

CHRONOLOGY
OF BEHIND THE SCENE CONTACTS
AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN
ON 2/22/2011

March 21, 2011 4:37 pm
From Lisa Gilleran to Dana

Dana: "... I think we need to work with Les and Richard D before we obtain any schematics for (Block) E – I have no problem asking Paul for a quote but we will have to let Les and Richard be involved in the development of the drawing..."

March 22, 2011 2:40 pm
From Dana to Les, Richard and Robin

Hi Les,

We will have the consultants draw up a final adopted DMP Option A with the arts center removed from the HMC site as well as other adjustments based on Town Council's final resolution. Then we need to place a footprint on Block E to represent the arts-associated uses center. Can you provide a footprint? This is conceptual of course.

March 22, 2011 3:05 pm
Les to Dana

Glad to help. While we have not met with our development advisors yet (April 7th) our initial concept is for a building much like the library to follow the shape of the lot. This building would cover about 85% of the buildable part of the block – about 20,000 sq. ft. on the ground. Since the theatre portion needs to be between 25-28' height, we see the building being about 35' tall or 3 stories (with the first floor being about 15' tall to accommodate gallery height and other studio spaces – sort of like a tall retail store. The other 2 floors would be about 10' ceiling heights.

March 22, 2011 3:31 pm
Dana to Les

Les – this is very helpful. If we show most of parcel 17 with a building footprint, but not pushing into the point of the corner at the north end, that may do it. Parcel 17 is listed at 23,579 sf. That puts your 20K footprint at about 85% of Parcel 17. Of course parcel 10B is constrained by VA Power easement and Parcel 18 is just a small triangle. We will stay clear of those.

March 22, 2011 4:47 pm
Dana to the Consultant

Dana conveys his and Les ideas almost word by word to the consultant to prepare a sketch.

April 12, 2011 5:12pm
Dana Heiberg's Email to Consultants on

"Eliminate the arts center over by the HMC at the center of Center and Lynn Streets..."

"Show the new Arts/Associated Uses Center on Block E as you have just drawn. Just had a reply that they may not be able to get back until Friday, after running this by their board; generally they are OK with the Block E drawing but agree that Vine Street could be reduced to a walking alley in favor of circulation through the garage. "... except that the land use will be reevaluated if the arts/associated uses center is not in final design or under construction by year 2015"

" This is alternate option without redevelopment of Ashwell property in partnership with the town. ... adjust the street connection to reduce it to a relatively narrow walking alley connecting Vine Street to the Street along the W&OD (Vine extended we will call it). The walking alley could be enhanced with "window" that would be art displays or posters for shows, etc. not actual windows.

" Block F – Show both of the options as you have created SF-D and Townhouse options to the Multifamily as show on the main adopted plan"

April 13, 2011 10:38 AM
Dana to: Lester Zidel, Robin Carroll, Richard Downer, Gilleran, Lisa
 Subject: concepts

Les: I'm really looking forward to the HFCA response. It occurs to me that joining the Block D parking garage and the arts center as we discussed briefly last night after the TC is not the way to go because it creates a superblock and greatly increases the garage costs and possibly the arts center costs. (the garage would have to move to a different construction regime --sprinklers, ventilation, etc.) I think the public street that UDA has drawn may really be the way to go, as it enhances the viability of all uses on that street -arts, arts associated commercial uses, and the commercial space that sits on what is now the Station Street parking lot. This can be a very flexible public street made of brick pavers and available to close to vehicles for special events. Public Art can adorn the garage facade on the south side of Vine extended as well as the arts center side. The arts related commercial uses and the arts center get visibility and access. Having a connection from Center to Vine Extended to Station through a garage is not nearly as good as having a special public street. The footprint of the arts and associated uses building has to shift a little. I called UDA just now, and the footprint that you are looking at is about 16,000 sf. That means the building can be 32,000 sf on 2 levels or if the part of it that is not the theater goes to 3 stories you may be able to achieve something closer to the 38,000 sf figure. Food for thought. -Dana

April 13, 2011 10:40 am
Consultants to Dana Heiberg,

We have relocated the garage to stay on city owned property. We are also illustrating a large footprint for the future fine arts building.

"There has been a suggestion that the new street linking Center to Station Street can be removed or turned into a pedestrian walk. We believe it is important to keep the new street in the plan for the future success of the downtown for the following reasons:

1. The town as currently configured has a super block defined by Center, Lynn, Station and Elden,. This block is too big for the downtown to properly accommodate cars and pedestrian circulation. The new street breaks that large block into two reasonable blocks and connects key properties together.
2. The new street will connect the new garage and arts center to the core of the downtown. Without the street , the two facilities will have their address on Center which will be a residential street outside the downtown area.
3. The new street will provide two approaches for the new 420 car garage which will be critical to its usefulness for the downtown. The new street will provide an essential vehicular and pedestrian approach to the garage for downtown users including restaurants and shops on Station/Pine/Lynn, the municipal center, etc.
4. The street can be designed as a special street that can be closed off for festivals and special events. It may be designed with special pavers, lighting etc. as a unique arts oriented public space. The city controls the parcels across Center and can use some of that area to move Vine Street north a bit to properly align with the new street . The face of the new fine arts center can be in the same location as the current building. Perhaps the open space requirement for the arts building can be dedicated to the new street.
5. The garage can be designed with unique ground floor features to accommodate festival vendors and will be required to have attractive facades on public streets.
6. A 25' depth along center can be reserved for shallow townhouses built as a liner building facing Center.

