

**Seminary Hill Association
Board of Directors Minutes**

March 10, 2004

The following Officers and Directors were present:

Frank Putzu, President
Joe Gerard, Vice President
Cindy Gurne, Communications Officer
Laura Vetter (for Maggie Melson) Episcopal High School and Secretary
Lillian S. Patterson, Area 1
Tom Kerester, Area 2
Richard Hobson, Area 3
Dick Hayes, Area 5
Carol Maxwell, Area 6
Pat Liddy, Area 7
Bruce McCarthy, At-Large
Charles Ablard, At-Large
Mary Lewis Hix, Virginia Theological Seminary
Bill Dickinson, Past President

February minutes approved

Treasurer's Report

Jack Sullivan reported funds transferred to Burke & Herbert from BB&T.
Jack Sullivan has a bill for web services of \$325 to set-up a survey system and \$67 monthly for website services. Discussion ensued about the contract with the vendor.
Cindy will check the bill.
Check received from Braddock Cove Homeowners. Pat Liddy will follow-up with Larry Nisley, who sent the check.
Interest rate was .1%. New rate will be .6%.
No report of account balances, because Jack is waiting for a statement from Burke and Herbert

Police Report

Sargeant Bartlett reported crime continues to decrease. Down 22% since this time last year.
New ext. 300 (703)838-6360

Area Reports

Area 1:

Lillian Patterson reported nothing new to report.

Area 2:

Tom Kerester reported nothing new to report in his area. He says that the housing market is crazy.

Area 3:

Dick Hobson reported Quaker View is on the agenda. He attended the City Council meeting in which the subdivision of Cooper Dawson's property was approved. 3 of the 4 conditions were approved. Mr. Smucker reported at the Planning Commission meeting that he and his wife intend to create a lot off of their lot for their son. No objections were raised from the neighbors. The Planning Commission appeared to be okay with this. Maintenance of the lawn condition was not accepted by the Planning Commission or City Council. The covenant across front of the property was included.

Area 4:

Cindy Gurne reported that the trees on Fort Williams Parkway have been replaced and replanted. She also reported reduced problems with townhouse parking.

Area 5:

Dick Hayes reported nothing new to report.

Area 6:

Carol Maxwell reported nothing new to report.

Area 7:

Pat Liddy reported that the Ivor Lane property with 4 building lots has been sold. This item is on the agenda.

Area 8:

Don Fullerton reported nothing new to report.

Area 9:

Bob Coulter was not present to report. Concerns expressed in the area about people putting trash out too early before pick-up. Speed bumps approved for St. Stephen's Road.

Virginia Theological Seminary:

Mary Lewis Hix reported notice of public hearing of the Board of Architectural Review to install a handicapped ramp to one of the historic buildings. Bill Dickinson raised the issue of historic designations for buildings on Seminary Hill. The Seminary is still working with city to build new houses at the west end of the campus.

Episcopal High School:

Laura Vetter reported nothing new to report.

Second Presbyterian

Frank Putzu reported the application for the site plan will be addressed at a joint work session between the Planning Commission and the City Council in May. Frank believes that the plan presents some positive elements, but that other options should be explored. Andrew MacDonald and Ludwig Gaines want the entire property preserved. Del Peper would like the city to acquire more lots. City Council meeting debate was described a "spirited." Ludwig Gaines issued a memo to the City Manager to come up with ways for the city to purchase the entire property.

Frank sees this as two separate issues: retention of open space and the development itself should retention of open space not be successful.

Joe Fisher made the point that this issue has been going on for 14 months.

Jean Moore said she would welcome acquisition of the entire property for open space, but that if this not possible she can accept the development as long as the houses are compatible with the neighborhood.

Joe Gerard pointed that SHA places high priority on water runoff issues. Frank mentioned that the SHA letter should request a hydrological study.

Cindy Gurne expressed concern about what she perceives as the delay tactics placed in front of this development. Joe Fischer feels that we need to prioritize among the open space in this area. A clarification was made that the property has not actually been purchased, it is under a contingency contract.

