



## **Economic Development Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 ❖ 7:00 pm

**NOTICE:** This virtual meeting of the Economic Development Authority was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.

All participating members of the Economic Development Authority were present at this meeting through electronic means. All members of the public may view this video of this meeting on the City's website at [www.fallschurchva.gov](http://www.fallschurchva.gov).

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice**
- 3. Roll Call**

**EDA Members Present:** Jim Coyle, Edward Saltzberg, Sandra Kiersz, Chair Bob Young, Vice Chair Brian Williams, Matthew Quinn,

**EDA Members Absent:** Erin Messner

**Student Liaisons Present:** Rex Crespin, Miles Pierre

**Student Liaisons Absent:** Alex Lacroix

**City Staff Present:** Jim Snyder, Val Weiner, Becky Witsman,

**Public attendees:** Letty Hardi, Phil Duncan, Mr. Muffler, Nick Benton

- 1. Approval of September Meeting Minutes:**

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15227/September-2021-Meeting-Draft>

Jim Coyle motioned to approve the September meeting minutes, seconded by Ed Saltzberg. Unanimous approval.

- 2. Founder's Row II (1001 West Broad) Presentation from Mill Creek**

Project Site: [Founders II | Falls Church, VA - Official Website \(fallschurchva.gov\)](http://Founders II | Falls Church, VA - Official Website (fallschurchva.gov))

Please see Item 3 for staff comments, maps, and more information - [https://fallschurch-va.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=1738](https://fallschurch-va.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1738)

Mr. Muffler of Mill Creek Residential made a presentation on Founders Row Phase II, and solicited comments and questions from the EDA. Comments and questions included:



- Concerns with traffic congestion and safety entering and exiting the property.
  - Mr. Muffler noted there are two garage points of access, one on Broad St. and one on West St. They are going to create a median break on Broad St. that will allow for left turn out movements. This will help drivers going west on Broad from sitting at a light. On the other side of the garage, they are working to improve the phasing of the signaling to minimize backup. They've also requested a 17% reduction in parking requirements on the side to minimize traffic.
- Pedestrian safety as a result of high traffic congestion.
  - Mr. Muffler noted the improvements from Phase I will help support excess demand created by Phase II. There is currently a crosswalk with signage between Ellison and West Streets, and there will be crosswalk improvements throughout and around the site. He noted the speed limits are high on adjacent streets and they are in talks with the City's DPW on lowering those speed limits. They plan to expand the sidewalks as well for biking, walking and running.
- Access to public parking inside the site
  - The first two levels are for retail parking only; there is a corridor to take pedestrians from the street into the parking lot.
- Co-working space not accessible to members of the public; may not be used for its primary purpose of 'office space' and remain empty
  - Mr. Muffler noted it will be available for all residents as an amenity and as a membership with the City. It will just be an open desk policy; will not be staffed.
- The lack of one-bedroom and office in the project and why there aren't more.
  - Mr. Muffler noted they foresaw this demand for Phase I and designed entirely separate rooms for office. In Phase II, office space consists of a designated area in some apartments but not a separate room. There is a co-working space provided as an amenity to residents. This space is 5,000 SF and open to the public for a membership fee.
- LEED standards on the roof
  - They are proposing LEED gold, and are proposing two green roofs. They will have a set aside for solar panel readiness.
- The heating system
  - The heating and cooking will be electric.



- Condos versus rentals; why not more condos?
  - Mr. Muffler noted Mill Creek is a commercial apartment developer—they do not construct condos. He postured there could be condos but this site is potentially too far from metro to be successful in an economic downturn.
- Founders Plaza; lacks sufficient outdoor seating, based on increased demand throughout COVID-19, and does not seem very open to the public and asked whether it could be. EDA members suggest more flexibility to keep the space open and accessible.
  - Mr. Muffler said there is not enough space for a ‘market square’ like in Phase 1 due to lack of space. He would like to anchor the space with an art installation, and thinks the co-working space is a good public gathering space. The street along Broad St. will also have more outdoor seating.
- Timeframe for next steps
  - The project will take the next couple years; construction in 2022 – 2026
- Planning liaison Tim Stevens asked the EDA their opinions on the percent construction (currently 6%) compared to other sites in the City.
  - EDA members believed there to be higher demand for residential than commercial at this site, and believed residential to be a better use of this site. Members were not concerned by the lower commercial percentage.

After discussion, remaining comments include:

- Members are not concerned with the low commercial percentage due to lack of parking, traffic congestion, and retail available at Phase I. It should not impact the overall net fiscal impact since retail can lower the overall value of a project.
- Affordable housing: allocate all 12% units at 60% AMI, rather than split between 60% and 80%
- Members would like to see a more sophisticated and developed co-working space and more office if possible, otherwise it may not be used at all. They encourage potentially leasing all or part of the space as office.
- Members care most about quality of commercial as opposed to quantity
- Members are very concerned about traffic outside the building, particularly on W. Broad/7. Members suggest a stop light or sign or lowering the speed limit even more than existing limits.
  - Council member Letty Hardi noted a recent traffic study showed that without development, that intersection would degrade due to high traffic volume. With development improvements, it will stay the same and potentially improve with signal timing changes.



Mr. Muffler also noted they moved their first tenants into Founders Row Phase I on Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. He noted that 2020 and the pandemic made the retail and commercial markets take a dive, but they are now regularly giving tours of their commercial spaces and have agreed to terms with 5 tenants. They are in advanced discussions with 75% of commercial spaces as well as on the movie theatre space.

- City staff asked about the senior housing units in Founders Row I. Mr. Muffler noted they will not be finished until January. They are pre-leasing; but expect more demand once it is finished.

### 3. **City American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) business funding discussion update**

EDA Summary Memo for ARPA Recommendations:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15240/ARPA-EDA-Summary-Memorandum-for-recommendations>

Potential Uses for ARPA Funds Comparison Report:

[https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15238/Potential-Uses-for-ARPA-Funds-Comparison-Report-in-WORD-updated-10\\_4\\_21](https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15238/Potential-Uses-for-ARPA-Funds-Comparison-Report-in-WORD-updated-10_4_21)

Proposed grant program specifics:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15239/Proposed-grant-program-specifics-needing-further-EDA-reviewdiscussion>

September EDA Memo on ARPA funds:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15123/EDA-discussion-memo-of-possible-City-of-Falls-Church-American-Rescue-Plan-Act-expenditures-FINAL-091421>

Eligible ARPA expenditure categories:

[https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15122/Expenditure-Reporting-Categories\\_Appendix-1\\_June-17-2021](https://www.fallschurchva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15122/Expenditure-Reporting-Categories_Appendix-1_June-17-2021)

Staff presented options for ARPA funding. EDA discussed potential grant options, but details will be decided at next month's (November) meeting.

- Deputy City Manager Cindy Mester will attend next month's meeting to discuss the separate application for ARPA money to go towards affordable housing

Jim Coyle motioned to approve asking for \$2.5 million in ARPA funds for grants, COVID recovery marketing plan, tourism promotion, targeted assistance to our 3 City hotels, salary funds for a



possible part-time employee/consultant, who may assist in marketing and/or administering the proposed program. Ed Saltzberg seconded. Unanimous approval.

#### **4. Wayfinding Project Update**

City staff provided an update that the wayfinding program is estimated to complete in mid-January.

#### **5. Future EDA meetings may be in person ...**