



City of Richmond
Navy Hill Development Public Hearing
Minutes

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk

Thursday, January 9, 2020

6:00 PM

Pine Camp Cultural Arts and Community Center
4901 Old Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Chris Hilbert, Vice President
The Honorable Kristen Larson (late arrival)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (late arrival)

Absent

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Kim Gray
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Reva Trammell
The Honorable Michael Jones

Staff Present

Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Bill Echelberger, Council Policy Analyst
Candice Reid, City Clerk

Council Vice President Chris Hilbert called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and presided.

Upon the Vice President's request, City Clerk Candice Reid provided information regarding citizen speaker guidelines.

PROPOSED NAVY HILL DEVELOPMENT (NHD) PROJECT PUBLIC HEARING

(Associated Legislation: ORDS. 2019-211, 2019-212, 2019-213, 2019-214, 2019-215, 2019-216, 2019-217, 2019-218, 2019-2019 and RES. 2019-R044)

The following individuals provided comment regarding the proposed Navy Hill Development project:

Opposition

Ernest Parker, Jr. spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, stating that the project seems to be "too good to be true" and referenced the Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center project for its lack of increased revenue for the city. Mr. Parker urged Council not rush its decision regarding the proposal.

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived at 6:03 p.m. and was seated.

Ross Catrow, RVA Rapid Transit executive director, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, voicing concerns regarding the location and design of the potential Greater Richmond Transit Company transfer center.

Debbie Rowe, 3rd District resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, expressing concern with the lack of initial community engagement and the possible reduction in funding for city schools and infrastructure. Ms. Rowe asked Council to reject the proposal and mentioned that the

Legal Aid Justice Center, Partnership for Smarter Growth, New Virginia Majority, Richmond Education Association and Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission believe the project to be unsound.

Robin Levey, former 3rd District and current 5th District resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, stating that she was not against development, however, she has concerns regarding the TIF (tax increment financing). Ms. Levey expressed interest in a special tax zone bill being introduced by Delegate Jeffrey Bourne to assist with financing the project.

Councilor Kristen Larson arrived at 6:09 p.m. and was seated.

John Moser, 3rd District resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, stating that he does not agree with the current state of the development project; however, there should not be a “do this or do nothing” approach. Mr. Moser maintained that there are other financing alternatives, and he advised Council to review information he forwarded to the NHD Advisory Commission.

Ben Tyler, 3rd District resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, expressing concern with potential cost overruns and questioned whether development, other than that of the proposed arena, will be cost-effective.

Support

James “JJ” Minor, Richmond National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that the NAACP endorses the development project.

Pamela Irving spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that she is in favor of the project.

Dion Clarke spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that she is in favor of a project that will bring hope to the community.

Anthony “Ajay” Brewer, Jr. spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and reflecting on his years as a financial advisor, he noted that thirty-year financing is customary. Mr. Brewer implored citizens to respect one other while sharing comments regarding the project.

Thomas Stewart spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that it is a great idea and will generate jobs. Mr. Stewart encouraged citizens in opposition to provide suggestions to make the project successful.

Anthony Brewer, Sr. spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, citing that the project will increase city revenue.

Sandra Francis spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, commenting that the project will revitalize downtown.

Brenda Carter spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that the new arena will be beneficial for retaining entertainment revenue within the city.

Opposition

Florence Breedlove spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project, sharing that she is not opposed to progress; however, she stressed the need for affordable housing.

Support

AnnMarie Grohs, Boho Studio owner, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, mentioning the successes of a similar project where she formerly resided and professed the same for Richmond.

Qiana Armstead spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and stressed that it is time for change. Ms. Armstead suggested additional information be provided to the public in order to increase support and to combat naysayers.

Myia Francis spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that she is in favor of the project.

Beverly Fox, Hosea Productions president and chief executive officer, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, expressing concern that the city lacks a venue that she can promote entertainment.

Victor Landry, Virginia State University Multi-purpose Center general manager and on behalf of Spectra, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, mentioning that the new arena will allow for a variety of entertainment opportunities while infusing capital and job creation. Mr. Landry urged Council to commit to the project.

Kenneth Jones spoke in support of the proposed NHD project, stating that it is needed to increase the level of employment opportunities for African-Americans, especially for youth.

Vice President Chris Hilbert thanked the citizens for their attendance.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

CITY CLERK