving their

facades and the aesthetic of this area. They are interested in talking about a long-term transition and want to work with the County and have incentives to change. Another member said that there should be no loss of green space.

The Chair took a straw poll on whether the Working Group would like to ask the consultants to develop the idea of an arts district. All but one of the members present agreed with this. There was some discussion that the arts district could be located in the park area, but only west of Nelson Street.

One member asked staff to advise the Working Group as to what an arts district is and to provide examples. Another member said that a fieldhouse and arts district cannot be considered in isolation. Parking, pedestrian flow and traffic need to be considered.

One member asked for clarification on the recent County Board action related to Barcroft. *[It was explained by another Working Group member, a Sports Commission representative, that the County Board had designated the Barcroft indoor facility as a gymnastics-only facility, due to demand. Other indoor sports activities that had been hosted there, will be relocated.]* Another member said that a fieldhouse could be co-located with bus parking, commercial space and the arts.

Another member said that Arts Space has developed two districts, one in Hyattsville and one in Brookland, and that this firm is a good resource and is already under contract to the County. He suggested a tour of these arts districts.

Another member said that he knows one property owner who wants to sell his car business and get new arts tenants. Another member said that there needs to be collaboration between the consultants, as there is a need for one vision, not two separate visions. Another member asked staff to research different types of fieldhouses and to provide parking data. Another asked staff for information on how to build a floodable park.

Ballfields – One member said that he did not hear strong interest in moving the baseball fields closer to Four Mile Run Drive, but DPR staff indicated that two-thirds of the tables at the visioning workshop had recommended this. Another member said that perhaps the ballfields should be converted to synthetic turf and this investment should be protected, but the fields should not be put too close to people's yards.

For more details, please visit the 4MRV.com webpage.