

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

SECTION 106 COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: November 02, 2005 9:00AM – 1:00PM

Location DC Office of Planning

Attendees: Joseph Woo (JW),
Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington (AFRH-W)
Hector Abreu Cintron (HA),
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
Lisa Burcham (LB), DC State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO),
Tim Dennee (TD), SHPO
Rosalynn Taylor (RT), DC Office of Planning (DCOP)
Anita Hairston, DCOP
Nancy Witherell (NW), National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC)
Tom Mayes (TM), National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)
Frank Milligan (FM), NTHP
Gary Scott (GS), National Park Service (NPS)
David Murphy (DM), NPS
Sandra Hoffmann (SH),
Petworth and Columbia Heights Residents Concerned (PCHCC)
Rebecca Miller (RM), D.C. Preservation League (DCPL)
Reyn Anderson (RA), United Neighborhood Coalition (UNC)
Timothy Jones (TJ), ANC-4C
Paul Brooks (PB), Catholic University of America (CUA)
Nancy Czapek (NC), General Services Administration (GSA)
Steve Schwartz (SS), GSA
John Thompson (JT), RSM McGladrey (RSM)
Giles Moore (GM), Koetter Kim & Associates (KKA)
Mona Khechen (MK), KKA
Emily Eig (EE), EHT Traceries, Inc. (EHT)
Carrie Albee (CA), EHT

This list represents all persons that signed the Section 106 Meeting sign-in sheet. There may be others who attended, however they are not included on this list.

OPENING REMARKS

The meeting began shortly after 9:00AM in the offices of The District of Columbia, Office of Planning. These meeting minutes do not attempt to provide a linear record of the meeting, but rather groups the comments of participants into topical areas related to the six proposed development zones.

NC provided opening remarks regarding the project, the process, and project status. The purpose of the meeting was to review draft guidelines for the Home pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The committee was informed that AFRH planned to modify the schedule for the project. A number of participants had expressed their concern that the project was moving too quickly and requested that AFRH allow more time for review of the Master Plan. In response to those requests, AFRH will submit the Master Plan to NCPC for its February meeting, rather than the January meeting as was previously scheduled. The next meeting of the Section 106 Committee, scheduled for November 16, 2005, has been canceled to allow the AFRH team time to prepare the Draft Master Plan and committee members to review the draft documents prior to the next scheduled meeting. The Draft Master Plan will be distributed by the end of November, hopefully by November 23, 2005.

SH indicated that she had prepared a brief (five minute) presentation that tied into potential development on the site and requested an opportunity to present.

NC asked that she hold her presentation until KKA had an opportunity to complete its prepared presentation.

SITE WIDE ISSUES

GM reviewed those historic features included in the design guidelines that are site-wide, including views, both internal and external, wooded areas and open land, tree lines, roads and paths and buildings.

RT – There is an ongoing study being conducted by the District of Columbia Government on open space in the District of Columbia. This study might inform the activities of the AFRH and be relevant to the concerns expressed by residents of adjacent neighborhoods.

TD – The Master Plan process is normally a comprehensive review of the entire site. AFRH is not clear on what its needs are in Zones 1 and 2, and are unclear on when the Home might proceed with Zones 5 and 6. HPRB suggests that the Master Plan be prepared with a focus on Zones 3 and 4, given the immediate need to produce revenue.

SH – We feel that this is a sensible approach. The review of the Master Plan should consider the open space needs of the capitol as a whole, not just the financial needs of the AFRH. The 106 process is supposed to look at adverse affects and potential mitigation. The PCHCC questions the need that has been promulgated by AFRH. We don't have figures to match up to those needs.

LB – It is a higher priority to minimize/avoid adverse affects in Zone 6 than affecting the scale and density of development proposed in Zones 3 and 4.

A summary of items to be considered in preparing the Master Plan was recorded on flip charts at this meeting. From the site-wide discussion, the item that was recorded was:

- D.C. STUDY OF OPEN SPACE NEEDS

ZONAL GUIDELINES

The design guidelines for the site are broken into each of the proposed development zones. A description of each zone, including area, goals and specifics of the zone introduce each of the zones.

ZONE 1

GM presented the ten-acre zone which contains the AFRH core residential facilities, both existing and proposed. The Zone 1 presentation included views into the site, and contributing buildings located in Zone 1, and it further described Zone 1 as containing three distinct sub-zones. Zone 1a, on the northern most portion of the site, contains two potential building sites. Zone 1b, on the eastern portion of the zone, is the area with the greatest potential development within Zone 1, and Zone 1c, which contains the Sheridan Building, is proposed to receive no development.

DM suggested that the comprehensive plan contained sections which are relevant to the proposed project. During Lincoln's presidency, the signal corps utilized high points in the District for communications, including portions of the AFRH. These high points are considered historic resources and should be respected.

