

Minutes
Fairlington Citizens Association
Fairlington Community Center
3308 South Stafford Street
Arlington, Virginia
November 16, 2011, as approved

Board Members Present:

President Rosiland Jordan
Vice President Bryan Pettigrew
Secretary Carol Dabbs
Treasurer Ed Hilz
Director Kent Duffy
Director Mark Jones

Board Members Absent:

Director Guy Land
Director Brenda Kriegel

Public Meeting regarding replacement Safeway store at Bradlee Shopping Center

There were a total of about 50 persons present.

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

B. PRESENTATION BY SAFEWAY TO FAIRLINGTON COMMUNITY

Safeway provided drawings of some of the departments planned for the new building, and of the proposed exterior of the building from several angles. A representative of Safeway made a general presentation, including the following points:

- This proposed 61,000 sq. ft. building will be the third on this site. The original building had 17,000 sq. ft., and was replaced with a building of 36,000 sq. ft., which was enlarged to the current 41,000 sq. ft. building in 1982.
- It is proposed to be a “Lifestyle” store, much like those in Georgetown and Bethesda. This concept, initiated in 2005, is intended to make shopping a more enjoyable experience, with a warmer ambience.
- There will be a number of new or upgraded departments in the store, such as
 - one for organic produce,
 - a floral kiosk,
 - a bakery with more variety,
 - an expanded grab and go section of the deli,
 - a Starbucks inside the store,
 - a service meat and fish department,

- a wine steward,
- seating areas both inside and outside,
- a community room, and
- a big, airy, well-lit garage and separate small retail store on the King Street side of the parking lot.

C. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- What is the timing for the construction?
Safeway anticipates approvals in December 2011 from the Planning Commission and City Council of Alexandria, and construction starting in mid-summer of 2012 and lasting about 12 months. They will keep a temporary pharmacy operational, at a location still to be determined.
- The architecture looks very modern, in contrast to the 1940's and Williamsburg revival of the surrounding communities. A second comment indicated that modern "doesn't cut it."
Based on the nearby commercial buildings, which are more modern, they concluded that there is no real architectural reference for this building. The building is a new design for this site, not a knockoff of other Safeway buildings, and will have LEED silver rating. The sidewalks will be widened on both the King St. and Braddock Rd.
- Is the parking proposed adequate? Is there any intent to manage parking for other Bradlee stores or Episcopal High School? Follow-up comment: Harris Teeter at Shirlington has a system of 60 minute parking meters, which must be activated but are free.
There are currently 199 spaces; 228 are anticipated, which is an increase of 15%.
- Does Safeway favor the Alexandria City staff recommendations for the Braddock/King/Quaker intersection improvements, in particular the operation of the Taylor/King and King/access road intersections as a single system?
Safeway has agreed to fund additional studies on options for the access road, and will contribute \$81 thousand towards the traffic signal and \$200 thousand towards the overall Braddock/King/Quaker updates. The new store is mostly about making a more comfortable shopping experience, and improving these intersections is considered in that light.

D. FURTHER INFORMATION FROM SAFEWAY ON CONSTRUCTION, TRAFFIC, AND BUILDING PLANS

Craig Muckle, the community liaison for the Bradlee Safeway, indicated the following about construction and traffic aspects of the new building.

- Construction workers will park on site, not in the neighborhoods;
- There will be a meeting 30 days in advance of beginning construction with neighboring residents;
- The City of Alexandria determines the traffic patterns for trucks for construction;

- Asphalt removed will be recycled on Pickett St;
- Construction will be confined to the hours of 7 am – 4 pm;
- No pile driving is planned; and
- Alexandria limits noise during construction.

He went on to say that:

- The new small building will be leased to another retail concern;
- Staff will increase from about 100 to 150-200, and many will use public transportation;
- Currently, there are about 450 customers per hour at the weekly peak on Saturdays, and an increase of about 160 customers per hour are expected at the new store, but it is population, not square footage that that drive customer traffic; and
- The roofing will be white and reflective, with lots of equipment placed there, and will have bio-retention areas.

E. FURTHER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

- Will there be transit improvements to increase the use of busses?
Safeway will re-locate the bus stop, and provide cover for it; some plans are still being developed regarding how to handle the bus traffic.
- A representative of Fairlington Glen asked about the breakdown between customers from Alexandria and Arlington.
Safeway did not have this information available.
- The Fairlington Glen representative indicated that the community meetings held earlier by Safeway were larger, and not specific to individual neighborhoods, and asserted that Fairlington had been ignored because it is perceived to be an Arlington community.
- Although 25' trees will be planted, they will grow larger, possibly obscuring the building.
- What safety enhancements will be made?
Safeway responded that Alexandria has lighting standards which will be met, creating consistent, even levels of lighting, without dark spots.
- Could the small retail building be used as a drive-thru for Safeway's pharmacy?
This is unlikely because so much surface area is necessary for drive-thrus.

F. FOLLOW-UP AND ADJOURNMENT

President Jordan indicated that she will speak on behalf of the FCA at the Alexandria Planning Commission on December 6th and Alexandria City Council on December 17th. She adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Carol J. Dabbs, Secretary