

## **PENTAGON ROW PLAZA REDESIGN**

### **January, 2012**

Federal Realty presented revised conceptual plans for a re-design and upgrade of the plaza at the November 9 AHCA meeting. Their Dec. 8 proposal is posted on the ARCA website. As previously reported, the winter-season ice rink would be lengthened but not widened, to 57' x 120,' making it about two-thirds of regulation size, which many people who use the rink thought would be an improvement. The existing raised areas with grass would be removed to allow the bigger rink, but other play space would be added. Mature trees would be kept or replaced if weak; a proposed artificial turf lawn with curved path would replace current pavement. Two 800 sq. ft. freestanding retail spaces would be added at northeast and southwest corners, with nearby table and chair seating. Federal Realty says the retail will help cover the cost of the re-doing the plaza. Other features for seating, fountains, and play space would replace existing ones. A fire-pit and additional seating would be at the southeast corner. Outdoor warm-season restaurant seating would mostly remain as is.

The discussion at the AHCA meeting was lively, with concerns expressed about pedestrian flow (especially during winter, when the rink is in place), viewing area for non-skaters, flexibility for families with small children, the heat island effects of artificial turf, and nature and quality of retail in freestanding buildings. A number of residents said they preferred real grass (sod), but it would get dry and worn quickly, and require replacing every year; artificial turf does have significant advantages, although it does get washed periodically. Federal Realty said construction would take about six to seven months, done in stages. In spite of enthusiasm from a number of people, a majority of AHCA residents voted not to approve the plan. Federal Realty had made a number of changes in response to previous comments, and is making changes to respond to comments from County planning staff. They will submit their revised application at the January 21 County Board Meeting.