

**Minutes for the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA)
Executive Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.**

President Judah Dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 p.m. Present (in addition to Judah Dal Cais) were First Vice President Lou Martin, Treasurer Judy Collins, Neighborhood Conservation Representative Kate Mesches, Civic Federation Representative Bob Atkins, and BCA members Suzanne Sundburg (who took minutes) and Laura Kirkconnell. Civic Federation Representative Ed Fendley arrived at approximately 7:12 pm. Newsletter Editor Carl Hallinan joined the meeting at approximately 7:25 pm.

Judah Dal Cais asked Kate Mesches to explain the "Keep Kids Alive – Drive 25" sign program. Kate showed the group a sample of the sign. She said that the signs must be placed on private property (and not in the public right-of-way/utility strip), with a maximum of one sign per property. She also recommended that prior to posting a sign, people check to confirm that the speed limit is in fact 25 mph in their area.

Kate said that she had 10 signs for distribution but could likely obtain more if there was additional demand. She reported that Carl Hallinan had some specific ideas about distributing the sign, but she said that she wasn't exactly sure what criteria he wanted to use.

Judah replied that Carl simply wanted the signs to be widely distributed. Judah noted that availability of the signs should be on a first-come, first-serve basis. He also stated that an article about the signs should appear in the January newsletter and that an announcement should be made at the next general membership meeting. Judah asked Kate to reserve a sign for him.

The group discussed the speed limit for the neighborhood. It was determined that the speed limit in the neighborhood is generally 25 mph, unless otherwise posted.

Ed Fendley reported that he has been looking into the posting of various signs. He said that there are so many signs posted in the neighborhood, he has begun to wonder how effective they are and he hopes to remove any unnecessary signs. Bob Atkins commented that if the speed limit is not posted, it is unenforceable. Ed suggested that perhaps speed-limit signs could be posted at the entry points to the neighborhood.

The discussion moved briefly to street lighting. Lou Martin and Laura Kirkconnell reported that there had been a request to add a street light on North 8th Road between Frederick and Edison streets. Kate Mesches told the group that the utility pole "cobra" lights are provided at no charge by the power company. Other street lighting/pedestrian lighting is provided by the County. Kate noted the difficulty in obtaining street lights through the NCAC process.

Judah Dal Cais then called on Ed Fendley to discuss the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) project delay letter. Ed noted that seven projects had been approved and funded by the County Board over the past several years. However, none of the projects, as yet, has been constructed. He reported that most of these projects were for sidewalks and noted the number of pedestrian deaths that had occurred during the same period. Ed distributed a copy of his letter to the County Board. He asked for any comments and said that he needed anyone who wanted to add his/her signature to the letter to let him know by end of day 1/13/04.

Suzanne Sundburg reported that she had spoken to a member of another civic association and was told that the County was overwhelmed with construction projects at the present time.

Ed expressed his frustration over the ongoing delays, noting that the money for the projects had been approved and earmarked by voters. He said that in 1997 the County Board had announced a new process to eliminate the backlog in construction. This new process has not translated into any real movement.

Judah suggested that in addition to sending a letter to the County Board it might be wise to attend the County Board meetings so that BCA could point out the problem. It was suggested that one person stand up and speak for the group. One example to be given might include the lack of continuous sidewalks for a school route, in one case Swanson Middle School.

Carl Hallinan joined the meeting and noted that the funding backlog for projects was short, while the construction backlog was quite long. He also noted that the delays were adding to the price of the projects through inflation.

Bob Atkins noted that the next County Board meeting would be held on Saturday, February 21. He said that public comment slips would need to be submitted in advance and noted that the public comment period begins at 8:30 am.

Next, Ed Fendley reported on the activities of the Arterial Traffic Management (ATM) committee for the three roads being studied (including Wilson Boulevard). He said that the consulting company should be presenting its initial recommendations to the County Board shortly. After that, he projected that it would take another month until the plan is in a form for the civic associations to review. He said the process is moving along and noted that other civic associations had not been as active as Bluemont.

Ed noted that County staff, particularly Randy Bartlett, is very focused on the ATM program. He said that the County wants to balance the needs of the neighborhoods with those of commuters.

Carl Hallinan pointed out that BCA had expressed an interest in installing medians along Wilson Boulevard (between Edison and Frederick streets) prior to the formation of the ATM committee. He was wondering if he should try to jumpstart the effort with Rich Viola but asked if the ATM study had overtaken BCA's existing median plans. Ed replied that the ATM plan would likely be available by spring, and Carl responded that BCA would likely see the plan before they obtained a response from Rich Viola.

Ed Fendley told the group that Randy Bartlett had already mentioned funding for the ATM project. Bob Atkins suggested requesting funding ahead of time in order to push the project along.

Ed suggested using the approved funding for the Wilson/Edison/Frederick medians as a way to jumpstart the ATM plan.

Judah Dal Cais suggested speaking to Rich Viola at the next ATM meeting and asking him for a firm implementation timeline for BCA's median project on Wilson Boulevard.

The group then discussed whether the new speed-activated pedestrian light at Wilson Boulevard and Bon Aire Park was working. Several people commented that the light seems to be triggered by the speeders but does not activate in time to stop them (instead, stopping the people who are driving behind them).

Ed noted that the next ATM meeting would be held on Thursday, January 15, at 7:30 pm at the County Building, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard. With that, he excused himself and left (approximately 7:45 pm).

