

VIRGINIA BEACH VISION

Virginia Beach City Council
Public Hearing
Development Authority Land Transfer
October 1, 2011

Good evening. My name is Mike Barrett, and this evening I present the endorsement of the members of Virginia Beach Vision, a 115 member organization of business and civic leaders, in support of your resolution to transfer land for the Dome Site project and the convention hotel project to the Development Authority.

This action is consistent with our continued support of investments of public infrastructure that can enhance private development. Public investment in roads, parking facilities, water/sewer services, public gathering places and access can be, when economic studies project a positive return on the City's investment, an appropriate and essential ingredient in directing and fostering private investment. City Council should continue to identify public-private ventures where studies show that joint participation will enhance the economic prosperity of the City, broaden its tax base, and serve the interests of the citizens at large.

Emerging decisions about the development of an entertainment center at the Dome Site and the development of a headquarters hotel are two instances where public investment in infrastructure will be critical to ultimate success. The transfer of the land to the Development Authority is an essential step in this process so the proposed private developer can negotiate with the City in good faith about the details of the proposed project, and determine his ability to obtain financing and equity support for the proposed project.

Make no mistake about this action. It is simply a step that must be taken in order to negotiate the terms to determine if they provide a positive fiscal benefit to the taxpayers of this City. Our support at Vision for this transfer is not yet an indication of our support for the deal or deals to be worked out by the Authority, and we reserve our support until we understand the fiscal impact of each project and determine if it meets our criteria for support.

However, to fail to take this step in good faith would be a strong indication to any interested developers who must risk their capital that the City is not serious in its efforts to create these Public-Private Ventures. That would move us backwards and we believe this action should be viewed as an important step in the process to get a deal or deals that can then be evaluated to see if they will benefit the public interest.

We at Vision urge a yes vote on this resolution.