April 13, 2011, 3:34 pm
Richard Downer to Dana

When do you prefer our response? We plan on meeting on 04:16:11 and should be able to communicate our remarks to you by that weekend. Will that do?

"I assume you are only looking for a more accurate representation of the proposed art/arts related use center to replace the current sketch on the initial DMP. Is that correct?"

April 13, 2011 – 4:22pm
From Dana to Richard Downer, Les and Robin,

"The town needs to proceed on two tracks, as directed by Town Council in their adoption of the Downtown Master Plan... the original track corresponds to the graphic of the final adopted plan (originally Option A) and it depicts redevelopment of the Ashwell land as well as the town land on Block D & E.

The second track is a scenario without consolidation of the Ashwell property with the town-owned parcels. This is the graphic that I provided to you in rough draft. A public street from Vine Street

through the block to Station Street is a part of both options. This street is going to have some small impact on the land area of Block E, because the reconfigured garage cannot quite fit on the town land that we often refer to as the Paul lot. Our consultants have convinced me that the positive overall condition of creating public street frontages and connectivity for the various uses clearly outweighs the slight constraint to the size or placement of the arts/associated uses building. A walking alley provides a nice benefit, but it would be inferior to a small public street.

April 13, 2011 9:20 pm

Les Zidel to Dana, Robin, Richard, Gene Fleming

Robin & I had a chance to study the new illustrative plan today. Richard has sent us an email with some of his suggestions but we have not formally met as a committee – that is scheduled for this coming Wed. Art came over today at lunch and he shared some of his ideas as well about the Vine Street design issue. Dana: You raise a good point about a superblock – that it could impact cost of development because of fire suppression and ventilation costs if the buildings would be combined in some manner – if parking was in the bottom level of otherwise occupied buildings. We were not looking to eliminate the Vine Street extension completely, nor to combine the parking structure into the arts “compound”. Your idea that Vine Street could be a special “alley” with pavers without curb and gutters may be a solution.

Our Advisory Committee which includes Ted Britt, David Birtwistle, Bill Lauer, Grayson Hanes, and Mark Gibbs will be looking at practical solutions for both D&E to be developed together, but not necessarily into one super building. This would be out of scale to the “village” concept. We are working with a DBI architect – Alan Hansen, who was a consultant to the Wilson/Buttler team back in 2002-3 for us. He now has our power point presentation and is waiting to be briefed by Ted Britt on land issues once we go over the topo maps of the town owned land.

As far as the footprint of the proposed art center, what your design team came up with is close to what we thought was a useable footprint. As a side point – 80 condos will not fit here either! 40 is more like it.

As we discussed 3 floors is probably right with non-standard heights. We will be looking to test the feasibility of a basement for storage and support space as well as mechanical. The height should not exceed that of a townhouse in Fortnightly Square or the Municipal center.

April 14, 2011, 9:07 am

Richard Downer to Les Zidel and Robin

Les- I strongly disagree with the three-floor designation, even if we understand that are three “non-standard” floors. While you, Robin, Dana and I ma understand that “three non-standard” floors may end up at 45’, the public does not. They understand floors as you see them from the street. If we say three and the arts center ends up four stories in some portions, we will possibly be creating a battle later on that we don’t need. We don’t want to put word on a concept plan that may restrict use and cause problems in the future. Remember, the parking garage is not shown as five levels, which assume would be at least 40-45’ high.

PLEASE join me in suggesting the wording for Parcel E shown as “Arts/Associated uses on 3-4 levels (actual concept to be determined. This clearly indicates that portions may be three stories

and portions may be four stories, which is what it's going to probably take to make this concept work physically and financially.

Also, the paved, roll curb alleyway IS the answer for Vine Street extended, as well as designing all of the buildings on D&E to work together to support the "Village" concept. I agree with you and Dana that a "super block" building would make it very difficult from a design and construction standpoint. Also, having separate buildings, form-based designed to compliment each other, would allow them to be built in phases, which frankly is probably the way it will need to be happen anyway.

Also, I strongly feel that the pedestrian bridges from the art center to the W&OD and to the Parking Garage must be shown on the illustrative Master Plan maps. Creating second floor/W&OD Trail level connectivity is vital to the success of our overall concept. Making it easy for folks to "flow" into and through the Arts Center and to the Parking Garage at the Trail level, will be unique and vital to the Arts Center Café' and terrace concept success. Of course the same connectivity needs to exist at the street level. I always thought our goal was to extend the Town Green/Trail level across to Parcel D&E, which the Wilson/Buttler PPEA plan did. These pedestrian bridges help achieve that original goal on a smaller scale. From what I gather, Dana would like our final out as soon as possible, so the three of us need to agree on these matters. ASAP.

