

RESPONSES TO LAUREL HILL & SPRING HILL CITIZEN QUESTIONS

Public Meeting – July 24, 2007

Revised August 1, 2007

1. Appearance of the Reformatory and Penitentiary

An interim measure to conduct a facelift to the adaptive reuse areas in direct view of Spring Hill residents should be completed while a comprehensive plan for reuse remains in the planning stage. What is the status of a plan to complete an interim facelift?

The county is taking measures, and will continue with measures, to improve the former prison site in preparation of future development. A “facelift” of the site began in 2006 and continues in 2007.

- ↻ The County is conducting an **engineering study of the prison wall**, begun in July, 2007. The study will determine the structural integrity of the wall, identify areas of weakness or concern, and estimate the cost for repairs.
- ↻ The County has authorized work for **refurbishing the large guard tower** (northwest tower) at the corner of Silverbrook Road and Spring Hill. Work will begin the second week of August.
- ↻ The County has also authorized work for **refurbishing the guard hut** alongside the trail adjacent to Spring Hill. The work will be done in the summer 2007.
- ↻ The County is working with Pulte to **remove the light poles inside the walls** of the penitentiary.
- ↻ The County hired a firm in June 2007 to **assess the condition of the Laurel Hill House** and make recommendations for its future use.
- ↻ Please note that work at the adaptive reuse site did not begin in earnest until 2006. Prior to this, time and energy was devoted to preparing the Lorton Arts Foundation site. LAF aggressively sought a partnership with the county and the county, in turn, focused time and money on the Workhouse site. The county invested over \$4M on building demolition, site clearing, new slate roofs on buildings, and environmental mitigation.
- ↻ The County is actively stabilizing and repairing buildings at the adaptive reuse site. In 2006, the county replaced the roofs, trim, and downspouts on the 12 Reformatory Dorms and on the two-story Educational Building (slate roof). The county made improvements to the former cafeteria building’s roof and trim.

This year (2007), the county has replaced the roof on the Laundry building adjacent to Spring Hill, replaced the decking, drainage, and roof on the ball field grandstand, and replaced the slate roofs, copper flashing, and downspouts on the two Guard Quarter buildings.

2. KSI/Kettler Buildings at Spring Hill

Kettler real estate development firm owns five buildings within the Spring Hill development, planned for housing. Kettler has these buildings and additional property up for sale. The continued deterioration of these privately owned buildings will have a negative impact on the Spring Hill community. What steps can the County take to intervene on Spring Hill’s behalf to remove the uncertainty of the future of these 5 buildings?

- ↻ There is little the county can do to intervene with the development or sale of the Kettler-owned buildings. The proffers for Spring Hill (RZ/FDP 2002-MV-040) do not include a requirement

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that the buildings be renovated within a certain time frame. They are proffered to be redeveloped as independent living facilities in accordance with the approved CDP/FDP. The approved CDP/FDP allows for a maximum of 442 dwelling units broken down as follows (please see the proffers and the approved CDP/FDP for additional details).

- Single-family attached (active adult): 32
 - Single-family detached (active adult): 149
 - Multi-family (5 new 4-story buildings): 125
 - **Maximum number of active adult units: 306**

 - Multi-family conversion (adaptive re-use of 5 existing structures for independent senior living): 56
 - Senior Housing (New 4-story building along Silverbrook Road): 80
 - **Maximum number of senior housing units: 136**

 - **Total maximum number of units = 306 + 136 = 442**
 - **Please see the proffers and approved CDP/FDP for additional details**
- ↔ The county is not aware of any proposed changes to the planned and approved use for the 5 buildings. Any proposed changes to these uses – by Kettler or another owner – would likely require additional review and approval by the County through the established planning and zoning review processes, which involve public input and public hearings.
- ↔ Pulte is doing some work to improve the appearance of the buildings. The county is aware that Pulte is cleaning up the areas around the buildings, replacing windows in the adaptive reuse buildings, and landscaping. Concerns about the buildings should be directed through the homeowner association to Pulte and Kettler.

3. RFP Schedule and Project Prioritization

The outcome of the RFP process targeted for March 2005 was not completed until January 2007 with rejection of the two proposals submitted. The current course of action is to solicit the services of a master developer. What steps are being taken to accelerate the process and make this project a higher priority?

