

Symmes Advisory Committee
Town of Arlington

Report to Town Meeting

To: Town Meeting Members
From: Charlie Foscett - Chairman, Symmes Advisory Committee
Date: November 6, 2002
Re: Status Report to Town Meeting

The Symmes Advisory Committee

The 2001 Annual Town Meeting formed the Symmes Advisory Committee to advise the Town Manager, Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, Redevelopment Board and Town Meeting on the potential uses and disposition of the Symmes Campus. The Committee is required to report to each Annual and Special Town Meeting, and consists of the following members:

Charles Foscett, Chair – designee of Capital Planning Committee

Brian Rehrig, Vice-Chair – designee of Open Space Committee

Stephen DeCoursey, Secretary – designee of Finance Committee

Carolyn Simmons – designee of Board of Selectmen

Phyllis Bailey – designee of Brattle Hill Neighborhood Association

Robert Carey, MD – designee of Symmes Corporation Board of Trustees and Sanborn Trust Board of Trustees

Elisabeth Carr-Jones – designee of Selectmen's Transportation Committee

Brian Greeley – designee of Interfaith Council

Patricia Worden – designee of Arlington Housing Authority

Cindy Friedman – designee of Council on Aging, Assisted Living Task Force, and Arlington Seniors Association

Marc Dohan – designee of Affordable Housing Task Force

Allen Reedy – designee of Vision 2020 Standing Committee

David Walkinshaw – designee of Arlington Chamber of Commerce

Principal Activities Since Spring Report To Town Meeting

Highlights: The principal activities of the SAC since June are outlined below:

- Town-wide Survey Completed 5/30/02.
- VHB retained as Consultant June 27, 2002.
- On July 23 SAC held two hour hearing focused on neighborhood concerns and interests.
- Three Community Wide workshops held, one at Symmes Hospital (July), two at Town Hall (August and September); over 200 people attended each workshop.
- New web site developed and put on-line in July, www.symmesarlington.org.
- Physical Inventory; urban design analysis; economics study; structure analysis and use study underway under management of VHB.
- Symmes Advisory Committee use-focused Working Groups made priority recommendations to VHB, and these have been presented to the Committee and are on the Web-site, www.symmesarlington.org.
- VHB, SAC and ARB developing detailed use alternatives for Symmes Campus and plan Public Hearing on Alternatives Dec 3, 2002 at Arlington High School Lowe Auditorium.
- Report on Financial Status by Director of planning and Community Development to Finance Committee is attached.

Commentary:

Overall, the project is progressing close to schedule and is under budget. As reported in Mr. McClennen's report (attached), through his efforts the Town has achieved substantial reductions in operating expenses. Since the SYMMES HOSPITAL REUSE AND FEASIBILITY PLAN is operated by the Arlington Redevelopment Board under Chapter 121B of the laws of the Commonwealth, operating expenses, capital expenses, debt service and revenue are treated as an enterprise, and as such current debt service on Bond Anticipation Notes is being funded by the enterprise. A timely disposition of the project may avoid direct support of the project by the exempt tax levy, although there is no assurance that this will be the case.

The Symmes Advisory Committee project with VHB is also on schedule, and under the estimated cost for project consulting although there have been several changes in scope for the project. The first change was to cover the cost of additional meetings, that is more public meetings than were anticipated. The second change was to include the development of a three-dimensional model to aid the consulting team, the SAC, the ARB, neighbors and abutters and the Town at large in understanding the scope, density and impact of proposed development alternatives. Both the SAC and the ARB agreed that these changes would help the overall project move forward more efficiently and insure a greater degree and quality of community participation.

The third change arose from the daunting economics of medical service delivery in 21st century America. Several factors, including 1) current Arlington demographics, 2) the complex economic interaction and competition among Lahey Clinic, Mt. Auburn Hospital, Winchester Hospital and the leading Boston area teaching hospitals, 3) the affiliation of most local physicians with a local hospital, and 4) state and federal regulatory controls on both delivery methods and payer systems make the

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expansion of medical services at the site an intimidating if not intractable problem. The SAC and ARB decided, upon the recommendation of the Medical Uses Working Group, that additional resources were required to rationally address this issue. Even with these additional resources, there is a strong possibility that the problem will remain intractable.

The initial budget for the contract with VHB was \$200,000. With the changes in scope we estimate that the cost will rise by an additional \$50,000.

The Committee is now evaluating several alternative concepts with VHB as they are developed. Each day and each week, these concepts progress closer to the state of a potential recommended use plan. The Arlington Redevelopment Board, neighbors and abutters, and the SAC working Groups on Medical, Commercial, Residential and Public Uses are all involved and contributing. We plan to have a public meeting at Arlington High School on December 3rd to provide a preliminary presentation of these alternatives. Town Meeting members and citizens across Arlington are invited to this meeting as well as to our regularly scheduled Committee meetings on November 7th, November 14th and November 21st, held at the Symmes Hospital Cafeteria at 7:00 PM. There will be one or more meetings following the December 3rd meeting, and a formal presentation to Town Meeting early next year at a date as yet undetermined. At that presentation to Town Meeting, Town Meeting Members will have the opportunity to approve or reject the proposed changes to the Urban Renewal Plan, zoning regulations and other land use restrictions contemplated for the proposed uses. Only after Town Meeting approval will the Redevelopment Board be in a position to proceed with the development.

