



Long Range Planning Committee

Minutes

April 18, 2016

700 – 900 PM

Submitted by Tricia Daniels and Grant Davies Co-Chairs

Attendees: Council Member Cecere, Tricia Daniels, Grant Davies, John Beale, Tina Coplan, Martha Johnson, and John Murtagh.

700: Approval of minutes

The minutes from the March 2016 meeting were not available because of the absence of the minute taker.

705: Update on Bethesda Sector Plan

The members discussed the lessons learned from the April 7th meeting of the Planning Board. Appreciation was expressed for the work of John Freedman and his presentation to the Planning Board. Council Member Cecere thanked those that attended the work session. The members discussed why with the representation at the Planning Board meeting were we unsuccessful in reducing the heights and density of the buildings – particularly the Jaffe building. The consensus reached was that the Planning Board was developer friendly and while the Board members might listen to our arguments there was limited commitment by the Board members to following through on our recommendations. The Committee members discussed what should be done to try and have a greater effect on future decisions. Of particular importance will be the Planning Boards review of density targets to achieve the original objectives of the Bethesda Sector Plan (likely requires a reduction of up to 4 million sq. ft.). Three suggestions were made:

1. Collation of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR) be invited to the next LRP Meeting to discuss next steps (May 16, 2016)
2. The Town review the current density proposals and come up with specific suggestions and trade-offs to make the Planning Board's decision easier. The strategy has to include addressing the "edge communities" and all communities' needs.
3. Ensure the new Council focuses on the Sector Plan immediately.

800: Mission Directed Budgets

Fred Cecere and Tricia Daniels provide the LRP Members with an overview of the budget. As the Committee has been aware the Town faced significant financial issues from the Wynn decision, unsupported and unrecognized tax revenue from the State, and funds allocated to Purple Line and other initiatives. The work of Todd Hoffman, Fred Cecere, Tricia Daniels, Zack Gold and other members of the Town's Revenue Committee has allowed the Town, in spite of the fiscal issues noted above, to create a surplus for the prior year and to create a budget for FY 2017 while retaining the vast majority of services. The services retained include the priorities establish early in FY 2016 by Town residents at a public session. The surplus and budget objectives were accomplished by actions including but not limited to:

1. Consolidating funds to reduce capital expenditures by approximately \$700,000An update on the implementation of the proposals from the January 2016 meeting will be discussed along with the planned next steps.
2. Controlling legal fees by simplifying the administrative variance process.
3. Reducing from 3 shifts to 2 shifts the coverage by off-duty Montgomery County Police Officers.
4. Recovering 75% of the cost of snow removal through FEMA grants.
5. Eliminating charity contributions.
6. Supporting through the Mayor and Town Manager (with other community leaders) legislation that will culminate in repaying the Wynn and State over payments over 17 years (with no interest).
7. Introducing a 1 cent per hundred property tax – this results in an additional \$120,000 in direct revenue and a \$130,000 match from the State.

Generally, the LRP members recognized that the Town is in a much better financial position because of the hard work of the Council, Staff and residents and that there are no concerns about the Town's fiscal state.

845: Comments of Fred Cecere

Fred made a number of closing comments. He said that he does not believe he will be the Council Liaison to the LRP. He stated that he felt while the year had begun in a rather adversarial manner that in the end the Council had figured out how to work together effectively – noting that many of the final votes were 5-0. He also noted that we have a strong group of candidates running for election. He said that he did not want to see a re-emergence of adversarial approaches. He noted that he will not run for Mayor and he will not vote any incumbent as Mayor.

The LRP thanked Fred for his leadership.

900: Adjourn