

Campus Plan Task Force Meeting
April 20, 2010
Mary Graydon Center – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Timetable
3. Review previous discussions
4. Housing need calculation
5. Potential housing sites
6. Neighborhood action plan
7. Issues list
8. Other

All materials from the meeting are available on the Community Relations web page on the American University web site at www.american.edu/finance/fas/campus-plan.edu

AU representatives attending the meeting included David Taylor, Chief of Staff for AU President Neil Kerwin; Jorge Abud, Assistant Vice President of Facilities Management; Jerry Gager, University Architect; Penny Pagano, Director, Community and Local Government Relations.

David Taylor opened the meeting with task force members. The task force meeting scheduled for March 23 was cancelled so that university officials could do additional work with planners to address current and future housing needs. Taylor said that tonight's meeting will focus on housing as that has emerged as a top priority for the university and that the university has made progress on an action plan. He also said that the university has been reviewing its timetable for submitting its new Campus Plan to the city's Zoning Commission. Initially, the university envisioned July, 2010, as its target to submit its new plan, but now anticipates that the filing will be sometime this fall, with a specific date still to be determined.

Jorge Abud led the task force through a presentation that reviewed the university's strategic goals and how a new facilities plan would align with those goals, and balance density and open space in the best possible way. He told the group that working with our planners, McKissack & McKissack, we have started to discuss the potential development of housing on the current Nebraska parking lot. University officials also met recently with a group of neighbors around AU's Tenley campus about plans to move the Washington College of Law to our Tenley campus.

Abud said that the current resident halls on AU's main campus are designed to hold about 3,465 residents. With 345 students tripling in rooms, plus 200 students currently living at the Berkshire Apartments in space leased by AU, our actual capacity is 4,010 beds. Reducing tripling would create

an immediate need for 300 additional beds. Returning students to campus from the leased apartments in the Berkshire creates a need for 200 more beds. Improving the quality of some current rooms creates a need for another 50 beds. If the Congressional building is demolished at Tenley for a new law school, that will create a need for an additional 180 beds on campus. This adds up to a total need for 730 beds without any additional increase in new students.

Abud said the university needs to increase our housing stock to about 1,300 new beds in the new campus plan. Most of these beds are to meet current need, and only a small number of beds will be needed for undergraduate growth in the next decade.

In response to requests and suggestions from members of the Campus Plan Task Force, the university is looking at additional sites on campus for the location of possible new residential halls. Areas include Public Safety, Hamilton, Beeghley, McKinley, Asbury, the President's Office Building, and Clark. The university is investing several million dollars now to renovate three of the four buildings in the Clark area to use as housing. A neighbor asked for more information on whether the timeline for development on the Public Safety site could be affected by the impact of the Army Corps work in the area of the Public Safety building.

A survey of students about their interest in on-campus housing if we offered more housing types that students want resulted in a projection of 1,800 beds. The university needs to weigh that against the financial risk of building too many new beds.

We continue to work on site plans for the Nebraska parking lot and are will planning for at least 600-700 beds. We originally proposed 1,000 to 1,200 beds for this site. The plan is for a mix of housing that will be mostly doubles with a bath built in or suites, and some singles.

Neighbors from Westover voiced objections to any housing on the Nebraska lot and to bringing students closer into their neighborhood. They urged the university to look again at the Clark Site and the green space behind McKinley to Beeghley as potential sites for residential housing that would have less impact on the community. Concerns were raised with putting anything high on the Child Development Center site because it sits on one of the highest parts of the campus. Other neighbors objected to putting anything on the site behind the President's Office Building because of its proximity to the old house and to Massachusetts Avenue.

At the request of neighbors, the university will set up a time for a tour of the campus for members of the Campus Plan Task Force.

AU student government president Andy MacCracken said students want to be part of the community and do 100,000 hours of service annually. He said that the more we bring students on campus, they will be better behaved.

Other neighbors raised concerns about the university acquiring other commercial properties along New Mexico Avenue.

On the issue of students living off-campus in the neighborhood, David Taylor said the university is taking a number of steps to be more effective in resolving off-campus student conduct. As part of that process, we are changing the students conduct code, have put in place an internal team that is meeting regularly, and undertaking several new initiatives to reaching out to neighbors in areas where students live off campus.

The next meeting of the Campus Plan Task Force will be Tuesday, May 25 at 7 p.m. in the Butler Board room on the Sixth Floor of Butler Pavilion.