

**Bluemont Civic Association
Executive Board Meeting
October 9, 2007, 7:30 p.m.
Arlington Traditional School**

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 p.m.

In attendance were Judah dal Cais, Carl Drummond, Judy Collins, Sam Ferro, Suzanne Sundburg, Terry Serie, Lisa Byington and several BCA members. In the absence of Secretary Mary Thorne, Byington recorded the meeting's action items.

Approval of Previous Executive Board Minutes

The Board reviewed minutes from the July 10, 2007 Executive Board meeting. A motion to approve the July 10 minutes was made and seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes. The Board also discussed the minutes from the September 11, 2007 Executive Board meeting. Suzanne Sundburg reported that a few items in the minutes required clarification. Once the September 11 minutes are finalized, they will be sent to the Executive Board for review and approval.

Peck-Staples Site

Terry Serie, BCA's Information Coordinator for the Peck-Staples Redevelopment Plan, reported on the latest proposal that the developer JBG has submitted to the County. The County released the documents on October 9, 2007.

The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) will be reviewing the revised plan at its public meeting on Monday, October 15, 2007, from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. All interested BCA residents are urged to attend. JBG has requested that the County complete all three of its meetings and hearings before the end of November 2007, so residents must act quickly if they would like an opportunity to review and respond to the proposals.

Serie reported that the revised plan includes a building on the Peck site that is 10 stories (135 feet) high (down from a maximum height of 165 feet in earlier proposals). The building on the Staples site is proposed at 7 stories. (For comparison's sake, the Regent at 950 N. Glebe is 175 feet high.)

Another major revision to the plan is JBG's proposal to partner with Arlington Housing Corporation (AHC), an affordable housing group that would like to redevelop and expand the Jordan Manor apartment building on the corner of Wilson Blvd. and N. Woodrow St. JBG has proposed to swap a portion of the Peck site on N. Wakefield St. (the portion where JBG had originally proposed to build townhouses) for the Jordan Manor site (including two neighboring single-family houses purchased by AHC). Under the terms of the swap, an affordable housing apartment building for AHC would be located along the east side of N. Wakefield St., adjacent to the proposed office building on the Peck site. JBG would sell the Jordan Manor site (and neighboring lots) with the purchaser

acquiring the right to construct 28 townhouses on the site between Woodrow and Wakefield Streets, along with another 11 townhouses on the northeastern side of Wakefield Street (behind the new building on the Staples site).

There are few details on the proposed affordable housing building, although it appears to be 45 feet high. Given the County's commitment to affordable housing and AHC's efforts to secure State funding before the end of the year, members of the Executive Board expressed some concern that the County may approve the proposal on an "envelope" basis without many details finalized.

Serie reported that JBG has reminded the County of Virginia Tech's apparent interest in the new building to be constructed on the Staples site. VA Tech is apparently also considering a campus in Fairfax County, so Arlington County may feel competitive pressure to rush its consideration of the proposal.

In addition to concerns about the revised proposals, the Executive Board discussed the many community benefits that should be required of the developer (changes to existing traffic patterns, streetscaping along Wilson Blvd., etc.).

Serie distributed a draft memorandum to be sent to various persons at the County on behalf of BCA regarding BCA's interests and concerns on the proposed redevelopment. The memo would reiterate BCA's support for redevelopment of the site, with appropriate community benefits, but at a maximum height of 95 feet for the office buildings and 45 feet for the affordable housing building and the townhomes. A motion was made to authorize Serie to work with President dal Cais to finalize the memo and send it to the County this week. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

JBG and AHC were invited to attend the October 9 Executive Board meeting to discuss the proposals, but they declined. Representatives of JBG and AHC have been invited to attend. BCA's general membership meeting on October 24 (which is after the first SPRC meeting on October 15).

Widening of I-66

BCA member Lisa Byington raised concerns about the State's efforts to widen I-66 and the State's apparent conclusion that no further sound barriers are needed, despite the increased noise levels projected. Byington noted that there currently is no sound barrier along N. Fairfax Dr. from N. George Mason Dr. to just west of N. Edison St. Byington stated that BCA should attempt to focus attention on the need for more sound barriers. Sundburg reported on the efforts of the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST) in opposition to the widening of I-66, but it appears that few are focusing on improving the sound barriers that protect residential streets from the highway noise. President dal Cais agreed to research the issue further, and Byington agreed to work with ACST.

Budget Rental Trucks

Byington reported on neighbors' concerns regarding the parking of Budget rental trucks on residential streets. In addition to it being illegal to park commercial trucks on residential streets (according to Officer Koch), the trucks provide hiding places for illicit activities and are damaging limbs on the trees that provide the only buffer along I-66. President dal Cais will continue to work with the owner of the service station to find alternative parking places for the trucks.

ATS Softball Fields

Byington reported on neighbors' concerns about the unlocked porta-potty on N. Fairfax Dr. next to the Arlington Traditional School (ATS) softball fields. The potty is supposed to be locked and only used by softball teams; however, the potty has been unlocked since it was re-installed this fall. This creates an attractive nuisance for public drinking, homeless people, and passing construction workers (who illegally park their large construction vehicles on George Mason Dr. while using the porta-potty). President dal Cais agreed to contact the County's Parks Department to discuss neighborhood concerns.

October Newsletter

Newsletter Editor Suzanne Sundburg distributed a draft of the articles to be included in the October newsletter. Final edits are due with Newsletter Designer Sam Ferro by Friday October 12.

Other Old Business

The Executive Board discussed its support for a Candidates' Night to be held on October 30, 2007. A motion to allocate up to \$50 to purchase refreshments for the event was made. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. President dal Cais agreed to purchase the refreshments.

Treasurer Judy Collins reported that BCA has added 7 new members and 4 membership renewals since the neighborhood-wide newsletter delivery.

New Business

BCA members discussed their concerns about the admission policies of ATS. Currently, ATS is the only "choice" elementary school in Arlington County that does not contain preferences for local children. This causes most BCA students to be bussed to schools farther away, while the ATS neighborhood is overwhelmed by buses and cars transporting students from outside the BCA neighborhoods. The County is considering school boundary changes that could affect BCA's admission policies, and a decision is expected before the end of the year. Interested BCA parents will work to express their support for including ATS in the boundary-change decisions.

Adjournment

President dal Cais adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 pm.