

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, September 29, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Arlington Traditional School
855 N. Edison Street

Call to Order and Attendance

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Judah dal Cais, Sam Ferro, Suzanne Sundburg (who took minutes in Mary Thorne's absence), Judy Collins, Larry Smith, Robert Atkins, and approximately 16 other BCA members and Bluemont residents.

Park Development Division Chief Lisa Grandle

President dal Cais introduced Lisa Grandle to the group. Grandle spent the majority of her time discussing the recently converted parkland at 882 N. Lexington Street. The property owner, who had previously sold property to the county for park enlargement, offered to sell the property at N. Lexington Street. In accordance with the parkland acquisition guidelines in the 2005 Public Spaces Master Plan, the county purchased the property for \$570,000. The house was subsequently deconstructed by Tysons Corp., and 98% of the materials were recycled/reused. The house did not have a basement; however, there temporarily was a 4-foot drop-off to what was the house's crawlspace. That area had been roped off for safety, but a contractor lowered the barrier during the deconstruction process and forgot to replace it. The garage was left intact for park personnel to use as storage. The land was reseeded and has been left in a natural state until such time as a plan for its ultimate use is decided.

Earlier in the evening, Grandle had met with a group of residents from the N. Lexington Street area who were concerned about the activity at 882 N. Lexington and had several more general complaints about parking, lighting and crime near Bon Air Park. Grandle noted that in the future the county would notify nearby residents of parkland purchases, deconstruction of buildings, and the like in writing. She said the county does not post notification signs in such cases, because it does not want to advertise that a dwelling is unoccupied. Zoned parking along county property is prohibited, so the zoned parking signs adjacent to 882 N. Lexington are to be removed.

Grandle noted that Lexington Street residents also had met with Bon Air Park Manager Lyndell Core. She believed an agreement had been reached to use recycled fencing to extend the park fence along N. Lexington Street border and to add fencing between 882 and the neighboring property. The new parkland is not another "portal" into the park, Grandle stated. She also

believed that Core had agreed to some additional landscape planting around the property's perimeter for appearance sake. However, Grandle added that that the interior would be left as passive space so as not to preclude other potential uses in the future.

Grandle then took questions from the floor. Dal Cais asked whether parkland acquisition funds could be used to purchase an existing building for use as a Bluemont community center. Grandle noted that most civic associations that had community centers owned them outright (they do not belong to the county) and were responsible for their maintenance and upkeep. Grandle felt certain that such a purchase would be beyond the county's limited budget.

Another resident asked why the playground in Bluemont Park (next to Four Mile Run) was rehabilitated since it involved so much impermeable surface (creating a lot of contaminated storm runoff) so close to a stream that was already polluted. Grandle noted that the Parks Division had funds to rehabilitate the existing facility but not enough to relocate the playground to a more suitable site. Many park facilities were situated decades before environmental impact rules were promulgated. The existing playground equipment was old (all except for the swings had been removed) and did not meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal safety requirements. Residents near the park had specifically asked for a new playground in Bluemont Park.

In response to a question about the location of the healing/meditation garden that has been proposed (using recycled/donated materials from the garden owned located at the old Whitman Walker Clinic on Lee Highway), Grandle said that the county was considering a site other than Bon Air Park.

After Grandle left, Brian Cullin (appointed by dal Cais as a coordinator between parks staff—Lyndell Core—and the civic association), who is a resident living on 9th Street North, reported on his and other residents' meeting with Core and Grandle regarding the parkland at 882 N. Lexington Street. According to Cullin, residents do not want this new space to be used as another access point into the park. They also hope to spur the county to come up with a plan for this area well before Public Spaces Master Plan is revised within the next 10 to 15 years.

Approval of Minutes for 6/23/2010

The membership voted unanimously to approve the June 23, 2010, Annual Meeting minutes. Suzanne Sundburg will forward the approved minutes for posting to the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) Website.

