Planning Commission Meeting
February 26, 1997
Verbatim Excerpts

CP-86-C-121-8 - WESTERRA RESTON, L.L.C. & ORACLE CORPORATION
CP-86-C-121-9 - WESTERRA RESTON, L.L.C. & ORACLE CORPORATION

After Close of the Public Hearing

Vice Chairman Byers: Close the public hearing; turn to Mr. Palatiello.

Commissioner Palatiello: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me, first of all thank all of the citizens who came out this evening to share their views with us. I think this was a very constructive hearing. I think Reston has done itself proud once again in terms of the quality of the debate and discussion and consideration we had this evening. Let me enter into the record several letters. We had written statements that accompanied presentations made this evening. I do have a letter from Alma Schulman, who is the Executive Vice President of Intertech Corporation and developer of Plaza America in support of the application. I received a letter today from Carl Ingebritsen, who is the Director of the Link TSM Program in Reston, in support of the application. One (1) from Mr. Terrence P. Ford, Vice President of Oracle, obviously in support of the application; a statement from Bonnie Whyte in Reston expressing some reservations about the application; a letter from Phil Odeen, the President of BDM, in support of the application. The recommendation of the Reston Citizens Association Planning and Zoning Committee -- the Co-Chairs, Mr. Tom Wiltshire and Mr. Bill Keefe, in support of the application and reflecting the vote of their committee. And a letter from Mr. William Hoppe in opposition to the application. I would ask that those all be made part of the record. I listened to all of the comments that were made this evening and a couple of things really stuck in my mind. First of all, the comment was made about a comparison between Montgomery County and Fairfax County. And Montgomery County just chased away a major development project -- a multi, multi-million dollar investment in downtown Silver Spring that the developer took a walk on. Montgomery County competed long and hard for Oracle. I think Governor Glendenning offered Camden Yard, Chesapeake Bay and a player to be named later and they still didn't go to Maryland, to Montgomery County; they came to Reston. I was impressed, particularly by Mr. Thillmannand Mr. Todd who were key players in this project in Reston Town Center, that this, indeed, was what was envisioned at the time. We've heard from a number of folks that this is in accordance with the Zoning and with the Proffers. As Mrs. Harsel pointed out, those are the standards upon which this is to be evaluated. I would remind folks, and the applicant has said this on a number of occasions in the several meetings that we've had in the community on this, that when you travel north on Reston Parkway from the Toll Road today, what is the first thing you see on Reston Parkway -- a parking garage at the Hyatt Hotel. So there is nothing perverse about putting a parking garage on frontage on Reston Parkway. Coming home to grab a bite of dinner this evening from my office, which is in South Reston on Sunrise Valley Drive, I noticed something today. As you travel south on Reston Parkway and the Dulles Toll Road, what do you see -- you see the back of the International Center, you see the back of the Sheraton Hotel, you see the back of the Roy Rogers, you see the back of a gas station and a car wash and you see a parking lot -- surface parking. On the right hand side you see the back of UNISYS. You know design, as Mr. Kelso says, it's always helpful to have a design professional on the Commission because he often puts things right into perspective. Design is in the eye of the beholder. And I said in my opening comments, what I like and what I

