

Highlights of Minutes:

May 14, 2002 ; EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

May 23, 2002 ; GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 12, 2002 : GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 18, 2002 : SPECIAL MEETING - SAFEWAY REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

May 14, 2002 ; EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

1) Ballston Gateway, Proposed Site Plan Amendment

Representatives of the JBG Companies presented their proposal to change the site plan of the Ballston Gateway project - now under construction at the southeast corner of Glebe Rd and Fairfax Dr. The developers would like to substitute a 250 unit apartment building for the 325 room, full service hotel called for under the existing approved plan. The Ballston Partnership has determined that existing conference facilities in the area are inadequate, and has listed as one of its top priorities, the construction of a full service hotel. The Executive Board unanimously approved a motion by Carl Hallinan that : " The BCA urges Arlington County to work with the developer of Ballston Gateway, to facilitate the construction of a hotel, as described in the existing site plan that was approved on December 15, 1999. "

2) BCA Nomination Committee

The Nominating Committee of Adrienne Pilot, Gerry Procanick, and Bob Atkins reported that they will have a full slate of nominees for BCA offices published in the next newsletter before the June meeting.

3) Calendar for Neighborhood Conservation Projects, Fall Funding Cycle

NCAC Rep, Margot Thomas, reported that residents of both 5th St and 7th St are working to finish their petitions, and finalize the scope of their projects, so that they will be "qualified" by September. The NCAC's fall funding calendar calls for a letter from BCA by the end of September to notify county staff of the neighborhood's intent to submit projects. All civic associations must approve and prioritize their projects in October. The projects will then be ranked by the NCAC, and some of them will be recommended for funding approval by the County Board.

4) Committee Updates and New Business

a) -- Carl Hallinan reported that the Wilson Boulevard Committee is organizing a planning charette on June 8 {changed to June 11}. The next committee meeting is on May 16.

b) -- Win Boerckel reported that the Powhatan Springs Park working group is now considering how the proposed skate park will be operated.

c) -- Margot Thomas brought up an issue regarding how NC projects are treated in the County Manager's proposed Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Ron Carlee has proposed that several other existing programs be combined under the NC umbrella, but has not recommended an increase in funding. She also noted that the Jefferson St sidewalk project has disappeared from the CIP. She urged that all to send a protest letter

to the County Board.

f) -- Margot Thomas requested approval for a contribution to the NCAC to pay for an advertisement in the Sun Gazette that will urge citizen support for an increased NC budget. A motion was approved unanimously to contribute \$100 towards the purchase of the ad.

May 23, 2002 ; GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

1) Wilson Boulevard, Commercial District Charette

Carl Hallinan reported on the Wilson Boulevard Committee's upcoming planning charette on June 11. Carl has recruited a lineup of speakers and experts to provide information on various aspects of redevelopment. Among them is Mark Silverwood, whose firm is exploring the possibility of building on the Safeway site. Also on the agenda is a "red dot - green dot" exercise, organized by Eric Davis, that will allow participants to express their preferences, pro and con, for various features found in commercial areas. At the core of the charette program, participants will discuss their visions, values, and goals for the area in breakout groups. Finally each group will report its results, and an effort will be made to consolidate the viewpoints.

The event will be advertised primarily through the newsletter and with flyers. Richard Young volunteered to deliver the flyer, door-to-door, to every business on Wilson, and to all of the other properties on the Safeway block. The flyer will be mailed to every owner of commercial property in the district.

Gerry Procanick commented that no other neighborhood in Arlington has done something like this. Ed Fendley noted that results of the charette could form the basis of amendments to the Bluemont NC Plan. Carl said that participants will be randomly assigned to a group, and that facilitators will guide the discussion towards a set of specific questions.

2) Community Preparedness Meeting

Ed Fendley announced that the Arlington Civic Federation has requested each neighborhood association to send a "liaison" to a meeting on Community Preparedness, May 29, at the Arlington Hospital. There were no volunteers. Ed said he would find someone to attend.

3) Nominations Committee Report

Gerry Procanick reported on the Nominations Committee's slate of candidates for BCA offices. The slate will be published in the next newsletter, and voting will take place at the June General Membership Meeting.

4) Ballston Gateway, Site Plan Amendment

The membership discussed a proposal by JBG Companies, presented at the last Executive Board meeting, to amend the site plan for the Ballston Gateway project, by substituting an apartment building for a full-service hotel. At the May 14 meeting, the Executive Board passed a resolution urging the county to work with the developer to facilitate construction of a hotel, as called for in the current, approved site plan.

Gerry Procanick reported that the county is considering ways to assist in the construction of a hotel, such as Tax Increment Financing, or industrial development

bonds. He mentioned that the hotel is considered a key need by the Ballston Partnership, and noted that when the current site plan was approved, the hotel was considered a benefit that justified other trade-offs. Carl Hallinan commented that this is the third proposal for the Gateway site. He reiterated that every site plan requires a lot of negotiation, and said that the county and JBG will have to go back and re-work the whole deal.