TM –These signal locations should be included in the historic resources on the site.

SH-The signal corps should be seen in the context of the McMillan Plan, which is the center of my presentation.

LB-Is there a timetable for AFRH plan in regard to Zone 1?

NC-The revenue stream must be improved prior to undertaking a capital project like the buildings shown on the draft Master Plan. The revenue generated by AFRH activities in Zones 3 and 4 will drive the schedule for activities in Zone 1.

TM-I'm concerned with your proposal to construct a building between Lincoln Cottage and the Grant Building. It will block views from the Lincoln Cottage.

EE-Foundations on the site suggest that a building was previously located at the same site as the proposed building.

LB – Regarding the areas indicated for proposed building in Zone 1a, we would like to see a superimposed drawing which shows historic landscape elements and proposed building sites. HPRB wants to see an affirmative statement that includes a preservation plan section in the Draft Master Plan.

TM-The design guidelines should strengthen the public visitation component of activities in Zone 1.

SH – The traffic and transportation impact of the National Trust activities should be thoroughly documented as part of the Zone 1 Master Plan.

TD – What specifically is being planned for Zone 1a?

NC – The building proposed for Zone 1a has not been specifically identified at the present time.

A summary of items to be considered in preparing the Master Plan was recorded on flip charts at this meeting. From the Zone 1 discussion, the items that were recorded were:

- HISTORIC ELEMENTS: SIGNAL CORPS, MCMILLAN COMMISSION, and HISTORIC SIGHTLINES WITHIN CITY
- NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION
- LANDSCAPE FEATURES: PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS
- MASTER PLAN ISSUES
 - PRIORITIZE AFRH ACTIONS AND ESTIMATE IN 5 YEAR BLOCKS
 - OVERLAY PROPOSED BUILDING FOOTPRINTS AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS
 - INCLUDE AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT THAT “DEFINED HISTORIC LANDSCAPE MAINTAINED”
- BUFFER EDGE
 - ALONG EASTERN EDGE OF ZONE 1, WHERE NEW DEVELOPMENT IS PLANNED
- PUBLIC VISITATION
 - INCLUDE AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT IN MASTER PLAN

ZONE 2

GM presented the proposed design guidelines for Zone 2 development. He gave an overview of the location, the landscape features, the size of the zone (18 acres), and the existing open area (paved parking) in the center of the Chapel Woods. It is the intent of AFRH to utilize the central open area as an organizing element for locating most of the proposed housing in Zone 2. The remainder of housing would be located on the eastern edge of the zone. GM pointed out that there had been considerable loss of tree canopy during severe storm activities in 2004 and 2005. The design guidelines seek to preserve the pattern of roads and pathways within the zone and to maintain a majority of the existing trees located in Zone 2.

LB – What is the need for small scale housing shown in Zone 2?

JT – One of the intended purposes for the small scale housing is to provide residential facilities for married veterans who desire cohabitation.

LB – Is this seen as a continuation of the pattern of housing within the campus? Are you planning on protecting and preserving the existing detached housing on the site?

DM – It appears that the proposed location of houses will require destruction of trees within Zone 2. Does the suburban tract development model need to prevail, or can mature trees be left between houses?

GM – We have not conducted an inventory of existing trees in Zone 2. With careful siting of houses, a majority of the existing trees should be undisturbed. If we shift the western most row of houses to be more in line with the chapel, the existing trees on the western edge of Zone 2 should not be disturbed.

TD – Zone 2 is an important buffer on the site, between AFRH at the north end of the campus and the dense development proposed for Zones 3 & 4. Mitigation might involve planting not only replacement trees, where removed for housing, but also to replace trees that have been lost to storm events during the previous 18 months. The Master Plan should identify foreseeable needs of AFRH and propose solutions to those specific needs. The approach to Zone 2 should be no harm or removal of trees.

LB – AFRH should review the intensity of development in Zone 2. Is a suburban subdivision the proper model for development in this zone?

TM – AFRH should seek to maintain the wooded character of Chapel Woods.

A summary of items to be considered in preparing the Master Plan was recorded on flip charts at this meeting. From the Zone 1 discussion, the items that were recorded were:

- DENSITY: PREFER LESS DENSITY, SCATTER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS
- FOREST:
 - NO TREES HARMED OR DESTROYED
 - MITIGATE - REPLACE DISEASED/DEAD TREES
 - MITIGATE - PLANT ADDITIONAL TREES
 - QUANTIFY – HOW MANY TREES WILL BE REMOVED?
- DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIVE TO SITE FEATURE, HISTORIC TOPOGRAPHY
- DO NOT DIMINISH STYLE OF EXISTING HOUSING ON THE SITE
- GUIDELINES ILLUSTRATE BUILDING HEIGHTS

ZONES 3 & 4

GM reviewed the overall goals and approach to Zone 3 (55 acres) and Zone 4 (22 acres), views within the site, views through Zones 3 & 4, and external views into Zones 3 & 4. He illustrated the proposed green buffer along the North Capitol and Irving Street boundaries of the development zones. GM also review proposed building heights within Zones 3 & 4, and presented a site section which illustrates the significant change in elevation from the northern portion of the AFRH site (Zone 1) to Irving Street on the south edge of the site. The guidelines also illustrated the view corridor and the impact of the change in elevation on sightlines to the far reaches of the city.