The summary schedule, with accomplishments and status to date, is attached.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Foskett
Chairman
Symmes Advisory Committee

Event Plan Status:

Event Plan Date	Activity	Status
16-Jan-02	Town Meeting vote to purchase property.	Complete
4-Feb-02	Department submits Urban Renewal Plan documentation to State Department of Housing & Community Development for sixty-day review period.	Complete
Apr-02	State Department of Housing & Community Development approves Urban Renewal Plan, Town floats bond issue for acquisition	Complete
1-Apr-02	Redevelopment Board and Symmes Advisory Committee approve text of RFP	Complete
3-Apr-02	Notice to Central Register for notification to potential consultants	Complete
8-Apr-02	Notice published in Goods and Services Bulletin.	Complete
11-Apr-02	Notice published in The Arlington Advocate.	Complete
25-Apr-02	Bidders' conference, 10 a.m., 1st floor conference room @ Town Hall	Complete
9-May-02	Proposals due at Purchasing @ Town Manager's Office at 11:00 a.m.	Complete
23-May-02	Short list of consultants selected.	Complete
4-Jun-02	Consultant interviews.	Complete
6-Jun-02	Consultant interviews.	Complete
13-Jun-02	Consultant selection.	Complete
20-Jun-02	Consultant under contract.	Complete
July & Aug., 2002	Facilitated outreach sessions.	Complete
Oct-02	Consultant presents selected development alternatives to	Planned November
Oct., Nov. 2002	SAC recommends preferred development alternatives.	Planned December 3 rd
Dec-02	Revised Urban Renewal Plan prepared for Town Meeting.	Planned January
Jan-02	(Action, and if necessary, submittal to DHCP.)	Planned
Jan. & Feb. 2003	Special Town Meeting to receive report and amend Urban Renewal Plan, if necessary.	Planned
Apr-03	Development RFP prepared for distribution.	Planned
Jun-03	ARB receives development proposals.	Planned
Aug-03	Select developer(s).	Planned
Sep-03	ARB executes land disposition agreement with developer(s).	Planned
Oct.-March 2004	Permitting sale or lease to develop.	Planned
Jun-04	Construction.	Planned

Meetings Scheduled:

11/6/02 Report to Town Meeting	8:00 PM	Town Hall Auditorium
11/7/02 SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria
11/14/02 SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria
11/21/02 SAC and ARB Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria
12/3/02 Public Hearing and SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Arlington High School Auditorium
12/12/02 SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria
12/19/02 Public Hearing and SAC Meeting	Not Confirmed	
1/9/03 SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria
1/23/03 SAC Meeting	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Symmes Hospital Cafeteria

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Memo to: Finance Committee
From: Alan McClennen, Jr., Director
Planning & Community Development
Subject: Symmes Hospital Financial Report
Date: October 16, 2002

The Redevelopment Board took title to the Symmes' property on April 17, 2002. Our commitment was to report periodically on the finances of the project. In the report to the Town Meeting under Article 2, the Finance Committee reported projected expenditures as follows:

\$7,100,000	purchase of the property
6,000,000	operating costs for four years
300,000	professional planning process
	leading to the development of the Symmes Plan
50,000	removal of debris required by the
	Purchase and Sale Agreement
150,000	legal fees
50,000	bonding costs
350,000	contingency

We have now been operating the property for six months and are pleased to provide you with this interim financial report:

<u>Estimate</u>		<u>Actual</u>
\$7,100,000	purchase	\$7,100,000
1,500,000	annual operating costs	800,000
300,000	planning process	225,000
50,000	debris removal	21,350
150,000	legal	83,581
50,000	bonding costs	50,000
350,000	contingency	350,000

As you can see, the principal change in the budget has occurred with operating costs. Commencing in May of 2001 the Planning Department received information on operating costs for the property. Our analysis indicated that the prior owner was expending more than \$120,000 per month or approximately \$1,500,000 per year to operate the property. This information was used in our report to you and the Town Meeting. We have

undertaken several steps to reduce these expenditures including: conversion of the power plant from high pressure to low pressure steam with associated reduction of staff (5.8 FTE's at \$246,000 annually); consolidation of leased space; reduction of other staff (2.5 FTE's at \$109,000 annually); and assumed reduction in heating and cooling costs due to closing space in the buildings. We hope to be able to reduce the operating expenses to approximately \$800,000/year resulting in a savings of \$700,000/year from the original estimates. This will be effective on or about November 1, 2002, at which time Lahey's free rental period will end since they have taken the post closure costs (January 31, to April 17, 2002) as a rental credit.

We have also finalized leases with Lahey, HealthSouth, two telecommunication companies, and three non-Lahey medical practices that we have allowed to remain on-site. We expect that annual income from these leases will be \$655,583 through April 17, 2004. Therefore, the net annual cost of the Symmes Arlington Urban Renewal Project is \$145,000 prior to the cost of the BAN's.

AMcC/an