

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
WILSON BOULEVARD SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING – JULY 8, 2002

Carl Hallinan chaired.

Results of the “vision exercise” from the **planning charette** were distributed.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Gerry Procanick and the new Wilson Boulevard Subcommittee chair were appointed to be the **Committee’s representatives/contacts to Silverwood Associates.**

**Don Sheehan was appointed subcommittee chair.** The transition period to his chairmanship will occur over the summer.

**Status Update on Silverwood proposal.** There was no new information since the meeting last week.

**Tearing down of the Thai Restaurant.** The Safeway manager has confirmed that Safeway was tearing down the Thai restaurant on the corner of Wilson and Edison; current plans are to pave the lot over.

**Abandoned houses.** The bad condition of the three abandoned houses on 9th Road North east of Frederick was noted. The vacant houses were becoming an eyesore and a hazard, and may be attracting unwanted persons into the neighborhood. The original owner of the block received approval for a Unified Residential Development to allow more than by-right development and build four homes on the site. The property was recently sold to Landmark Developers, who are working out details about grading and landscaping of the property. The architectural plans for the houses are in the approval process.

**Defining Principles and Guidelines.** One of the tasks of the Wilson Boulevard subcommittee was to define the principles and guidelines with which to evaluate any prospective development of the Wilson Boulevard commercial area. We needed to decide what we want in the commercial area and what we don’t want, and what we’re willing to give up and what we’re not in order to achieve our goals.

There was a discussion about possible heights of any development, and how any limit on heights would restrain the economic viability of a project. A number of general ideas were discussed.

A work group was established to develop alternative scenarios and an economic model for parameters for an acceptable development. A sign-up sheet circulated among those present. Any decision on principles and guidelines would await the completion of the work group’s efforts, perhaps in September.

Carl Hallinan will call Mark Silverwood to propose a meeting within the next two or three weeks with the subcommittee.

The time line of the process of approving any proposed development were discussed; one conclusion was that nothing goes through quickly in Arlington.

**Public funding of improvements.** The group discussed the possibility of attracting public funds in the context of any development. We do not have a good idea of what was available, and how concessions are demanded of developers in Arlington in order for the County to fund improvements as part of a development. County government is unlikely to fund infrastructure improvements in the absence of being able to attract and leverage private developer funding.

**Encouraging Safeway.** The group discussed ways that the community might be able to encourage Safeway to make improvements. The Wilson Boulevard Safeway is profitable, and people enjoy shopping

there, but it needs upgrading. Ways to influence Safeway, which clearly wants to keep doing business at this location, were discussed.

**Wilson Boulevard median proposal.** The committee discussed the proposal to put medians in Wilson Boulevard between George Mason and Greenbrier, in the area where painted medians currently exist. The proposed medians would provide a refuge for pedestrians crossing Wilson, but would forestall other options to improve Wilson Boulevard, such as: (1) narrowing the street; (2) widening sidewalks; (3) reducing crossing width and (4) a “road diet” – reducing the number of lanes on a wide street and using the land for sidewalks and/or a bike lane, and wider lanes that allow passing (like along Washington Blvd in Westover). A road diet would improve traffic flow and calm traffic. Traffic would flow more slowly and evenly.

A general discussion of traffic on Wilson Boulevard followed, and a number of options, including medians and turn lanes were considered. The large number of driveways up from Wilson Boulevard presents difficulties in designing any solution.

Traffic plans have addressed the stretch of Wilson Boulevard from George Mason to Greenbrier, but it was noted that the rest of Wilson to the west also merited attention. The fact that Wilson Boulevard was so narrow at this point limited options.

Carl Hallinan said that the Committee needed to decide on the median proposal soon, or we would lose the available funding. Carl said he would distribute Gerry Procanick’s drawings of the proposal via e-mail so that Committee members could review them and decide on the median proposal at the next meeting.

Carl Hallinan promised that he would (1) send Gerry Procanick’s traffic design schemes to everybody by e-mail; (2) circulate recent articles in the Washington Post and City Paper and (3) contact Mark Silverwood.