- ↔ Laurel Hill is a high priority for the Board of Supervisors and the county as reflected in the great strides we have made in developing the former prison property. This is a concerted effort involving multiple agencies, many different citizen, homeowner, and user groups, and public-private partnerships to address a wide-range of needed improvements.

The prison property operated for over 80 years as a stand-alone institution outside of Fairfax County control. July 2007 marks only the 5-year anniversary of the signing of the deed transferring the land to Fairfax County. Great strides and investments have been made in the past 5 years:

- There has been extensive demolition of old and non-historical buildings both inside the prison and in the areas – including Spring Hill – that are now developed.
- The South County Secondary School was built and opened,

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- The area is revitalized with new homes and communities,
 - The Golf Course and Clubhouse were built and opened,
 - Accelerated activities at the Workhouse resulted in new slate roofs, building demolition, environmental mitigation, and site preparation for Lorton Arts,
 - The Lorton Arts Foundation agreement is signed, buildings are under renovation, and the Foundation plans to open this year,
 - Lorton Road redesign is underway with preliminary engineering completed, final engineering begun, and construction funds earmarked for the November bond referendum,
 - The National Register Historic District created and officially listed in 2006,
 - A new elementary school is under construction,
 - The Greenway Trail was officially opened last year,
 - Improvements have begun at the Reformatory and Penitentiary.
- ↻ The task forces and citizen planning groups involved with Laurel Hill are a testament to the priorities given to this area. The planning process began even before the property was transferred to the county. Laurel Hill planning has included no less than 3 Citizen Task Forces, the appointment of the Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizen's Oversight Committee, involvement by Boards and Commissions (such as the County School Board, VDHR, the ARB, and LAF) and dedicated county staff time from agencies such as Parks, Public Works, Planning and Zoning, Facilities Management, and the County Attorney's office.

The county recognizes its responsibility in stabilizing the main historic structures and otherwise taking care of the assets, pending the full implementation of the Task Force and BOS vision.

- ↻ Much was learned from the recent Request for Proposal, and contributed to the consensus that a master developer would accelerate the next phase of the adaptive reuse process. Working with a Master Developer puts the county at the table with a developer to create a financially viable and timely plan. Unlike the traditional RFP process the county becomes an active participant in the development of the site. This also allows county resources to be put to the maximum use and to promote a phased development that best serves the market needs. The County's Department of Purchasing will release the RFP prior to September 1.
- ↻ Public involvement has been – and will continue to be – an integral part of every step. All activities at Laurel Hill must comply with the procedural stipulations set forth in the deed that transferred the 2,700 acres at Laurel Hill to the County. Adaptive reuse of the former prison buildings must also follow the Memorandum of Agreement, and the Comprehensive Plan. The reuse plans were vetted in the community through numerous task forces and commissions and all proposed plans have benefited by public input every step of the way. The community has consistently been given the chance to participate in and comment on proposed visions and concepts, the historic district nomination, the comprehensive plan amendments, and the request for proposal.

4. Alleviating Developer Uncertainty

The County noted that the lack of RFP responses most likely reflected developer uncertainty about some of the business issues related to the RFP items – such as the type of allowable new development, residential density, and the level of financial participation by the county. The

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county's stated desire to retain ownership of the land and buildings may have also contributed to developer uncertainty.

What steps are being taken to minimize developer uncertainty as listed above?

- ↻ One purpose of hiring a Master Developer is to minimize developer uncertainty about the vision for the area. Minimizing uncertainty may include identifying financial incentives (such as tax credits), assisting with development incentives (such as a clear understanding of how to work in the historic district), or better understand the review or approval process.
- ↻ Uncertainty can also be dispelled by guidelines and information from ongoing studies. Ongoing studies (e.g., of the wall and the Laurel Hill house) and projects (e.g., Lorton Road improvements and park openings) are also helpful to developers by giving them a better sense of the opportunities and constraints of the Laurel Hill area and the adaptive reuse site, in particular.
- ↻ The county's plan to retain ownership of the property is imbedded in the deed of transfer. We believe county ownership of the site can be an attractive element of the adaptive reuse plan.

5. Development Options at the Adaptive Reuse Site

A key driver to developing the adaptive reuse site is the costs associated with the rehabilitation of the buildings. In particular, the cost of rehabilitation of historic buildings is typically higher than new construction. If implementing the original vision for the reformatory and penitentiary areas is not feasible, would the County consider a more realistic plan, such as expanding the low density, low impact housing concept of Spring Hill into these areas?