don't like is not the issue today. We've heard a lot about what people like and what people don't like. I'm persuaded that this, indeed, is consistent with the Plan and with the Proffers. If we were to defer this application, and I have though long and hard about this, I've thought about this extensively since Monday evening when I watched on Television the Reston Citizens' Association consideration of this and I've discussed it with the applicant and the question in my mind was what would we gain by deferring? This applicant is not going to redesign the site; the applicant believes that topography, market -- one (1) of the things that has not been brought up this evening that I think that if the folks from BDM and Oracle themselves were here would say to us is one (1) of the things that they're buying with these sites is frontage on the Dulles Toll Road that millions of consumers and business people coming down that Toll Road from Dulles Airport every year -- these folks want to have their building frontage and their corporate logo signs up on those buildings and that exposure. And some of us would like it to have an exposure to the Reston Parkway and some would like to have it exposed to the Toll Road and some would like to have it exposed on Sunset Hills Road. I don't think you can satisfy everyone. Much of what has been asked for this evening are long term solutions. They really are not inherent to this particular application. I happen to have with the me the notes that I took on the afternoon that Mr. Stowers and Mr. Simon came by my office and we met behind the closed door; it was just the three (3) of us. So when we talk about closed door meetings, there were some closed door meetings with citizens in this community -- happens all the time in this process. They wanted to orient this project and make pedestrian connections to the urban core. It's done. It's on the periphery of the project, it's not down the spine of the project, but it is accomplished. Number 2, maximize the FAR to meet future needs, particularly for rail. That's something that we cannot do here in this application; that is something that requires a change in the Comprehensive Plan, it requires a change in the Zoning and it requires a change in the proffers. If that's what you want, you're against the BDM and Oracle because that will not meet their schedule -- they will take a walk. Third is the orientation of buildings on Reston Parkway, and I think I've addressed that. I've worked long and hard on this project to try to take into account all of the concerns that I've heard from everyone who has taken the opportunity to come to meetings, to call me or to write me. As I said before, every request of the Planning and Zoning Committee has been accepted by the applicant and is in this application. For over twenty (20) years, the Planning and Zoning Committee has been the vehicle for soliciting community input in Reston, they have done a wonderful job. They did a wonderful job under Mr. Stowers tutelage and they have done a wonderful job under each of his successors. As was stated before, -- you know, I saw something in the paper the other day when Ken Starr reversed himself and said he was going to stay on as the special council and he quoted Mayor LaGuardia in New York who says: "When I make a mistake, boy, I make it a doozie." And I guess maybe when I made the mistake of asking for this hearing, my mistake was a doozie and I'm not admitting I made a mistake, I think I did the right thing by having this hearing and having a staff report on this. You know I wanted the -- I don't think I've ever told this story before, but you know when I was a College student --

Vice Chairman Byers: You're on verbatim.

Commissioner Palatiello: I realize we are. This ends here too, and it doesn't go to the Board. When I was a College student and I studied Urban Politics and related courses, I remember one (1) course I had in particular -- we studied new towns. And we had to go and visit either

Columbia or Reston. And I went from American University out to Reston and at that time there were just a few thousand people living in Reston; there was Lake Anne and there was the International Center and there wasn't a whole lot else. But I was captivated by Reston and one (1) of the great joys of my life has been to have some small part in seeing the maturation of something that I studied as a student. And part of that has been the true joy of working with people like Bob Simon, the founder of Reston. There have been applications where Bob and I have agreed and there have been applications where Bob and I have disagreed. And I think what this comes down to is that there are thing in this that Bob happens not to like, but the fact of the matter is that this plan is consistent with what was approved in the zoning. And I'm not sure what we would gain by a deferral. I think that there are just fundamental differences of opinion and in my conversations with the applicant, the fundamental changes are such that they're not changes that they could make. With that in mind, Mr. Chairman, I would MOVE THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE CONCEPTUAL PLAN 86-C-121-8 AND CP-86-C-121-9.

Commissioner Thomas: Second.

Vice Chairman Byers: Seconded by Mr. Thomas.

Commissioner Alcorn: Mr. Chairman?

Vice Chairman Byers: Mr. Alcorn.

Commissioner Alcorn: I would like to make a substitute motion THAT WE DEFER DECISION ON THIS APPLICATION FOR ONE (1) WEEK.

Commissioner Palatiello: MOVE TO TABLE.

Vice Chairman Byers: Is there a second to the substitute motion? The second motion fails and we'll go with the original motion.

Commissioner Kelso: Excuse me. Point of information, didn't Mr. Palatiello move to table?

Commissioner Alcorn: No. Moved to table his motion.

Commissioner Kelso: I'll move to table his motion.

Commissioner Koch: Second.

Vice Chairman Byers: I don't table it. All in favor of the motion to approve CP-86-C-121-8 and CP-86-C-121-9, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Vice Chairman Byers: Opposed?

Commissioner Alcorn: Abstain.

Vice Chairman Byers: Mr. Alcorn and the Chair abstain. Motion carries. Mr. Palatiello, anything further?

Commissioner Palatiello: I think that's it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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(The motion carried by a vote of 7-0-2 with Commissioners Alcorn and Byers abstaining; Commissioners Coan, Hunter and Murphy absent from the meeting.)

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