Motion by Bob Atkins, passed unanimously

" The BCA strongly supports the existing Arlington Gateway site plan, as approved on December 15, 1999, including the hotel; and urges the county to work with the developer to 'make it happen'. "

5) Neighborhood Signs

Several examples of Bluemont Neighborhood signs were on hand for review and comment. The members expressed a preference for the Bluemont logo, a "Beige Granite" background color, the typefaces, and that the text should say "Est. 1890". Ed Fendley recalled that the original proposal asked for 4 sign locations. Smaller signs would go in at the Custis bike trail near the path to 10th St by George Mason Dr, and on the Bluemont Trail at Kensington St. 2 Large signs were to be installed along Wilson Blvd at Four Mile Run on the west, and at George Mason Dr on the east.

June 12, 2002 : GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

1) Wilson Boulevard, Commercial District Charette

Carl Hallinan reported on the Wilson Boulevard Committee's planning charette held on June 11. The charette was very well attended – more than 100 people. The program commenced with a group of speakers who gave presentations on : the history of the shopping strip, zoning and planning regulations, public works infrastructure, public economic development, and commercial development.

Eric Davis then conducted a "red dot, green dot exercise". Eric had prepared two posters with photographs from DC-area commercial districts that exhibited variations on common features such as roadways, sidewalks, awnings, parking types, high-rise/mid-rise, etc.

Participants were then given time to affix their red and green dots to the pictures of features they liked and disliked.

Participants then were directed to go to their assigned breakout group. Each of the six groups were guided by a facilitator - A) Eric Davis, B) Margot Thomas, C) Craig Deering, D) Richard Young, E) Gerry Procanick, and F) Tim Lynch. All groups were asked to begin with 2 questions - What degree of change would they like to see (from property owner fix-ups, through significant redevelopment); and How soon they would like to see some changes (from ASAP, through within the next 20 years). Each group was then asked to consider some follow-on questions - A & B) The Degree of Redevelopment (zoning types, building size, expansion of commercial district); C & D) Features and Amenities (business types, public space features); E & F) Transportation Features (pedestrian routes, traffic lanes, parking types).

Although time did not permit all the groups to address every question, participants had the opportunity to express their views and concerns on the present and future characteristics of their local shopping district. The facilitators will work on summarizing

the discussions of their respective breakout groups, and an attempt will be made to develop a summary of the Bluemont neighborhood's viewpoint, as expressed at the charette.

2) Announcement, Friends of Washington Boulevard

Bob Atkins was contacted by someone who is forming a new group to unite various civic associations in a joint effort to monitor and advocate for improvements to Washington Boulevard. Bob will pass along the name and number of the contact person to the new BCA president.

3) Treasurer's Report

Carol Spicer reported that the 12 new members who joined the BCA at last night's charette will bring the total of paid up members to 345. Expenses for the last year will be less than budgeted.

4) BCA By-Laws, Amendments

Carl Hallinan distributed a draft of proposed new By-Laws for the BCA, based on the by-laws of some 20 other civic associations. He hopes the new format will clarify the rules related to membership, voting procedures, and duties of the officers. A motion was approved unanimously to refer the question to the Executive Board for review; with the latitude to create a separate By-Law Committee. During the discussion, Gerry Procanick noted the many benefits that would accrue to the BCA if it were a non-profit corporation, and suggested that the draft by-laws be reviewed for conformance to the requirements for non-profit corporations.

5) Bluemont Junction Railroad Exhibit

Bernard Berne suggested that Dick Walker of the Parks Dept. be invited to a future BCA meeting to discuss the construction of a railroad exhibit at Bluemont Junction. The BCA voted in favor of the concept last year, but there has not been any follow-up on the idea.

6) Election of Officers for 2002/2003

Gerry Procanick announced the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates for BCA offices, as published in the June newsletter. The candidates are President - Carl Hallinan, 1st Vice President - Judy Collins, 2nd Vice President - Talmadge Williams, Treasurer - Carol Spicer, Secretary - John Huennekens, NC Rep - Margot Thomas, Civic Federation Delegates - Bob Atkins, Talmadge Williams, Ed Fendley and Rob Waffle; Civic Federation Alternates - Ellen Armbruster, Rick Hodges, Dan Laredo, and Adrienne Pilot.

There were nominations from the floor for the positions President, NC Rep and Civic Federation Alternate. All uncontested candidates were elected by unanimous voice vote. All contested positions were voted upon by paper ballot. The slate of candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee was elected.

7) New Business, Candidates Night

The members unanimously approved a motion, made by Bob Atkins, that the President of BCA work over the summer to ensure that BCA is a co-sponsor with other nearby civic associations, of a "Candidates Night" for the fall election.

June 18, 2002 : SPECIAL MEETING - SAFEWAY REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Some 40 to 50 persons attended a special meeting regarding a redevelopment proposal for the Safeway Block, bounded by N Edison, Wilson, N Frederick, & 8th Rd N. The meeting began with a presentation by Mark Silverwood, the president of Silverwood Associates, a development firm from Leesburg, VA. Silverwood Associates has completed or is working on a number of residential apartment redevelopments in Northern Virginia, and also has worked in the rest of the state and North Carolina.