Jo Anne LePanto has mixed feelings particularly concerning the size of the homes, but at least it is known quantity as opposed to the city acquiring the property.

Jack Sullivan detailed SHA's history of successfully fighting development that has violated the principals of SHA as a neighborhood of single family homes. He does not trust how the city would use the land. Jack Sullivan believes SHA should support the development, because it is consistent with SHA as a neighborhood of single family homes. Jack motioned and it was 2nded for SHA to approve the development as is.

Frank made the point that SHA is committed to open space. Joe Fischer clarified his January motion that SHA's position is to maintain the maximum amount of open space.

Cindy Gurne feels that that there are other higher priority open space properties.

Tom Kerester would want a guarantee from the city regarding how the property would be used by the city.

Bill Dickinson placed 2nd Presbyterian in the context of other at risk open space properties in the city. There is \$16 million to be accumulated in the city's open space fund over five years, which is inadequate. The properties identified in the open space plan are a grab bag. Bill said that his committee has identified 60 open space sites that should somehow be protected though a variety of ways and prioritized 10 as being at high risk and worthy of careful consideration for purchase by City Council. Bill is concerned about the process in that when the 2nd Presbyterian property was presented to the City Council for purchase, the city rejected purchasing the property without consulting SHA. The city was given 3 opportunities to buy the property according to Joe Fischer. Bill Dickinson agrees with pursuing the max open space we can get. Eileen Fogerty once indicated that building 7 homes instead of 8 would the optimum and the city could purchase one lot. Bill speculates that at 7 homes the city will receive an additional \$150K per year in property taxes, so in 3 years the city could pay for the purchase of an additional lot assuming a cost of \$500k. Bill Dickinson would want an open space

easement so that the city could never sell the lots it would acquire to a developer. Bill Dickinson also wants the utilities underground.

Bill Dickinson's points can be summarized as follows:

1. The city buys one lot in addition to the 1.1 acre donated to the city.
2. How will the city maintain and develop the open space?
3. Easement on the open space.
4. Bury the utilities.
5. Use the city code to pursue the issue of character and compatibility of the proposed residences with the neighborhood

Jack accepted Bill points as an amendment to his motion.

Frank Putzu will prepare a letter and circulate it for comment before the joint work session. Discussion of the language for Frank's letter ensued: Joe Gerard proposed an amendment supporting the development with 7 houses with the city to purchase 1 lot, which will be contiguous with the other open space on the site. Joe Gerard believes that this development is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Frank is uncomfortable supporting the with language supporting development, but is willing to incorporate laudatory language.

Motion for letter from SHA to includes Bill Dickinson's five points and language applauding the progress made by SHA and the city in obtaining existing concessions from the developer and therefore SHA supports the proposed plan for the property.

Jo Anne LePanto raised the concern that the city acquiring open space at the corner of Quaker and Janney's Lanes might open the door to widening Quaker Lane.

Motioned seconded. Dick Hobson abstained, because of conflicts due law partners.

Motion carried. Bruce MacCarthy voted against it.

After the motion passed, Dick Hobson praised SHA's work and decision.

Cindy moved and Dick Hobson 2nd pursuing the Quaker View property for open space. Dick will pursue.

Buzzard Gap

The development is now called Pickett's Ridge. It has been through the application process and obtained an easement. The original was plan to build 6 to 8 homes. SHA met with the developer to obtain a better approach. The new developer proposed a plan to build 4 homes. The first 2 homes were approved in June and are now being constructed. The easement issue is that the Pickett St. easement will be the only pedestrian access between Pickett's Ridge and Jordan Street. The 2nd phase easement was relocated, but a future trail is subject to future public hearings. The 2nd phase of the 2 final homes was approved. Unofficially, it is rumored that the developer would like to build 2 additional houses. SHA would oppose, if the developer proceeds. Dick Hobson noted that this was approved by a 4-3 vote. Some City Council members were disturbed by the size of the houses and loss of wooded land, as well as impact on the existing city road easement from Pickett St. to Polk Ave..