NC Report

Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Representative Larry Smith reported on NC activities. BCA's first-priority project is a sidewalk, curb and gutter project in the 1000 block of N. Edison Street. Smith also noted that county staff is now requiring 5-foot-wide sidewalks (rather than the existing ADA-required 4-foot width) for NC projects. Due to the additional width, at least one NC project has been withdrawn.

Civic Federation alternate Bob Atkins commented that the Civic Federation had not yet taken up this change because it had not yet been forwarded to the County Board for consideration. However Atkins noted that he had forwarded the item for consideration by the appropriate Civic Federation committees so that they can study how the change may affect the county's lot coverage and setback requirements.

NC Plan Update Committee Chair David Van Wagner reported that his committee had met in early June and that sections of the NC Plan document had been placed in Google docs for redrafting by subcommittee members. He said the committee hopes to have a revised draft by the end of the fourth quarter of 2010.

Miscellaneous Matters

David Van Wagner, who is also in charge of newsletter distribution, asked for back-up volunteers to supplement the carriers who deliver the newsletter neighborhood-wide twice a year.

Bob Atkins suggested that the carriers also be asked to report any problems around the neighborhood (potholes, broken sidewalks, etc.) that they may spot when they are distributing newsletters.

The Harris Teeter-American Service Center (ASC) site plan amendment was discussed. It is part of a larger consolidation plan, and a lot owned by ASC will swapped with land at the existing Harris Teeter site. The county wants ASC to move its operations to the west side of N. Glebe Road and to occupy the ground level of what it expects to be a high-rise, mixed-use building on the Harris Teeter site.

Judah dal Cais reported on the proposed bocce court that residents would like to build along the Bluemont Junction Trail near N. Florida Street (the new court would not block access to the trail from N. Greenbrier Street). Dal Cais is continuing to meet with Park Manager Lyndell Core to discuss the project. Residents are willing to perform at least some of the installation work. David Van Wagner noted that a sinkhole has developed near that part of the trail.

Treasurer Judy Collins, who is heading up the Civic Federation's Edge Development project for Bluemont, noted that she and others on her committee would be identifying properties adjacent to other properties with different zoning. This data collection effort should take place in October and November.

Civic Federation Delegate Suzanne Sundburg noted that the Civic Federation would be considering its recommendation on the proposal to switch Arlington streetlights to LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs at its October meeting. The county will swap out some 4,000 of its own fixtures using federal stimulus funds. At issue are the approximately 12,000 fixtures owned and operated by Dominion Virginia Power. It switch is expensive, and Dominion Power will lose income along with the reduction in power usage.

Presentation of Zoning Variance Requests

Brian McPartland of 5318 5th Street North presented plans to add a new front porch and a 2-story rear addition to his house. He noted that the setback in the front would be 15 rather than the required 20 feet. The roof height will be 28 feet. There are some potential drainage issues that he and his wife are resolving.

Dal Cais presented plans for Michael Grasso of 807 N. Harrison Street. The house has a detached garage, and Grasso proposes to add a second-story greenhouse on top of the garage. The new roof height could not be determined.

It was noted that whereas the county requires variance applicants to present their plans to the civic association, the civic association does not generally take a position for or against these requests. It is up to those requesting variances to notify their adjoining neighbors and to work with them to resolve any issues of contention.

Dal Cais said that he would like to add a new page to the BCA Website that lists all variance requests, site plans, and other construction-related documents that pertain to Bluemont so that residents would have a one-stop place to review details regarding proposed projects.

Additional Motions Passed

Designer Sam Ferro plans to add signs below the three Bluemont signs to advertise the civic association's URL — www.bluemontcivic.org. A motion was made and seconded to approve \$300 for this new signage, and it was unanimously approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve \$25 to be spent on refreshments for the upcoming joint Candidate's Night event October 28. Members passed the motion unanimously.

President dal Cais adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:08 pm.