Silverwood heard about the BCA / Wilson Boulevard Committee's interest in redevelopment of the Bluemont commercial district from Tim Lynch, a BCA member who is the executive director of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization. They have begun discussions with county staff and with Safeway. Silverwood and Safeway are considering a sell/lease back concept in which Silverwood would buy the Safeway lot, along with the other 12 homes on the block, and then build a new mixed-use project that would include a new store that Safeway would lease and operate. The new store would be about twice the size of the current store, (50-60,000 sq.ft. vs. 25,000) and there would be additional space for other smaller retail businesses. County staff seemed receptive to the idea and actually suggested that Silverwood redevelop all three blocks between Wilson and I-66.

Silverwood brought along a rendering of the Wilson Blvd side of the proposed building, and floor plans. The structure would be 5 stories tall along the entire length between Edison and Frederick, with retail on the first floor, and 4 stories of apartments above. The 8th Rd side of the project would be 2-1/2 stories near the street, and step up to the full height further back into the site. The project would require rezoning of the property to the C-T-H category, which allows buildings up to 55 feet high. The current C-1 zoning only allows a 35 foot building height.

At the ground level, the new Safeway would take up the west half of the block all the way from Wilson to 8th Rd. The interior of the ground level would hold a parking area for shoppers, with an entry/exit to Wilson at a point just east of the Emerson St intersection. The retail garage would include a lower level served by an elevator leading directly into the interior of the new Safeway.

On the east side, about 12,000 sq.ft. of space along Wilson, and turning the corner up Edison, would be available for lease to other businesses. At about mid-block along Edison, there would be an entrance lobby/office for the apartment complex, next to a driveway entrance leading up to the parking areas for the residential levels. The upper floor plans are occupied by somewhere between 240 and 280 residential units, with the parking area for each level in the interior of the east half of the block. The residences would be rental units.

Mark Silverwood then began to take questions from the floor. Among the points -->
-- The plan shows 90 spaces on each of the 4 apartment levels, for a total of 360 spaces for some 240 to 280 units. The Safeway/retail garage is shown with about 250 spaces.
-- As to county staff's suggestion to redevelop all the way to I-66, if Silverwood went into those blocks, the new construction would be all residential.
-- Bob Berchick, a real estate broker working for Silverwood, said that he will be contacting the other property owners on the Safeway block. Berchick said that he realized

this project would have a big impact on peoples' lives, but reassured property owners that he would work to ensure that they are satisfied with the outcome.

-- Silverwood said that due to financial and zoning considerations, the project needs to be this large in order to work. Redevelopment can't be limited to just the Safeway lot.

-- A project this size would take about 12 to 15 months to build.

-- Silverwood expects negotiations with Safeway to take about 4 to 9 weeks.

-- Silverwood wants to work with no more than 2 representatives from the BCA.

The representatives from Silverwood Associates then left, and the meeting continued with discussion among BCA officers and attendees.

Among the points -->

-- Gerry Procanick said that the Silverwood presentation is just the beginning of a very long process, and that there will be much discussion and change along the road to any approval.

-- Gerry and Carl Hallinan felt that the County Board would not approve a rezoning and site plan without an endorsement by the BCA. There are usually 3 public hearings for a site plan.

-- No one knows what will happen to the Safeway site if Silverwood's proposal falls through, but Carl said that Safeway does not appear to have any plan for their property.

-- Gerry Procanick said that small lots constrict the opportunities for commercial redevelopment. In Cherrydale, county staff said you need a 200 foot deep lot for a C-2 commercial project to work financially.

-- Carl Hallinan circulated a sign-up sheet for the Wilson Boulevard Committee, and its e-mail list. Silverwood was very clear that he only wanted to deal with 2 BCA representatives, and those 2 people will certainly be members of the Wilson Boulevard Committee.

-- The current manager of the Safeway has said that the store is doing well. Martin Tatuch said that the manager had told him that the store was Number 3 in sales, out of 140 stores.

-- Carl Hallinan said that any BCA endorsement of the project would have to be approved at a general membership meeting. There is an effort right now to clarify the BCA by-laws regarding voting, which will probably end up with 1 vote per membership (households would get 1 vote).

-- Carl noted that if a BCA vote was a slim majority, dissenters can voice their concerns directly at the public hearings. Gerry Procanick commented that if a neighborhood is divided over an issue, the county usually looks at what the zoning map and general land use plan have to say.

-- Carl Hallinan invited the principal of Arlington Traditional School, to attend; along with the PTA, and the system's Asst. Supt. Of Facilities. He couldn't say if any of them attended, but noted that the PTA was active in opposing construction of a gas station on the Safeway lot.

The meeting concluded with Carl Hallinan again urging everyone to sign-up for the Wilson Committee and its e-mail list. Carl noted that the BCA usually has no general meetings or newsletters during the summer, but told everyone to expect another Wilson Blvd meeting in a few weeks to discuss the latest developer information, and to review the results of the charette.