Quaker View

Proposed development at the corner of Quaker and Duke to rezone from commercial to residential for townhomes. Initially, the was rejected and returned to the Planning

Commission. The number of townhomes to be built was reduced from 8 to 6 and approved by the Planning Commission.

The City Council and Planning Commission have expressed greater acceptance of this proposal, but it is not known why.

Dick Hobson reported on a discussion at the Planning Commission meeting regarding how to address traffic issues. The developer investigated the issue of access from the East with an easement from the existing office property. The Office building owners rejected the proposed easement, thus killing the option of access from the East. The church opposes the current townhome development plan.

Dick Hobson moved to reconfirm SHA's objection to the proposed development and confirming that the protest petition will remain valid. Motion passed.

The issue was deferred from the next meeting.

The church prefers a commercial development.

Cindy asked why this property has not been pursued for open space.

Tom Parry inquired about condemning the easement. Dick Hobson said it can and has been done elsewhere, but Dick considers it to be unlikely. Dick has a plan to obtain more recent signatures to the protest petition.

Joe Fisher's efforts were thanked and applauded.

Mini-Grants

Cindy Gurne proposed resubmitting the plan to identify historic properties through a Historic Survey to create a historic district on Seminary Hill. Edith Bradbury said the survey has already been done and that she has copies of the materials. Dick moved that SHA authorize the filing of the application for the grant for \$5000 to conduct a historic survey. The motion was seconded.

Joe Ablard will pursue applying for the grant.

Cindy described last year's application for a virtual "town hall" to determine what the community feels are important issues to impact planning.

General Open Space

Frank Putzu asked Bill Dickinson what SHA can do to support the acquisition of open space. Bill replied that the city needs more money for open space, pursuing easements either donated or purchased, or adjoining property owners purchasing land and placing easements on the purchased property and identifying properties at risk. Concern was expressed that the city does not take care of the property that it already has (e.g. The property paralleling the fire house on Seminary Road).

Chesapeake Bay Protection Act

Bill Dickinson reported that a new RPA map is available on the city's T&ES website. This will constrain land development in some new areas of Seminary Hill

Psychiatric Facility at Alexandria Hospital

Frank Putzu reported that the plan is close the unit. Bill Dickinson reported that it is unclear where the patients would go. Jack Sullivan said that INOVA has had trouble getting the psychiatrists to man the unit. Jack Sullivan reported that the expanded

emergency room and additional beds will not be built and the 9 beds from psychiatric unit will help alleviate the pressure.

Joe Fischer supports closing the psychiatric unit, if the beds are genuinely needed to avoid reroutes. Joe Fisher described the problem of reroutes. Jack Sullivan reported that the pediatric ward has been cut in half. Dick Hobson feels that the closure of the psychiatric unit is financial. Dick feels that issue has already been decided. Bill Dickinson believes that we need to focus on the hospital, because it is such an important resource for the community, he did not take position the psychiatric unit.

Dick Hobson reported on the history of the transfer of citizen control of the hospital by membership to the hospital board of directors by way of background and agrees that we need to pay more attention to the hospital. Bill Dickinson suggested that we invite a member of city council to attend an SHA meeting. Dick proposed inviting a representative of the city to attend a future meeting to discuss the closure of the psychiatric unit

SHA Communications List Serve

Cindy Gurne reported on the value and progress of the list serve. Laura Vetter raised concern about personal information required by Yahoo to join the SHA List Serve.

Updates

Burke Library

Frank Putzu reported on a presentation on Burke Library. It is one of the most heavily used libraries in the city. Dick Hobson serves on the Library Board.. Dick wants to return the library to its earlier form. Bill Dickinson reported that the School Board made poor case for how they are using the library facility.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura F. Vetter, Secretary