



City of Richmond

Navy Hill Development Proposal

Public Hearing Minutes

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

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

6:00 PM

Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School Auditorium
1000 Mosby Street
Richmond, Virginia 23223

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Ellen Robertson

Absent

The Honorable Chris Hilbert, Vice President
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Kim Gray
The Honorable Michael Jones
The Honorable Kristen Larson
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Staff Present

Meghan K. Brown, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and presided.

Upon the President's request, Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton provided the citizen speaker guidelines for Council public hearings.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED NAVY HILL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(Associated Ordinances and Resolution: ORD. 2019-211, ORD. 2019-212, ORD. 2019-213, ORD. 2019-214, ORD. 2019-215, ORD. 2019-216, ORD. 2019-217, ORD. 2019-218, ORD. 2019-219, RES. 2019-R044)

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

Opposition

Charles Hall spoke in opposition of the proposed Navy Hill Development (NHD) project and expressed his concern for the project not celebrating or memorializing the historic Navy Hill area. Mr. Hall furthered by stating that the housing will be priced out of range of those making minimum wage.

Richard Rumrill spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project and discussed how the current coliseum and convention center were failed attempts at regional approaches to housing challenges. Mr. Rumrill urged Council to proceed with caution on the proposed NHD project.

Support

Van Williams, Williams Windows and Glass, Inc. owner, expressed support of the proposed NHD project. Mr. Williams touched on the potential for economic development and positive impact that having an arena for entertainment will have on the next generation.

Thomas Hogg spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and offered that the reason only one developer responded to the RFP was due to the amount of social benefits packaged into the proposed project. Mr. Hogg went on to state that no reasonable developer would come from out of town to embark on such a task and only developers committed to the city would respond.

Ivory Finner expressed support for the proposed NHD project and the importance of keeping Richmond as a desirable tourist destination. Mr. Finner expanded by saying that the revenue generated from the arena would support the local schools.

Brad Armstrong, 4th District resident, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and underscored that it stands to generate economic growth and act as a continued source of employment for thousands. Mr. Armstrong also stated that the project will not touch the city's general fund and stands to bring millions in profit to the city.

Alicia Venable spoke in support for the proposed NHD project and how it stands to support minority owned businesses and the low income population in the city.

Pamela Irving expressed her support of the proposed NHD project.

Dion Clarke spoke in support of the proposed NHD project stating that the coliseum was one of the driving factors for her moving to Richmond. Ms. Clarke furthered that this project would help attract entertainers to the new arena and regenerate funds into the community.

Brenda Carter spoke in support of the proposed NHD project noting that the project stands to bring economic growth and change to the city.

Qiana Armstead spoke in support of the proposed NHD project stating that it promotes positive change and economic growth to the city.

James "JJ" Minor spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and highlighted that it will bring much needed resources to the city and promote economic growth.

Jermaine Armstead spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and gave emphasis to the need for economic growth the project stands to offer.

Oscarlyn Elder spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and expanded that ending systemic challenges to poverty requires risk and innovation. She stated that the project is being proposed under a tried and true method of financing by several committed stakeholders.

Shandell Taylor spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and expressed her excitement for the opportunity.

Stuart Ruiz spoke in support of the proposed NHD project but noted concerns regarding the city's admissions tax rate of 7 percent. Mr. Ruiz posed that this high tax rate is the causal factor for various events and concerts choosing other localities. He furthered that this aversion of larger events will continue to happen if this admission tax isn't addressed.

Kenneth Jones spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and expressed that it stands to bring economic development with very little risk to citizens. He also stated that the project will aide minority business owners and bring lasting jobs to the community.

Sandra Francis spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and stated that it is important to have the younger generations experience downtown Richmond with as much vibrant economic development as when she was younger.

Myia Francis spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and noted that it is a great opportunity for the city.

Becca Ruiz spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and stated that this is an opening for Richmond to develop a true downtown presence.

Sandra White spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and highlighted the potential for revenue to the city and job development.

Ashley Jefferson, Very Ashley boutique owner, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project. She also stated if the project moves forward, that she would relocate her business from Stoney Point Fashion Park to downtown Richmond.

Davina Ellis spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and emphasized that the coliseum has been a nonfunctioning eyesore for several years. Ms. Ellis also stated that her grandparents are residents of the Navy Hill area and that it is devastating to her to see the conditions surrounding their home.

Anthony “Ajay” Brewer, Brewer’s Café owner, spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and highlighted the potential positive impact that the development can have on small businesses.

Orlandis Branch spoke in support of the proposed NHD project and stated that there is an opportunity to gain revenue from land that is not currently generating any taxes. Mr. Branch emphasized that this is an extraordinary project that leaves the city with very little risk.

Ta’Quan Grant spoke in support of the proposed NHD project because the project stands to bring revenue to Richmond Public Schools.

Opposition

Marty Jewell spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project and asserted that corporate entities have had a history of over-promising and under-delivering on city projects. Mr. Jewell stated that he does not have confidence in the plan as presented.

Hillary Small, 7th District resident, spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project and stated that it is remnant of the false promises made to citizens for the Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center and Stone Brewery. Ms. Small also highlighted the grave conditions reported in the Richmond Public Schools and that those concerns need more immediate attention.

Jennifer Lawhorne spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project and underscored the money being invested should be directed toward school funding to address the dilapidated conditions. Ms. Lawhorne also noted the danger of students crossing the intersection of Mosby Street to get to the Martin Luther King Jr. middle school and that funds would be better used ensuring children’s safety while traveling to school.

Florence Breedlove spoke in opposition of the proposed NHD project and highlighted the national negative press that Richmond is receiving for eviction rates. Ms. Breedlove furthered if Richmond was truly a dead city, it would not have just been ranked 39th on the *New York Times* list of top places to travel in 2020.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

CITY CLERK