

**Minutes for the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA)
Executive Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.**

President Judah Dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 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), Carl Drummond, and Allen Wood. Civic Federation Representative Bob Waffle arrived at approximately 7:12 pm. Newsletter Editor Carl Hallinan joined the meeting at approximately 7:20 pm.

Judah Dal Cais moved to approve the minutes from the January executive board meeting and asked for any changes. No one had any revisions; the motion was seconded, and all voted to approve the previous minutes.

Judah Dal Cais then asked Kate Mesches to begin with a report on her activities. She told the group that there are only two more meetings prior to the deadline for Neighborhood Day events. She reported that Christine Woods is the contact person for Neighborhood Day. Judah said he had planned last year's Hot Dog Day to celebrate Neighborhood Day. This year, Judah wants to use the e-list to advertise the free trees that are to be given away in conjunction with the event. Judah also suggested placing an article in the March newsletter (a mass distribution to the neighborhood) to reach as many residents as possible. Bob Atkins suggested handing out voter registration forms at the event and giving away left over water bottles. Bob also suggested handing out Neighborhood Conservation Action Committee (NCAC) materials. Kate Mesches suggested using the Neighborhood Day event as a membership drive opportunity.

Kate Mesches reported that the County is expanding the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) portion of its Web site. She also said she still has three "Drive 25" signs left. (Bob Waffle asked her to give him one.) Kate told the group that she can get more signs, and Judah Dal Cais asked her to obtain 10 to 15 more signs to be given out at the Neighborhood Day events.

Judah Dal Cais then asked Bob Waffle about the speaker he had arranged for the cancelled January meeting. Judah asked Bob to reschedule his speaker for the March meeting. (Bob Atkins noted that the Office of Aging would be providing a speaker for the February meeting.) Kate Mesches said that she would try to arrange for former Civic Federation President Lewis Bromberg to speak about the bond issue at either the April or May meeting.

Judy Collins reported on membership activities. She told the group that there were still 60 to 75 families that needed to renew for 2004. She also reminded the

group that Carl Hallinan had sent a letter in April of 2003 to remind those who had not renewed to pay dues in order to maintain their civic association membership. She also noted that some people receiving the mass-distribution March newsletter also would likely renew/join.

Judah Dal Cais said the deadline for the February newsletter would be Tuesday, 2/17/04. He asked Judy Collins to determine a deadline for the March newsletter. Due to the fact that the quantity would be larger for a mass distribution (approximately 3,000) and that more time would be needed for hand delivery, Judy Collins determined that the deadline for articles should be Sunday, 3/7/04.

Bob Atkins noted that the County's public budget hearing would be held on 3/23/04 and that the tax rate meeting would be held on 3/25/04. He requested both dates to be announced in the March newsletter.

Lou Martin reported that other than the three basements already dug, there had been no progress on the 9th Street URD project due to the winter weather. He also reported that five houses were being built on Randolph Street near St. Agnes, three of which have already been sold.

Suzanne Sundburg reported that currently there are 89 members on the e-list. She also said she needs to add any members who renewed/joined in 2004 and who had not already been invited. Judah Dal Cais asked if the e-list message announcing the cancellation of the January meeting (due to the closing of school for inclement weather) had been sufficient. Suzanne reported that at least one person had not received the message in time. She suggested including the cancellation policy in the winter newsletters to remind members that meetings would be automatically cancelled when the schools are closed. Judah also suggested publishing the cancellation policy on the Association's Web site. He noted that he had received several comments from residents via the Web site's e-mail link.

Bob Atkins reminded the group to make County Board members aware of the still-unconstructed sidewalk projects in the neighborhood. It was noted that the next County Board meeting would be held on Saturday, 2/21/04. Ed Fendley has been designated as the speaker representing the Association on this issue.

Carl Hallinan noted that several people had spoken during the last public comment period (at the County Board meeting) regarding the tree pruning issue. He also noted that the County Web site now breaks down the Board meeting

content by issue. So, people can hear the comments and discussion on particular issues. Judah Dal Cais moved the discussion to the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) training that is being offered by the County. He said that it supplements CPR and First Aid training. It is specifically designed to address issues involving catastrophic events, and it includes training in triage and search and rescue techniques. The training is free, and there are no prerequisites. Currently, Judah said that he and Carl Hallinan are signed up for the classes, but he would like to have additional people take the training. He suggested putting another notice about CERT training in the Association newsletter.

Bob Atkins asked that notice of the County's e-mail/cell phone emergency alert system also be published in the Association newsletter. Judah Dal Cais and Kate Mesches told the group about the school system's emergency notification system, which is limited to just e-mail alerts.

