

## **MEETING MINUTES**

Bluemont Civic Association (BCA)

General Membership Meeting

May 23, 2002 at Arlington Traditional School

Return Comments/Corrections to John Huennekens jhuenn@gwu.edu

### **ATTENDEES** (per Sign-In Sheet - 8 names)

Robert Atkins, Judy Collins, George Farah, Ed Fendley, Carl Hallinan, John Huennekens, Gary Procanick, Richard Young

### **AGENDA TOPICS:**

- 1) Wilson Boulevard, Commercial District Charette
- 2) Community Preparedness Meeting
- 3) Nominations Committee Report
- 4) Ballston Gateway, Site Plan Amendment
- 5) Neighborhood Signs

#### **1) WILSON BOULEVARD, COMMERCIAL DISTRICT CHARETTE**

Carl Hallinan reported on the Wilson Boulevard Committee's effort to organize a planning charette to help define the neighborhood's vision for the commercial district between George Mason Drive and Greenbrier St. The charette on June 11 has taken on added importance since a developer, Silverwood Associates, is exploring the possibility of redeveloping the Safeway site. Silverwood's interest was piqued by comments on the BCA's charette by committee member Tim Lynch, who is also director of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization.

Mark Silverwood has agreed to come to the charette and speak about the factors that are important to private commercial developers. In order to be even-handed, Carl is trying to find other developers who'd like to attend. He hopes to have on hand, persons with expertise in the areas of planning, zoning, construction and real estate development. Hopefully, there will also be a speaker from the county's economic development office, but their focus is on projects much larger than the Bluemont commercial district.

The charette was mentioned in the last newsletter, and all BCA members will receive more details in the next one. Since the goal is to define the neighborhood's vision for the area, the committee did not plan on advertising the charette to the general public. A flyer is being prepared for posting around the neighborhood, and for mailing to all owners of commercial property in the district. Richard Young volunteered to deliver the flyer, door-to-door, to each business, and to all other properties on the Safeway block.

The draft agenda for the charette calls for initial presentations to describe the existing setting and what could be built under existing programs and zoning. Bluemont resident Eric Davis, a landscape architect with EDAW, is preparing displays that will show examples from various commercial districts and their different features. Participants will be asked to express their preferences through a "red dot - green dot" exercise, in which they can put stickers on pictures that depict design elements that they like or dislike.

After Eric's presentation, participants will break out into groups and discuss their visions, values, goals, and desired features, concerning the commercial district. Finally the groups will report their conclusions and an attempt will be made to consolidate their viewpoints.

Gerry Procanick commented that no other neighborhood in Arlington has done something like this, and praised Carl's efforts. Ed Fendley noted that the Bluemont NC Plan addressed the commercial area, and that according to Jim Snyder, the results of the charette could form the basis of NC Plan amendments. Finally, some discussion occurred regarding the agenda for the breakout groups. Carl said participants will probably be randomly assigned to a group, and that they will try to cover "everything". Facilitators will guide each group discussion, and examples of some specific questions the groups will hopefully discuss are - the types of businesses people would like to see, and whether the commercial district should be expanded.

#### **2) COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS MEETING**

Ed Fendley announced that on May 29, the Arlington Civic Federation is sponsoring a meeting on Community Preparedness, (fire and police response). The meeting will be at the Arlington Hospital's Hazel Auditorium. The Civic Federation has requested each association to send a "liaison". In the absence of any

volunteers, Ed said he would find someone to attend.

### 3) NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Gerry Procanick reported on the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates for BCA offices. Gerry, Bob Atkins and Adrienne Pilot, came up with a group that includes a few new faces. The slate will be published in the next newsletter, and voting will take place at the June General Membership Meeting. The candidates are President - Carl Hallinan, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Judy Collins, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### 4) BALLSTON GATEWAY, SITE PLAN AMENDMENT

John Huennekens read his notes, from the May 14 Executive Board meeting, regarding the proposal by JBG Companies to amend the site plan for the Ballston Gateway project, by substituting an apartment building for a full-service hotel. 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. He also noted that when the current site plan was approved, the hotel was considered a benefit that justified other trade-offs. Without a hotel, the proposal opens up the question of what the benefits are from the project, and the negotiations have to start from scratch. Gerry also noted that since the last site plan was approved, a new revision to the zoning ordinance now allows 25% bonus density for affordable housing.

Carl Hallinan noted that this could be the third site plan negotiation for the Gateway project. He reiterated that during every review and approval process, there are trade-offs made in which restrictions in one area are eased in return for getting some other item. He emphasized that you can't just swap buildings in a site plan, and that the county and JBG will have to go back and re-work the whole deal.

\*Motion\* by Bob Atkins, Seconded by ? To pass a resolution that restates the Executive Board's resolution in support of a hotel, but in slightly different language.

Resolved : " 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'. "

\*Motion Approved\* Unanimous

### 5) NEIGHBORHOOD SIGNS

Several mockups of potential Bluemont Neighborhood signs were on hand for review and comment. The members in attendance expressed a preference for the "newsletter's Bluemont logo" that was originally proposed, instead of the modified versions used for the mock-ups. The "Beige Granite" (C204) background color was preferred, as well as the typefaces on the mockup that used that background color. All present agreed that the signs should say Est. 1890, which is when the first neighborhood subdivision was platted; rather than 1940-something, which was the earliest reference found for a Stonewall Jackson Civic Association.

Ed Fendley recalled that the original proposal asked for 4 sign locations. 2 Smaller signs were to be posted along bike trails □ the Custis Trail exit the leads up to 10<sup>th</sup> St near 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. He acknowledged that George Mason is not at the eastern edge of the neighborhood, but recalled that the Constitution Gardens area was the first publicly owned land where a sign could be installed.

John Huennekens noted that some public land has been created along Wilson nearer to Glebe Rd thanks to the reconstruction of the intersection of Tazewell and Vermont Streets. Ed said he'd take a look and see if that site would be suitable for the eastern Wilson Blvd sign.