- ↻ The Task Force Report recognized the need for contingency planning. The Report states that

“If the county is not able to identify a qualified development team during the RFP/RFQ process ... the county may consider amending the development scenario for either, or both, phases. Such amendments can include reducing the scope of an adaptive reuse strategy to incorporate fewer existing structures.”

The Task Force Reports states that any amendments should consider

- Assigning priority to historically relevant structures for preserving the Progressive Era of prison reform
 - Utilizing a hierarchy of historic structures
 - Considering demolition of structures
- ↻ Any changes to the proposed vision must carefully weigh the impact of all development scenarios. As stated in the Comprehensive Plan, “if preservation and adaptive reuse are not feasible, the area should be used for park and open space.” (see note at bottom of page)
 - ↻ The concept of a senior living community within the Penitentiary area is referenced in the Comprehensive Plan. It is one of several scenarios that may attract private investment while adaptively reusing contributing structures

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6. Safety and Security

In late June a murder was committed in Laurel Hill. The prison area will continue to be a magnet for activity of this nature until development occurs. This incident gives cause not only to the surrounding communities, but has a negative impact on the safety and security of the Greenway trail. What steps are being taken by the County to prevent further criminal activity on the prison grounds?

- ↻ Security at Laurel Hill is a high priority and has been funded since 2003. The county has a security contract in place for Laurel Hill through 2008 which can be extended through 2012. Security presently consists of one officer during the week and two officers on the weekend. Since the recent crime, the county has contacted the West Springfield District Station that serves Laurel Hill. The police have increased their presence in the Laurel Hill area. The county's commitment to security is reflected in our annual budget of approximately \$750,000 for security and maintenance on the site. Maintenance of the site is an important element of security and takes the form of mowing, removal of trash, brush, and debris, demolition work, and the maintenance and repair of fences and gates throughout the complex.
- ↻ Security at Laurel Hill requires diligence by multiple users – including citizens. Security must be maintained on property owned or operated by the Park Authority, the Lorton Arts Foundation (who has their own on-site security), residents, the South County Secondary School, and the Board of Supervisors. Security efforts must be coordinated and communicate with each other.
- ↻ The county is presently reviewing the security of the Laurel Hill area. The newly hired County Security Manager in the Facilities Management Department is reviewing the security at Laurel Hill and, with a Laurel Hill team of interested agencies and staff, will make changes as needed. Among the items being reviewed:
 - Number of security personnel on site at any given time
 - The need for security personnel to be armed and be able to make arrests.
 - Coordination of Laurel Hill security in areas controlled by the Park Authority (note, the Park Authority does not contract for security services on their properties but uses local law enforcement). The County's contracted security is, to the extent practical, expanding their coverage to include areas owned by the Park Authority.

7. Building Demolition and County Options

Residents in the area often ask about tearing down the prison and selling land to developers to pay for a middle school. Can the county just tear-down some buildings and sell-off portions of the prison property?

The deal that allowed for land to be sold to developers in order to construct the SCSS was put together by the county and approved by the federal government as part of the land transfer. No historic buildings were demolished.

Per the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the Board can determine that adaptive reuse of historic buildings in the adaptive reuse area is not feasible and that buildings should be demolished. This could only occur after a lengthy review and documentation process as outlined in the MOA.

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However, the only alternative given in the Reuse Plan and the Comprehensive Plan is to use the adaptive reuse area for open space and park land, clearly evincing the intent not to allow any new construction in this area. In the event adaptive reuse is not feasible and new construction is sought in the adaptive reuse area, the Reuse Plan and the Comprehensive Plan would have to be amended to allow such new construction. Any proposed amendment of the Reuse Plan would be coordinated with and submitted to the Administrator of General Services in the same manner as the original Reuse Plan.

The deed transferring the Lorton Complex to Fairfax County provides GSA with the right to object to, comment upon, or concur in a change in use subject to restrictions for park, recreation, and open space.

This information was prepared by the Fairfax County Department of Planning & Zoning. For more information, please contact Chris Caperton (703) 324-1375 or Leanna Hush (703) 324-1355, or visit the Laurel Hill website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/laurelhill/>