April 14, 2011, 10:22 am

Dana to Richard Downer, Les Zidel, Robin, Lisa G, and Art Anselene

I appreciate the excellent discussion, although this can get a little hard to follow via email. I think the consultants have created some confusion by combining the arts center building concept with the ALTERNATE garage concept for the Block D on one drawing.

"The TC action being conceptual also retains flexibility and it did not address whether or not a public street or alley would be viable if we have to move to the ALTERNATE garage concept. I think it is fair to assume that the Council wanted to retain a public street in either configuration, since the resolution does not address the issue. I think our ability to address further develop building concepts beyond say a footprint is very limited at this state in terms of what Town Council has approved.

I will dig out the geotechnical study, land survey and other information on the properties from back in the 2002 time frame and provide that to Les as requested. – I hope I find time for this today or at least before the end of the week.

April 26, 2011 1:27pm

Les to Dan, Robin, & Richard Downer

There is no reason to hold up the plans. The building footprint as shown in the latest Block E configuration is about what we had in mind. Robin suggests that the building shape could be a bit more triangular at the end near the Fortnightly library to use the block a bit more efficiently, more like the shape of the library itself perhaps. This is a detail that can be addressed in the pattern book. We understand that the street configuration which uses the land now occupied by the present Vine Street may change as plans develop together and that the two buildings proposed on the 2 blocks and the parking structure compliment one another.

One Observation. I agree that the residential component along Center Street as a front face for the proposed parking structure would use up too much land needed for parking. Yet it is obvious that we need to hide the parking structure and make the walk down Center Street on this side of the street very pedestrian friendly. I suggest that perhaps we should face the parking garage with some brick and glass shells several stories high that can be affordable artists studios would serve to create interest along the streets (Center & Vine) compliment the art center block E, and be less costly to build than include them in the art center building. There are examples of this type of construction with other downtown parking structures I have seen. In fact this is in UDI plans I saw from option B.

April 27, 2011 10:46am

Dana Heiberg's Email to the Consultants on

"...Block E: (on the main sheet and the options sheet) The Town Manager directs the reconfiguration of the vehicle load-in area to eliminate the curb cut on Center Street and eliminate the small parking/loading area on that portion of the block in favor of something along or off of Vine Street extended. It was emphasized that this does not need to serve tractor trailers or large trucks, more like vans and small box trucks."

April 27, 2011, 2:06 pm

Richard Downer to Dana, Les and Robin

"In case Les' response did not clearly answer our question regarding the New Facilities Committee's response, the below is what I understood we agreed to recommend"

"The latest building footprint, subject to Robin's suggestion in Les' email, is fine. However, we suggest the wording for Parcel E be shown as "Art/Associated Uses on 3 to 4 levels (actual concept to be determined)" – replacing the label "Cultural Arts Bldg: 38,000 sf (3 floors)" on the Master Plan concept maps. This clearly indicates that portions may be three stories and portions may be four stories, which is what it's going to probably take to make this concept work physically and financially."

We feel that, if possible, the second floor pedestrian bridges from the Art Center to the W&OD and to the Parking Garage should be shown on the Illustrative Master Plan maps. Creating second floor/W&OD Trail level connectivity is vital to the success of the overall concept, making it easy for folks to "flow" into and through the Arts Center and to the Parking Garage at the Trail level, will be unique and vital to the arts Center café' and terrace concept success. Of course the same connectivity needs to exist at the street level. Our goal is to extend the Town green/trail level across to Parcel D&E. These bridges help achieve that original goal.

April 27 at 3:27pm

Dana Heiberg to Art Anselene and Lisa Gillran

Based on yesterday's meeting I believe I should respond to Mr. Downer by saying that the Downtown Master Plan is general and conceptual and will not include or exclude pedestrian bridges and connections from ground and 2nd floor levels of an arts/associated uses building. The purpose at this time is to create a "feature shown" on the comprehensive plan per Town Council's adopted resolution for the general location of the facility and not to get into details that are not part of the Town Council's February 22, 2011 resolution – details can be addressed during review of specific building concepts. A building in the general location as shown on the plan will be

considered and details such as pedestrian connections, entrances, loading etc. etc. will be part of future processes for rezoning and site plan on the property.

April 28, 2011 11:56 am

Dana Heiberg to Richard, Les and Robin

“ I totally agree that there is a great opportunity to make pedestrian bridge connection, but specific trail connections and bridges will have to be considered at the arts facility concept design stage and will need to coordinate with the NVRPA as well. We can't put graphic elements on the plan that the Town Council did not discuss and adopt. An arts/associated uses center is now a “feature shown” on the adopted Comprehensive Plan – that is a victory, because under the Va Code Section 2232 Review public hearing process will not be required as we move forward to facility concepts.”