GS requested clarification on the adequacy of existing streets, specifically Irving Street and the bridge over North Capitol Street, to handle the traffic generated by the proposed development within Zones 3 and 4.

JT – The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) includes traffic studies for both of the streets that you mentioned. The Final EIS will address the impacts and mitigation necessary as a result of a final alternative.

LB – The allee of trees along Pershing Drive might be lost with the intensity of development that is proposed for this portion of the site. Might there be a method of preserving the existing roadway? Possibly converting Pershing Drive to a bicycle path, or AFRH might look for another alternative. Mitigation in this zone would certainly need to address the loss of this allee of trees along Pershing Drive.

TM – Is it possible to clarify the language in the design guidelines regarding the 130' building height?

JT – Please review the material that was distributed at the October 19, 2005 meeting. This topic was covered in some degree of specificity at that meeting. KKA described the

relationship of the taller structures to open space within the zone. The design guidelines will include language from that presentation.

RT – The DCOP doesn't generally see buildings of 130' height outside of the central core. We feel that there should be further discussion of this height prior to proceeding. I personally like the varying height, but might want to see lower buildings.

TD – The NTHP does not want to see the additional height on the AFRH campus. Where there is no view shed, there isn't an issue. You also need to control the footprint of the higher buildings.

GM – The site section demonstrates that the taller buildings have a limited affect on views.

SH – The McMillan Commission Report, published in 1902, calls for concentration of density in areas already built up. The Old Soldier's Home was specifically noted as a contributing open space within the District of Columbia. Consistent with the community meetings that have been held, we want no development on any parcels at AFRH. We are ready and willing to take action to halt the plans that are underway.

There was discussion concerning the Irving Street entrance. The site model indicates a building on the east side of the entrance. TM felt that the building was too close to the entry and blocked views to the pasture and open space. TM voiced his opinion that there should be no building adjacent to the Irving Street entrance to allow a better entry sequence.

A summary of items to be considered in preparing the Master Plan was recorded on flip charts at this meeting. From the Zones 3 and 4 discussion, the items that were recorded were:

- CONFIRM ADEQUATE CAPACITY OF TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS
NORTH CAPITOL STREET ENTRANCE
IRVING STREET ENTRANCE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL STUDY
- ENHANCE VIEW SHEDS, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
- LOCATION OF TALLER BUILDINGS
FOOTPRINT
RELATION TO OPEN SPACE
OUTSIDE OF VIEW SHED
- BUFFER ZONE
WIDTH RESPONDS TO MICRO CONDITIONS
BICYCLE TRAIL
- PERSHING DRIVE
PROTECT ALLEE OF TREES OR
MITIGATE

THE MCMILLAN COMMISSION REPORT

SH requested that she be given an opportunity to speak to the Section 106 Committee regarding the McMillan Commission Report and its' pertinence to the work that was underway at AFRH. The Commission Report was prepared in 1902 and presented to the Senate in the same year. It called for a balance in the open space in the District of Columbia, with parkland provided for the residential areas of the city.

SH made the point that the area west of 16th Street, NW has large tracts of open park space available to the residents of those neighborhoods, and conversely, the neighborhoods east of 16th Street have far fewer resources available. SH stated that she would work to maintain the open space, especially on the western edge of the site.

LB – Does the NCPC incorporate the McMillan Commission Report in its operations?

NW – This is one of three plans that govern the operations of the NCPC. The AFRH plans for Zones 3 and 4 are consistent with the goals of the McMillan Report, in that it concentrates building in areas already developed.

ZONE 5

GM reviewed design guidelines for Zone 5 (8 acres), including external views, landscape elements, and proposed entrances to gain access to Zone 5.

DM used one of the external photographs to illustrate salient elements of a park border road (roadway that borders a park or open space). DM indicated that a park border road has trees on both sides of the street as a transition to the park beyond. A park border road is the road that runs along the edge of a park. DM explained that development in Zone 5 would have the result of shifting the park border (prior to development, Park Place is a park border road) further into the site. When development of Zone 5 occurs, Park Place will have development on both sides (existing houses on the west, new development on the east) and will no longer be a park border road as it passes beside Zone 5. The existing roadway that forms the eastern/northern edge of Zone 5 will become a park border road (development in Zone 5 on one side of the road, lakes and golf course on the opposite side of the road). DM suggested that AFRH should incorporate park border road elements (trees on both sides of the street). Further, the lakes are a neighborhood asset. The development plan should provide some 'breathing room' around the lakes, and not construct right up to the edge of the lakes. The goals of the McMillan Commission Report, as reported by SH, regarding continuity of open space from the McMillan Reservoir to Zone 5 should be pursued.

