

**Bluemont Civic Association**  
General Membership Meeting  
October 24, 2007, 7:30 p.m.  
Arlington Traditional School

**Call to Order**

Vice President Carl Drummond called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 p.m.

In attendance were Wendy Dean, Suzanne Sundburg, Carl Drummond, Judah dal Cais, Kate Mesches, Terry Serie, Judy Collins, Sam Ferro, Mary Thorne, and 22 Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members.

**Presentation by Abby Raphael**

Abby Raphael who is running unopposed for the School Board spoke briefly about her background and what she would like to accomplish if elected.

**Presentation by JBG on plans for Peck-Staples-Jordan Manor development**

JBG reported on what had transpired with their project on the Peck/Staples site since they last attended a BCA meeting. They plan to build two office buildings. The larger one, which they identify as "Building A," will be on the corner of Wilson and Glebe on the former site of the Bob Peck showroom. Building A will be 135' in height with a 20' penthouse on top. Approximately 1,000 office workers will use this building daily with parking spaces for 450. No tenants have been identified for this building, and it will be built when market conditions allow. Building B will be 99' in height and will be built on Glebe Rd., north of Building A and will include the land currently occupied by Staples. Virginia Tech Foundation will own and occupy this building. This will not be a location for Virginia Tech classrooms or students. Buildings A and B will have some environmentally friendly components. JBG is going for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification. This eco-friendly effort allows JBG to request bonus density. The third part of the site plan is a series of townhouses, which will be located on N. Wakefield Street adjacent to Building B.

The fourth part of the site plan is a series of townhouses on the north side of Wilson between N. Wakefield and Woodrow Streets. This is the land now occupied by the Jordan Manor apartments. Since the Site Planning Review Committee (SPRC) meeting in February, Arlington County approached JBG with the idea of doing a land swap with the Arlington Housing Corporation (AHC) whereby JBG would swap some of the Peck-Staples land planned for townhouses for the site currently occupied by the Jordan Manor apartments. The details of this arrangement were finalized in August, and the first SPRC meeting to incorporate these changes was held on October 15. JBG couldn't answer questions about the interior of the proposed AHC buildings, but the building footprint is included in their site plan.

BCA members expressed concern about the fact that Building A looks like a big wall when looking east from Wilson Blvd. JBG said that it was stepping both buildings A and B down to 45' toward Wakefield in response to neighborhood concerns. JBG talked about the community benefits of this project. JBG will be making a contribution to affordable housing by participating in the land swap with AHC. BCA members were concerned about headlights coming down Center St. (a new street running through the JBG project) and shining into the windows of the residents' homes on Wakefield. JBG suggested it could curve the road or plant bushes or trees that would block the light. JBG will sell the two parcels for the townhouses (one parcel on Peck-Staples site and one parcel on the Jordan Manor site) immediately upon site plan approval. Jordan Manor would need to be vacant and demolished before AHC could release it to JBG who would in turn sell the land to a townhouse developer. Some members expressed concern about the residents of Jordan Manor who could have a difficult time finding affordable housing in a comparable location. The projected timeline given by JBG was that AHC would get funding for its building in 2009, followed by a site plan amendment. AHC would only be allowed to build after completing this process. Given that the buildings on this site plan will ultimately be built by three different parties, JBG, the townhouse developer and AHC, there was concern raised that completion of construction could occur over a very long period of time or never be completed at all. The next SPRC meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 5. BCA members should check the Website for updates on this project.

### **Approval of Minutes for 9/26/2007**

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 9/26/07 General Meeting. A motion to approve the 9/26/07 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted unanimously to approve the 9/26/07 minutes. Thorne will forward the approved minutes for posting on the BCA Website.

### **November Newsletter Deadline and Articles**

The text deadline for the newsletter is November 14. There will be articles about the latest JBG developments and upcoming SPRC meeting dates, information about the next NC funding round, an announcement of the December meeting, and an article about a new Civic Federation program.

### **Bad Signage Program**

Civic Federation Representative Kate Mesches announced that residents of Arlington County are asked to submit the worst example of bad signage that they have observed. This could be a case of too many signs, confusing signs, signs in bad condition, ugly signs or no signs where they are necessary. Bad sign reporters should submit their photos to the Civic Federation. This does not include signs with graffiti, which is a police matter. The Civic Federation is looking for the worst examples to submit to Arlington County for action. Ultimately, it would like to create a process to deal with this issue on a routine basis. Mesches will do an article for the newsletter.

**NC Representative**

Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Representative Wendy Dean reported that the project on 9<sup>th</sup> Street N. between N. Fredrick and Edison Streets was likely to be funded in December. Neighborhoods that have not been funded before get precedence when funds are available. The NC is hoping for better cost estimates in the future.

**Candidates' Night**

Candidates' Night will be held on Tuesday, October 30, for candidates in local and statewide races at Resurrection Lutheran Church. Questions can be submitted at the beginning of the meeting.

**Arlington Traditional School (ATS) Admission**

There was a lengthy and heated discussion concerning the admission policies at ATS as they relate to the Bluemont neighborhood. A number of Bluemont parents want to circulate a petition asking the School Board to change the ATS admission policy to give preference to children who live within safe walking distance. Parents of current ATS students expressed their reasons for not wanting to see this petition go forward. At issue were the current problems of over- and under-enrollment in county schools, the importance of diversity at ATS, and the desire to stay true to the history of the school. Parents in the neighborhood would like their children to be able to attend a neighborhood school instead of being bused long distances. There was a suggestion to have a special meeting to discuss this issue at greater length.

**Adjournment**

President dal Cais adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.