

**Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group
Meeting Minutes, 24 February 2003
Symmes Hospital Conference Room**

Members Attending: Greg Blass, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Steve Frigand, Ann LeRoyer, Suzi Lubar, Deborah O'Donnell, Brian Rehrig (Chair)

Also in Attendance: Alan McClennen (Director of Planning and Community Development), Carolyn Kenney and Julie Rackliffe Lucey (CATS)

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the 3 February 2003 meeting of the Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group were approved.

Symmes Public Forum

Brian Rehrig led a brief discussion about the Symmes Public Forum, held on 13 February 2003 at the Arlington High School Auditorium. Concern was voiced that, despite the SAC's explanatory presentation, the alternative scenarios lacked community vision. It was pointed out that the process has explored a range of feasible options, that it has educated us on the minimum impact solutions that will meet the financial constraints, and that future proposals from developers will be judged against a high degree of knowledge by the Town.

Urban Renewal Plan Input

Alan McClennen reported that decisions on recommendations by the SAC and the ARB would need to be made within the next 30 days, to allow time for the Urban Renewal Plan and other materials to be modified before the 5 May presentation to Town Meeting.

The scenic vista park concept was discussed. It was agreed that the park should be a true public amenity, attractive and accessible to all of Arlington's citizens, connected to the site's open spaces and beyond, and not compromised by any surrounding development. Ann LeRoyer volunteered to review the Working Group's previous reports, and to draft and circulate a recommendation on the scenic vista park for submission to the SAC.

Open space on the Symmes site was discussed. Although there was agreement on the importance of protecting the open space on the site, in particular the vista park and Summer Street woods parcels, the Group recognized that the integrity of the overall project could be compromised by rash restrictions. Brian Rehrig agreed to review the Working Group's previous reports, and to draft and circulate a recommendation on open space for submission to the SAC.

The memorial grove concept was discussed. Meeting participants expressed support for the concept, especially if it were to enhance the site's natural features, but there was concern that the Cemetery Commission had not yet submitted a proposal. On motion, the Working Group unanimously voted to request that the Cemetery Commission provide a financial plan for the memorial grove within one week's time.

Community Wellness Center

The future of the Community Wellness Center concept was discussed. Meeting participants questioned some of the assumptions that led to the elimination of the CWC from the current alternative scenarios, such as the economics, the ridge location and the volume of generated parking and traffic. The alternative scenarios show 60,000 sf of built space on the ridge, of which 35,000 - 40,000 sf is designated as medical offices. The remaining 20,000 - 25,000 sf leaves little opportunity for any integrated community facility. After discussion of potential options, the Working Group concluded that a first-class aquatics facility--which was affordable and accessible to the people of Arlington--would be the preferred use of the available space.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

The next PUWG meeting is scheduled for 7 PM on Tuesday 11 March 2003 at Symmes.