LB – If the lakes are not provided as a public amenity, then AFRH should decrease the proposed density of Zone 5 or forgo development in this zone altogether.

SH – The historic meadow and cultivated field are the greatest concern for neighborhood residents. Preservation of open space in Zone 6 is a higher priority than maintaining an undeveloped Zone 5.

LB – So, the neighborhood sees a trade-off between Zones 5 and 6.

SH – The neighborhood residents don't know the financial needs of AFRH and whether those needs will be satisfied by the proposed development in Zones 3 and 4. Maintaining open space on the western side of the campus will improve the development that is undertaken on the eastern side of the campus. AFRH should reduce its maintenance costs by reducing the mowing and other maintenance done on the open areas. They should explore a land transfer.

NC – If the NPS has properties of equal size and value that it would like to propose for a land transfer, NPS should prepare a proposal for GSA to consider. We made this request at previous meetings but have not received any proposals for land swaps.

DM – The NPS receives land for park purposes. Our mission is to provide active recreation space for citizens. What is being suggested is a major change in use of Federal land.

LB – How much revenue does AFRH anticipate from the development of their site?

A summary of items to be considered in preparing the Master Plan was recorded on flip charts at this meeting. From the Zone 5 discussion, the items that were recorded were:

- VIEW SHED FROM MCMILLEN RESERVOIR - PRESERVE
- CONTINUITY OF OPEN SPACE FROM MCMILLAN RESERVOIR - PRESERVE
- RETAIN HISTORIC TREE LINE (ROADWAY)
- 80' HEIGHT ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD IS PROBLEMATIC
- OPEN SPACE NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
- INCORPORATE PARK BORDER ROAD ELEMENTS
TREES, BUFFERING, SETBACKS
IF PARK BORDER ROAD FEATURES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED

ZONE 6

SH – Do not develop on this parcel.

TM – Lincoln’s route to the cottage passed the northern portion of Zone 6. The NTHP feels strongly that there should be no construction on this parcel, as it has potential adverse affect to the historic route.

SH – If you must develop in this area, PCHCC suggests that you build on the driving range and allow the cultivated gardens to remain undeveloped. We would like to see Zone 6 as recreation and open space.

LB – Is the NPS suggesting that we should entertain demolition of the houses on the north side of Park Road? Those houses were not present when Lincoln visited the site in 1850’s. We should attempt to entertain a compromise, as we surely are not going to demolish existing structures. Lincoln’s route is already compromised.

TM – The NTHP is adverse to development in Zone 6.

NW – Regarding the street pattern proposed for Zone 6, NCPC would like to see a pattern of streets that responds to the natural features of the landscape rather than a continuation of existing street grid.

SH – Can you relocate the golf course to the western edge of the site and move your proposed development to the central portion of the site?

TM – The NTHP wants AFRH to prepare a view shed analysis before it moves forward with development.

EE – What you are requesting is reasonable, however, commissioning such a study is not within the allowable funds at present. As an alternate approach, I would suggest that a development requirement for buildings taller than 85’ be that the developer prepare a rendering which describes the conditions. This will provide you with what you are requesting, but the cost will be shouldered by the development community rather than by AFRH.

LB – With enough greenery, an adequate screen could be provided for Zones 5 and 6. I would proceed with preparation of the Master Plan to include Zones 5 and 6 with the caveat that further study will be conducted when the AFRH economic conditions are better understood.

- PRESIDENT LINCOLN’S APPROACH ROUTE
PRESERVATION OF VIEWS
- PORTAL VIEW OF IVY GATE

- STREET LAYOUT,
RATHER THAN EXTEND EXISTING GRID, RESPOND TO SYLVAN
CHARACTER
- DENSITY
REDUCE DENSITY
- LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT
ZONE 6B DEVELOPMENT PREFERRED BY NEIGHBORHOOD
SOUTHERN PORTION OF ZONES 6A AND 6B
MAINTAIN VIEW SHED FROM PARK ROAD
- MITIGATION
ENTIRE ZONE 6A AND 6B AS MITIGATION FOR ALL OTHER
PORTIONS OF THE SITE
- LAKE ZONE
HOLD DEVELOPMENT AWAY FROM EDGE OF LAKE TO
PROVIDE “BREATHING ROOM”

The meeting concluded at 12:45.