Bob Atkins told the group that he had been approached by Jay Wind regarding the Arlington Marathon to be held on Sunday, May 2, 2004. Bob said that race participants will be passing through the neighborhood and asked if BCA would be willing to set up a water station for the runners. Bob then made a motion to set up a table on race day. Judy Collins seconded the motion.

The group decided to ask for volunteers in the next newsletter so that there would be at least two BCA members to man the table(s). The suggested sites for the table(s) were Edison and Wilson (near the 7-11) and at the base of the hill near the soccer field. BCA's monetary commitment would be limited to paper cups and 5 gallons of water.

All voted in favor of the motion.

Laura Kirkconnell said that she would volunteer to work at the water station but asked the executive board to seek at least one more volunteer via the newsletter.

Carl Hallinan turned the discussion to the cutting of trees along Four Mile Run. He noted that the County had not asked for input from residents, which was the main problem. Carl said that Dominion Power was cutting trees along the right-of-way, which they are entitled to do. However, he reported that Dominion Power was cutting trees that would not cause any problems for years and that some slow-growing trees (which could have been spared) were instead cut down.

Carl asked the BCA executive board to pass a resolution supporting a delay in the process before more damage was done. (Dominion Power will be cutting trees along all of the right-of-ways in the County.) Bob Atkins noted that the land covering the right-of-way had been transferred to the County in exchange for an easement.

Carl noted that in response to his and others' complaints, a Dominion Power representative walked the site (along the park) with Richard Epstein, who chairs Arlington Citizens for Smarter Growth.

Carl said that the key was to get the County to agree to a delay so that an independent urban forester would have a chance to make recommendations on future cutting and replanting efforts. Carl said that volunteers would be needed to serve as onsite monitors for any future work.

Carl Hallinan drafted the following resolution, which was adopted by the executive board:

"WHEREAS Bluemont Civic Association has previously gone on record in opposition to the loss of vegetation in the Bluemont Park right-of-way for the creation of the Bluemont Bypass Trail,

WHEREAS recent clear-cutting by Dominion Power Company along said right-of-way has been indiscriminate in the types of trees being removed,

BE IT RESOLVED that Bluemont Civic Association hereby requests that the Arlington County Board direct the County Manager and the Board's representatives on the Northern Virginia Parks Authority to ask Dominion Power to suspend the cutting of trees in the right-of-way until such safeguards are put into place to assure that any future cutting conforms to the existing mutually agreed-upon guidelines for tree pruning, and that the removed trees are replaced in accordance with said guidelines no later than May of 2004."

Carl Hallinan noted that he would send a copy of the resolution to other interested parties on his mailing list so that they could sign on, if they wished. The resolution would also be sent to County Board Chair Barbara Favola.

The discussion moved to the beaver pond located next to I-66, near Ballston. Bob Atkins reported that the area covering the beaver pond is still listed as residential and commercial property rather than as public property on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP). He said that the County Board had agreed verbally to convert the area to public property on the GLUP, but it had never been put in writing.

Bob made a motion to change the zoning for the beaver pond land to public property on the GLUP. Lou Martin seconded the motion. All voted yes.

Next, neighbor Mary Linder's concerns were discussed. Mary had observed that a developer had purchased four houses behind the red brick laundromat/drycleaners on Wilson Boulevard. (It was thought that the purchaser was Potomac Builders.) Mary expressed concern that the developer was planning to tear down the homes and replace them with condos. Bob Atkins noted that there was a County easement in that area that a developer might also be able to purchase. No one in the group stated that he/she was aware of any current redevelopment plans for this area.

With respect to Potomac Builders, it was also noted that the builder had decided not to purchase the County easement at Abingdon and Wilson, and had instead purchased the apartment complex next door to the single-family house. The general consensus was that the builder would likely exercise his option for by-right development.

Judy Collins reported that approximately 170 households had paid their BCA dues for 2004. She said that left approximately 166 households that were members in 2003 but had not renewed for 2004. She asked that a renewal form be included in the January newsletter.

Judah Dal Cais and Judy Collins established a 1/23/04 mail date for the January newsletter. The deadline for Carl Hallinan was therefore set for 1/20/04.

Lou Martin reported on the 9th Street URD project. He said that he had gotten the County to make the developer put up a fence around the flooded basements on the construction site.

Judah Dal Cais asked for updates from anyone else. Suzanne Sundburg said that she would e-mail her update to him.

Carl Hallinan reported on the "missing links" sidewalk project for 7th Street. He said that the project was funded, but BCA did not get alternate points for the project.

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Kate Mesches reported that Lyon Park and two other civic association representatives had not shown up to the last NCAC meeting. Therefore, BCA's projects were bumped ahead of those whose representatives were missing.

Bob Atkins asked about deadlines for future NC projects. He asked that an article be placed in the March newsletter to ask for volunteers to serve on the NC working group.

Kate Mesches suggested having Lewis Bromberg (immediate past president of the Civic Federation) speak at the March meeting on the bond issue.

Bob Atkins noted that there would be a Bonds & Budgets 101 class sponsored by the Civic Federation on 1/24/04 at the Department of Human Services building.

The group determined that the next executive board meeting would be held at 7 pm on Tuesday, February 10 at Arlington Traditional School (ATS), and that the next general membership meeting would be held at 7 pm on Wednesday, February 25 at ATS.

Judah Dal Cais approved an e-list message to announce the January general membership meeting.

Judah Dal Cais adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 pm.