

Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group Meeting Minutes, 27 August 2002 Symmes Hospital Conference Room

Attending: Harris Band, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Steve Frigand, Ann LeRoy, Suzi Lubar, Deborah O'Donnell, Brian Rehrig (Chair)

Not Attending: Greg Blass, Ellen Kushner, Jim Marzilli, Sue Sheffler, Denis Sullivan

Also in Attendance: Michele Hassler (Arlington Board of Cemetery Commissioners), Richard Maimone (Director of Fire Services), Alan McClennen (Director of Planning and Community Development)

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

Public Input

Richard Maimone presented an overview of the Department of Fire Services' proposal for the Symmes site. The proposal is to construct a new fire facility on the wooded lower portion of the site with direct access to Summer Street. Draft plans for the building were presented. The proposed facility would house the Highland Station apparatus (which would be relocated from 1007 Mass Ave), office space for the fire department's command staff, office space for the Division of Inspectional Services, a classroom/meeting room, a training facility, and living space for fire fighters. This facility would bring together personnel currently working in four town buildings. Construction costs would be offset by the sale of the Highland Station building.

Michele Hassler presented an overview of the Board of Cemetery Commissioners' proposal for the Symmes site. The proposal is to construct a columbarium site, or memorial grove, for cremains that would be integrated into a natural setting on the property. Many design options were presented. The columbarium site would require minimal maintenance, and no new staff or equipment. In order to preserve the limited space remaining in the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, the Board of Cemetery Commissioners has been forced to impose stringent restrictions on who is currently allowed to be buried in the town. Arlington currently has no facility for cremains.

Working Group members discussed the two proposals in relation to the three Criteria categories of need, fit and feasibility. Based on this evaluation, the Department of Fire Services' proposal was judged to be weak in all three categories, while the Board of Cemetery Commissioners' proposal was judged to be strong. The Group voted to reject the fire station concept and continue consideration of the columbarium/memorial grove concept.

Brian Rehrig presented a message received from Paul Morrison of 219 Summer Street. Paul's proposal is for the establishment of a "Stephen Symmes Woods Park" which would encompass the existing wooded areas below the hospital and connect via walking trails up to a public park with an observatory area at the top of the hill. The Working Group recognized the similarity of this proposal with the scenic vista park concept already under consideration.

Meeting Minutes

Elisabeth Carr-Jones presented the minutes of the 28 May 2002 and 21 August 2002 meetings of the Symmes Advisory Committee (SAC) Public Use Working Group. The minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Evaluation/Definition of Public Use Concepts

Brian Rehrig reiterated the Working Group's current charge: to prepare a short list of adequately described public use concepts to be further researched by the consultant team. The Working Group performed a preliminary review of the public use ideas from the first community workshop, the Symmes survey and the Vision 2020 surveys using the five criteria in the category of need.

The unranked public use concepts chosen to be evaluated at the 3 September meeting were:

- 1) Outdoor Pool
- 2) Indoor Pool
- 3) Walking Paths/Nature Trails
- 4) Dog Space (fenced area)
- 5) Observatory (astronomical)
- 6) Observatory (platform/tower)
- 7) Columbarium/Memorial Grove (integrated into natural site)
- 8) Expanded Wooded Buffer Areas and Walking Trails
- 9) Scenic Vista Park (landscaped setting at top of hill for public gathering and viewing)
- 10) Natural Wooded Areas
- 11) Core Community Center (function rooms, classroom space, meeting/gathering rooms of various sizes, commercial kitchen)
- 12) Recreation/Fitness Center (indoor pool(s), running track, ball courts, weight & fitness rooms)
- 13) Art/Cultural Center (exhibit space, performance space(s), Dallin museum, art rooms)
- 14) Science/Nature Education Center (observatory, natural history exhibits, science/discovery rooms)
- 15) "Tot Stop" Facility (stand alone or in community center setting)

Alan McClennen mentioned the Harwich Community Center as one research model and reminded the Group of the success of the Whittemore-Robbins House and Central School projects, which have successfully returned revenues to the town. Deborah O'Donnell distributed a proposal, titled "Community Resource Center for Arlington Tots & Families," for the Group's consideration.

Planning for Evaluation Exercise

Steve Frigand reported that there could be as many as 30-40 people at the 3 September PUWG meeting to evaluate the short list of public use concepts. Steve communicated that the meeting will begin with a brief explanation of the 15 Criteria developed by the Working Group. Participants will then be asked to look at one criterion at a time, comparing the use concepts against each other. The results will be tabulated and the number of short listed concepts will be determined. Steve asked for a volunteer to run the Excel program to tabulate the results during the meeting; Suzi Lubar volunteered to help.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Symmes Public Use Working Group was set for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, 3 September 2002 at the Symmes Hospital Cafeteria.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Handouts

7 May 2002 Meeting Agenda, 28 May and 21 August 2002 meeting minutes, Department of Fire Services Proposal, Board of Cemetery Commissioners Proposal, Copies of message from Paul Morrison, Symmes and Vision 2020 Survey Results, PUWG Comments, Topographic Map and Aerial Photo of Symmes Site, Community Resource Center for Arlington Tots & Families proposal.