

**Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group
Meeting Minutes, 19 September 2001,
2nd Floor Conference Room, Arlington Town Hall Annex**

Attending: Harris Band, Greg Blass, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Steve Frigand, Ellen Kushner, Ann LeRoyer, Suzi Lubar, Jim Marzilli, Brian Rehrig (Chair), Myra Schwartz, Sue Sheffler

Not Attending: Linda Privitera (Vice Chair), Denis Sullivan

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM.

Approve minutes of prior meeting

The minutes of the initial meeting of the Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group, held on 4 September, were received and approved.

Review of Open Meeting Rules

Brian Rehrig reviewed the procedural requirements of the Working Group's compliance with Massachusetts and Arlington Open Meeting Rules. These rules require that: 1) notice of meetings be filed at least 48 hours in advance with the Town Clerk's Office, 2) meeting places must be public and accessible and, 3) that meeting minutes be filed with at the Robbins Library and the town's webmaster within 45 days.

Other business

Ann LeRoyer reported that interest in the Symmes Project was high at the Open Space Committee's booth at Town Day.

Brian Rehrig and Elisabeth Carr-Jones reviewed the Symmes Advisory Committee's completed and planned public communication. Announcements of the Working Groups formation/call for volunteers were placed in the Arlington Advocate, the Town web site and e-mail list, Cable Access Channel bulletin board, and a mailing was undertaken to Selectmen, Town Meeting Members, Town Department Heads, PTO Chairs, and members of Arlington's Committees, Commissions and Boards. The Committee was reported to be developing a White Paper for presentation before Town Meeting's vote on the property acquisition.

Principles Statement

Harris Band's draft compilation of the Working Group's statement of principles was presented and discussed. Brian Rehrig explained that the statement will eventually be presented to the Symmes Advisory Committee, which will present it, along with the other Working Group reports, to Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen. He sees the immediate emphasis of the Working Group to be on process, rather than development, with a focus on laying the groundwork for responsible acquisition of the site.

Members of the Group discussed ideas on what should be presented to Town Meeting for their vote on the Symmes acquisition. It was suggested that a few scenarios with basic financial information on each be added to the statement of principles.

It was acknowledged that this subject matter Working Group's focus was broader than that of the other three groups, and that public uses may be dependent on other uses to produce revenue. Questions were raised about the financial models that would be used and how such things as the amortization of principal, and initial and operating costs would be factored into the Committee's analysis.

The distinction between commercial and public uses was questioned, using the example of a sports center with user fees. The Whittemore Robbins House was cited as an example of a public use facility which generates revenue. It was also pointed out that combinations of public uses on the site could be

revenue-neutral, such as a swimming pool with user fees supporting hiking trails. It was brought up that user fees could also be waived at certain times, using the Museum of Fine Arts admission as an example. Jim Marzilli informed the group that, under Massachusetts law, user fees cannot be charged which are greater than the cost of maintaining the facility. It was pointed out that the public school systems routinely charge students user fees for certain subjects, such as music. An Arts Center with a resident theater company was cited as an example of a complementary commercial/public use partnership which could be revenue-neutral. A Rehabilitation Center/Fitness Facility was also brought up as a revenue-neutral scenario which also incorporates the site's medical history.

The Group began the process of consolidating the Draft Recommendations (Principles Statement) by rewording and removing bulleted items from the Rationale section. Harris Band agreed to apply the same process to the other sections of the Statement and e-mail the revisions to the Working Group members for their further comment and refinement.

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that discussion of the Community Input Process and the use of the Outreach Working Group and other resources would be postponed until the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Wednesday 3 October 2001 at 7:30 PM, with a location to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Handouts

19 September Meeting Agenda

4 September Meeting Minutes

Symmes Public Use Working Group Draft Recommendations - 9/17/01