

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, June 22, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order and Attendance

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 p.m. In attendance were Judah dal Cais, Judy Collins, Mary Thorne, Matt Fehling, Larry Smith, David Van Wagner, Sam Ferro, Suzanne Sundburg, Dave Leichtman, Bob Atkins and 155 other Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members.

Glebe Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Tom Hutchings, Capital Projects Manager, Arlington County Division of Transportation

In 1999 a pedestrian safety study was done on North Glebe Road. Plans were completed in 2003 but there was no funding available at the time. In 2005, Arlington County completed improvements at the corner of Glebe Rd. and Randolph Street. In 2006, improvements to Carlin Springs Road which had been dropped from an earlier version were added back in to the project. Since 1999, a number of pedestrian safety and sidewalk improvements have been paid for by developers as a condition of development. Examples include; the corners of Glebe and the northeast corner of Fairfax Drive, the northeast corner and median enhancements of Wilson Boulevard and southeast corner of Fairfax Drive and median enhancements.

In January 2011, the plan for the next phase of pedestrian safety improvements was approved. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2012 with projected completion in late 2013. The details of this project can be found on the county website under "Glebe Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project Update". Included in this project will be work in the following areas: in front of the Holiday Inn, on and adjacent to the Carlin Springs bridge, the corner of Carlin Springs and Glebe and adjacent to the new construction at Wilson and Glebe. Center islands will be widened, crosswalks will be shortened, sidewalks will be extended at corners, "slip lanes" (free right turns) will be removed, and raised crosswalks will be associated with "porkchop islands" (eg. in front of Ted's Montana Grill).

Arlington County Police Liaison - Corporal Elizabeth "Beth" Lennon

Corporal Lennon introduced herself to the unusually large crowd. With the warmer weather, door to door solicitors are becoming more active. Lennon advises not opening the door to solicitors. While some of them are honest and carry the required permits others go from state to state running soliciting scams. Any issues of concern in the neighborhood should be reported to the non-emergency number 703-558-2222 or e-mailed to Lennon at elennon@arlingtonva.

Presentation on the Safeway Site's Current Zoning & the Requirements/Process for Rezoning-BCA & Planning Commission Member Steve Cole

Development in Arlington County is based on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and the county zoning ordinance which are both available on the county website. The GLUP is a policy document that establishes permitted uses for each piece of land in the county. The zoning ordinance is the law that outlines permitted use, density, height, lighting, signs etc. In some cases the zoning ordinance has been changed but the GLUP has not been updated for consistency. There are also sector plans which result from discussions between the county, developers and citizens. These plans are not law but they provide a framework for development. Usually sector plans are adhered to as development plans move forward. No formal plan exists for the Bluemont commercial area.

Every piece of property can be developed "by-right" as long as it remains within density and height limitations. If the existing building is taller than the law allows the property owner can develop up to that height. Once the plans exceed this limit, a site plan application is required. If additional density is requested then the county asks for community benefits. If landowners want to increase density and/or height they can ask for an amendment to the GLUP. This is a slow process. For example, work started to change the GLUP for the Goodyear site three years ago and the change is still under consideration. A study on whether to grant such a change would involve; understanding the history, existing GLUP and zoning designations, uses of that property and neighboring properties, participation of a citizen committee, a preliminary traffic study, a long range planning committee etc. After the study is completed the staff recommends whether or not the applicant's proposal is reasonable and should proceed. This recommendation then goes to the county board which does not rezone or change GLUP without a long and involved process.

According to the GLUP, Bluemont's commercial district is classified as "service commercial", which is the lowest density category and includes the following, C-1, C-1R, C-1O, C-2, and C-0-1-0. The Castro Bakery is the only business that is C-1R. The rest of the commercial area with the exception of Federal Lock and Key and the property west of Liberty Gas are C-1. Federal Lock and Key and the property west of Liberty Gas are zoned C-0-1-0. Most of the properties have a 35 foot height limit, though a penthouse or equipment on roof doesn't count in this total. Federal Lock and Key and the property west of Liberty Gas have a 45 foot height limit. A Bluemont commercial property could be developed under site plan to a height of five stories with additional density. Currently no such site plan applications have been filed. Neighborhood Conservation (NC) plans are important because they communicate the desires of the community. It is not policy but rather a means of informing the county what development the neighborhood would like to see going forward. When a proposal reaches the board they tend to follow what has been outlined in the NC plan though there is no guarantee. Creating an NC plan is a good opportunity for the neighborhood to come together. When the Peck/Staples site was being discussed there was no updated Bluemont NC plan for the county to use as a reference. The result can be seen rising at the corner of Wilson and Glebe.

Election of New Officers and Representatives/Delegates

Nominating Committee members Barbara Wien and Diane Schwartz described their process in creating a slate of officers for election, outlined the voting rules, and presented the slate. All meeting attendees had verified their membership through a sign-in process at the door and had received a ballot. No ballots could be cast until attendees were given the opportunity to make nominations from the floor. The slate was presented as follows:

President: Michael Groves, First Vice President: George Rovder, Second Vice President; Matt Fehling or Maura Quinn, Treasurer: Judy Collins, Secretary: no candidate, Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative: Kate Mattos or Larry Smith, Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Alternate: Mark Haynes, Civic Federation Delegate: Bob Atkins, Terry Serie, and Suzanne Smith Sundburg, Civic Federation Alternate: Dean Foster, Sam Ferro and Ed Fendley.

The following were nominated from the floor:

President: Judah dal Cais, Secretary: Chitra Kumar, Civic Federation Alternate: Sandra Munnell

A voice vote was used to elect all the uncontested positions. The contestants for President, Second Vice President, and Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative gave two minute (timed) speeches. The ballots that had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting were used to elect the contested positions with the following results: President - Judah dal Cais, Second Vice President- Matt Fehling and Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative- Larry Smith.

Civic Federation Meeting Highlights (www.civfed.org), Suzanne Sundburg

(Civic Federation Representative, Suzanne Sundburg attended the Civic Federation meeting on June 7, 2011 and submitted this report by e-mail.) Sponsors of the motion supporting more transparency and accountability in tracking developers' community benefit contributions (contributions made in exchange for additional density/height in site plan projects) have withdrawn their motion. Sponsors hope that a newly created process will bring more clarity to this often-opaque system, but they will monitor it carefully and reserve the right to reintroduce their motion if these efforts fail.

Street parking may now be eliminated on one side of any Arlington street measuring less than 28 feet. This new protocol ensures that fire trucks, emergency vehicles and trash trucks can access all neighborhood streets. Parking restrictions changes have already been applied to 3 or 4 county streets, and conditions on other streets are being reviewed. The county must notify the relevant civic association before the new no parking signs are installed on neighborhood streets.

Adjournment

Judah dal Cais adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:35 p.m.