Judah Dal Cais then circulated the initial results/plans (which included bike lanes and medians) of the Arterial Traffic Management (ATM) committee. These interim results are being circulated to the associations and others for review and comment. The final plans/recommendations will be forwarded to the County Board.

Judah said he would like to establish a Wilson Boulevard working group to receive the ATM committee's recommendations and to incorporate those plans into the revitalization efforts along Wilson Boulevard. The working group would also address the redevelopment of the Safeway site. Judah noted that Suzanne Sundburg had pointed out to him that redevelopment of the Safeway site would likely affect the surrounding areas. She asked that the working group consider and address the negative impact of any project's height and density on surrounding residents.

Judah Dal Cais then asked Bob Waffle to serve as chair of the Wilson Boulevard working group, and Bob agreed.

With respect to the area surrounding Safeway, Judah noted that Frederick and 9th Streets still need sidewalks. Lou Martin (who lives on 9th Street) remarked that sidewalks for these streets had been low on the old priority list. Judah remarked that sidewalk projects had been listed in the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan, but not necessarily in order of priority. Some of these projects were unable to obtain neighborhood approval. Others were funded through the Missing Links program. Some of the outstanding projects were identified in the newsletter last year, along with a request for volunteers to serve

as block captains. (Many of the areas with outstanding sidewalk projects do not have block captains to manage the projects.) Bob Atkins suggested drafting a separate flyer that would be inserted into the March newsletters and would be delivered to those areas needing block captains. Carl Drummond (who lives on Frederick Street) said he believed that the Association had approved a sidewalk project for Frederick Street but not 9th Street. Carl Hallinan said that the Association should check with the old block captain, Mike Minaie, to determine the status of the projects. Carl Drummond volunteered to serve as block captain, should Mike Minaie no longer want to serve.

It was noted that the developer for the 9th Street URD had set aside money to partially fund a sidewalk in front of that development. Bob Atkins reported that the sidewalk on North 4th Street (west of Kensington) along Four Mile Run Drive was in bad shape. Carl Hallinan said he didn't think North 4th Street was included in the original NC Plan list. Carl Hallinan asked if the sidewalk projects included sidewalk repair, lights, and gutter and curb improvements. Judah said they would.

Judah Dal Cais then informed the group that he wanted to form a committee to update the NC Plan. The update is to be limited to a revision of the list of sidewalk projects. Judah asked Kate Mesches if she would be willing to chair this committee, and she agreed.

Lou Martin asked about the relationship between the reduction of lanes that was likely to result from the ATM plan and the redevelopment of businesses along Wilson Boulevard (between North George Mason Drive and Jefferson Street). Lou remarked that if the ATM plan reduces lanes on Wilson Boulevard, it would restrict business size to that of "mom and pop" stores. Carl Hallinan replied that the size of businesses would more likely be constrained by the size of the property and lack of parking.

Carl Hallinan then asked about Eric Davis's letter regarding the height of homes being built on Kensington Street. Judah Dal Cais said he would send a copy of the letter out to everyone for review. Judah told the group that Eric's letter focuses on how grade is determined and measured and how it affects the height of new construction/redevelopment.

Carl noted that the Arlington County Board has been consistent in its support of preserving the character of the original neighborhood. He said the Board of Zoning Appeals is another matter. It tends to side with developers. Under state statute, the Arlington County Board has very little power to control the Zoning Board.

Suzanne Sundburg reminded the group that Eric Davis is also concerned about erosion. The County has permitted the developer to dispense with an erosion fence in favor of gravel. The result has been a great deal of erosion and runoff.

Carl Hallinan suggested that the problem might be one of enforcement rather than a code problem. He also said the matter might need to go before the Zoning Board in order to determine the nature of the problem.

In his letter, Eric Davis asks for the spirit of the height limit (of 35 feet) to be preserved. The group noted that height measurement was specified in the ordinance but that it was worded in such a way as to create a built-in loophole for developers to exploit. In the 800 block of North Kensington, the developer has dug out lots in order to lower the grade and thus increase the allowable height of the homes being built. Eric Davis is asking the County Board to put a stop to this practice.

Carl Hallinan suggested moving the request for action to the first paragraph of the letter. Suzanne Sundburg suggested adding pictures of the offending construction as an attachment to the letter. Bob Waffle suggested Judah tell Eric Davis that the executive board supports the concept of the letter but that some editing is required. Then, he suggested, the letter can be voted on at the next general membership meeting if it is ready.

Judah Dal Cais noted that he has room reservations at Arlington Traditional School set up for first six months of 2004 to cover executive board meetings and general membership meetings. He also suggested that the executive board and others begin thinking about whom to nominate for 2004-2005. Lou Martin said that he would not be willing to serve on the next executive board.

Judah adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:19 pm.