

9 November 1971

STUDY TEAM ON RHOA STRUCTURE & ROLE

Outline of Recommendations

A. Team Approach

1. The team defined community needs which could be met by institutions (see "Objectives" paper)
2. We recognized our proposal should encompass all institutions needed to meet defined needs
3. Question of role is basic to structure of a given institution. For example, a governmental, representative body requires a different substructure than an administrative body with limited functions.

B. The question of governance

1. Reston is a part of Fairfax County, which provides governmental services and the present government structure for Reston. Reston cannot incorporate under present state law.
2. The Team concludes Reston should have a degree of self-governance within the County structure for the following reasons:
 - a. To maintain a conscious, deliberate, identifiable sense of community that furthers the social and physical goals of Reston as a planned community
 - b. To facilitate interrelationships among members of the community on a meaningful scale and relatively personal level -- "government close to the people"
 - c. To better assure a desired level of services
 - d. To permit experimentation in new governmental forms in the sense of innovation

C. Can existing institutions perform a governmental role?

1. The Team concludes RHOA should not perform a governmental function because:

- a. It is a private, not a public corporation
- b. All members of the community do not have a franchise in elections of RHOA's principal governing body. (e.g. renters who will comprise over 50% of the entire community)
- c. RHOA is developer-controlled (the Team agrees this control is desirable throughout the major part of the community's development so long as it is exercised openly)
- d. There is no express provision for transition of control to resident members
- e. RHOA has an inflexible charter; its membership restrictions and assessment limit cannot be changed with an objection of 10% or more of its members
- f. The Team infers RHOA was not intended to serve a governmental function: RHOA's governing documents provide for priority consideration of land and facilities maintenance function
- g. RHOA's taxing base does not include all property in the community, since industrial and commercial properties are not part of the assessment base
- h. RHOA volunteers (E.G. Town Council) do not have full confidence of the community with respect to independent action

2. The Team recognizes that RHOA has some attributes of a government (e.g. "taxing" power, Village Councils with a representative base), that it exists and provides some stability. However, the Team places greater value on these factors:

- a. Self-governance should foster full and equal participation by all members of the community
 - b. Ultimate decision makers should be directly responsible and accountable to all of its constituency
 - c. At this stage of development, Reston's governance should be flexible and able to adjust to changes in the community's growth
 - d. Structure of self governance should affirmatively facilitate democratic bases of representation and not limit them
 - e. Institution should have a defined and acknowledged relationship to other levels of government (e.g. County)
3. As chartered, RCA comes closest to a governmental entity. Its principal weaknesses, lack of taxing power and lack of "officiality", taken together affect its ability to inspire confidence from the community

D. Proposed institutions

- 1. A Reston Council should replace RCA and serve as the principal form of self governance for Reston. It should
 - a. Be recognized by the County as
 - 1) The official advisory body of obtaining and coordinating County services within Reston
 - 2) The principal organized voice of the Reston community
 - 3) The potential recipient for future delegated functions and responsibilities now performed by the County
 - b. Be the forum for the identification and resolution of community-wide problems
 - c. Serve as the citizen advisory body to the developer during the course of development

2. RHOA's role should be limited to

- a. Ground and facilities development and maintenance, including environmental education
- b. Enforcement of deed of dedication
- c. Scheduling and operation of RHOA owned facilities

E. RHOA Structure

1. Rationale

- a. RHOA's limited role tends to limit need for "democratic" participation; it is not a governmental body
- b. The RHOA Board makes the real decisions; it should be directly accountable. So long as the developer has control, a community elected body with no real delegated authority from Gulf Roston masks the real power and authority
- c. Apparent democratized structure confuses RHOA's role, diverts emphasis from principal structure for self governance, and causes general community confusion
- d. Village level input in RHOA actions should be provided through committee structure. Another alternative is to provide that all villages shall be represented among RHOA Board members and Committee chairmen

2. Elements

- a. Members
 - as defined in the Deed of Dedication
- b. RHOA Board
 - should have at least three citizen members elected by homeowners
 - should develop clear and definite schedule for transition in composition from developer to resident-homeowner control

c. Executive Director

- Business manager for RHOA functions
- Directs professional staff
- Responsible for fee collection, budget preparation, presentation and execution
- Manages land and facility maintenance and operations
- Provides maintenance services to Cluster Associations
- Monitors and administers compliance with covenants
- Responsible to RHOA Board

d. RHOA Management Committee

- Provides detailed resident input to RHOA Board on RHOA policies and budget allocation
- Coordinates volunteer activities
- Composition emphasizes RHOA functional activities
 - (1) Resident members of RHOA Board
 - (2) Major committee chairmen appointed by RHOA Board
 - (3) Chairman of Cluster Council
 - (4) Executive Director (non-voting ex-officio)

e. Committees

- Chairman appointed by RHOA Board
- Established on village-wide or community-wide bases
- "Doing" bodies
- Serve as heart of volunteer participation

3. RHOA Budget Process

- a. We recommend the RHOA Budget and Finance Committee be eliminated and its functions be performed by the Executive Director and his staff
- b. Process
 - (1) Reston Management Committee holds preliminary public meeting to receive suggestions from community (Sept)
 - (2) Executive Director, in consultation with RMC, prepares budget and submits it to RHOA Board and Community (Nov)
 - (3) RHOA Board holds public hearing (Dec)
 - (4) RHOA Board adopts budget (Jan 1)

F. Reston Council

1. Rationale

- a. As an official advisory body to the County, it is appropriate and desirable to define its constituency in the same manner as for the County

2. Elements

a. Members

- All registered voters living in Reston

b. Council

- 9 members, 3 elected from and by each voting precinct bounded by Reston
- Chairman elected by full Council from among its members
- Members serve overlapping 2-year terms

c. Sub-structure

- The Team recognizes that accessibility and proximity of government is an important objective
- Each precinct delegation could form a caucus and provide a precinct or village level forum
- The Reston Council will have a committee structure which can meet the community's need for involvement and participation in government

3. Community facilities not normally provided by County

a. Major options

1) RHOA

- RHOA could assume construction and operating costs, or lease facilities from developer on long-term basis
- There is a question whether RHOA's 1% assessment limit will deter its ability to construct facilities directly

2) Special Tax District

- Policy and administration responsibility resides with Board of Supervisors
- Reston Council could serve as principal advisory body to Board of Supervisors (RHOA should not serve in this capacity since it is not representative of those who would be taxed, e.g. all residents, commercial and industrial property)

3) Joint School Community Facilities

- RCA is now working on this approach
- Reston Council should serve to coordinate community desires and school planning

b. Team Recommendation

- The Team recommends the Reston Council be accorded the lead role in securing and administration of community facilities

G. Sequence of events

1. Nov 9 - Gulf Reston briefing
2. Nov 15- RHOA Town Council & RCA Board briefing (public session)
3. Nov - County briefing
4. Nov 29- Draft recommendations to Reston Times for publication 12/2
5. Dec 14- Public Hearing on Study Team proposals
6. Jan 1 - Submit recommendations to RHOA Board
7. Jan - RHOA Board adopts structure for RHOA
8. Apr - Election of resident members of RHOA Board