

**Notes from Huntington Town Meeting  
Held at Mt. Vernon Government Center, on 9/14/2011**

**ISSUES:**

1. Storm Water Bond: Mr. Hyland asked the BOS to consider a referendum for a Stormwater Bond for a Flood Control Project for the Huntington area. If approved by voters, it is a projected 5 year completion with a \$30 million price tag. There followed a fair amount of discussion by Mr. Hyland over what this means and the process for moving this forward.
2. Consider redevelopment of area: Either a homeowner buyout, which would take ALL homeowners approval and carries its own risks or redevelopment into high rises with current homeowners getting priority at an affordable rate. This requires changing the conservation plan for this area.
3. Option presented by a resident: Consider the Fairfax County Stream "redesign" plan. This reroutes streams to slow water down and diverts water into wetlands and other areas designed to retain water. Cost of \$47 over 25 years.
4. Financial validity for owners, especially newer owners: there is general concern that if there is a buyout at current market rates, they will be upside down on their mortgages and end up filing bankruptcy.
5. Backflow preventers: some discussion on how these devices work and the cost. Apparently, quite a few residents only had flooding from floor drains and not through windows. One homeowner said it cost him \$75 and others said \$750 - \$1000 for purchase and installation, homeowner would need to maintain after installation. Mr. Hyland directed staff to research the costs and get back to him in a couple of days so that Mr Hyland can inform BOS and residents on how best to proceed.
6. Fred Selden (dubbed Mr. Zoning by residents attending) advised residents that THEY determine the density, not the county. Residents need to reach consensus on what they would like the community to look like and what density they would like to have. Mr. Selden outlined two communities that did exactly this and what the positive outcomes were.
7. Process: residents want to know what the process is for moving forward. Mr Hyland and Mr Selden both said the Civic Association should bring the issues to Mr Hyland as a whole, not piece meal. Residents were assured that non members were not excluded from the process and that in any case, membership is \$10/year. They asked for a point of contact with Mr Hylands office, he gave them Brett Kenney and relevant info. Residents also want to be kept in the loop on status of Bond Referendum so they can forge ahead with conservation plan if BOS says no and not have lost a year waiting around.
8. Best Practices and Subject Matter Experts: residents asked for real estate experts and lawyers for the purpose of educating residents on real estate values and negotiate the best deal for the community as a whole. Mr Hyland said this was a good idea and Mr Selden said he would be glad to work with residents on communities that have already undergone this process and show them what worked and what didn't.
9. Allan Rufe pointed out that Huntington has an online community

(Huntingtononline.org) that already has a lot of information regarding the conservation plan and proposed redevelopment, so residents wouldn't be starting from scratch.

10. Mr Hyland had discussion regarding folks who want to stay here. What happens if they don't want to live in a high rise and just take the money? They would likely end up buying 40-50 miles away and commute back to work. He will insist that part of any contract with community will provide priority and affordable price for every resident who wishes to buy into the high-rise development plan (if residents decide that's the way they wish to move). He was adamant that he would not do a thing unless he was satisfied that every single resident had been contacted and informed to their satisfaction of the entire proposal and was comfortable with it. He is absolutely opposed to eminent domain in this case.

11. Information Gaps: How do we get information to residents who are not attending meetings, do not have internet access or are not members of the Civic Association? Mr Hyland will direct staff to develop a white paper which lays out the issues and the current options in their entirety and in a format that can be understood by all residents. This includes residents who speak and limited English and those of us who aren't lawyers and proficient at reading between the lines. Residents mentioned the use of Face book, Twitter and other social networking mediums.

12. Seniors- concern that seniors have health and mobility issues that wont be addressed by younger constituents and that long term residents (regardless of age) will not get the same consideration as younger or newer residents.

13. Action now: One resident proposed that residents follow the Arlington model of "drop the conservation plan immediately, raise density immediately, let buyers sell individually and let hold outs "die off", It only took 20 years to work for Arlington. Mr Hyland expressed disapproval of this plan.

14. Civic Assoc: leaders discussed use of Community Center as base for meetings, adjusting times and dates to better accommodate more residents. More meetings will be held other than the standing monthly meetings between now and the 60 day timeline. Association also requested that Transportation officials be involved since any redevelopment resulting in higher density would have detrimental effect on traffic in an already congested area.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

60 days from now, Mr Hyland will present a rough cut of white paper with issues and considerations for residents to review. Civic Association would like to have Brett attend Oct. 6th meeting and bring relevant County staff in to speak to residents. They would also like to include Huntington Club community members as they are also interested in this subject. They would like to draft a vision for what Huntington would look like in 10-15 years under the proposal. Mr. Hyland asked Zoning staff if it wasn't feasible to engage in a new planning exercise for this area, given the comments and interest tonight. In wrapping up, the Civic Assoc. leaders indicated they would approach Mr Hylands office with suggested dates, etc for meetings, but that they needed help with printing and distribution as they only have a balance of \$800 in their coffers.