

BCA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2011, 7:30 PM
ARLINGTON TRADITIONAL SCHOOL

Christina Alexander, Arthritis Foundation of Mid-Atlantic

Ms. Alexander kicked off the BCA General Membership meeting by sharing information about the **Jingle Bell Run** in Bluemont Park on December 3, which starts at 8:00 a.m. (registration). At 9:00 a.m., there will be a timed 5K race, an untimed 5K walk, and a kids' Reindeer walk. There will also be a costume contest.

Ms. Alexander also mentioned a health and wellness event on Monday, November 14, at Aurora Hills Community Center.

Elizabeth McKeeby, Good Year Site Plan

Ms. McKeeby explained that this meeting was a good opportunity for people to learn about the site planning process, the height and density trade-offs, community benefits, etc. The site is at N. Glebe Road and N. Carlin Springs Road. She introduced two representatives of Crimson Partners who further described that they had come to the BCA in 2009 with a plan for an L-shaped building. Afterward, the County asked Crimson to consider adding a through-street behind the building to allow for better access when new development occurs on the existing Harris Teeter and American Service Center sites on that block. Elizabeth Case, an Arlington County planner, has been assigned to review this site plan; the first meeting with the County is on November 14.

The site is designated R-C, high residential zoning. No request to amend zoning has been made; rather, Crimson has just requested an amendment to site plan #72, which was for a 5,200 sq. ft. office building. The new design is for 6 stories, 163 units, with underground parking, 75 feet in height (the County allows up to 95 feet). When asked why they were not building to the maximum allowable height, they explained that the developer wanted to stick with the wood-building height limit (75 ft.). Approximately 65% to 70% of the units will be studios, and the rest will be 1-bedroom or 2-bedroom units.

The developer is seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification, with associated bonus density for LEED and for the through-street. Crimson also explained that there would be retail on first floor; the building design would have classical form with contemporary detailing and street-level loft units to mirror what's across the street and to "activate" the street.

After the presentation, audience members asked questions and gave comments. Suzanne Sundburg represented the views of Terry Serie, who lives at the Townes of Ballston, close to the site. She mentioned his and his neighbors' concern about how traffic is going to be managed with the

through-street in the vicinity of the stoplight at the already-busy intersection of N. Glebe Road and N. Carlin Springs Road. Terry and his neighbors would like more information before they put neighborhood support behind the development.

McKeeby explained that Arlington County is studying the entire west-of-Glebe area for development impacts on area traffic, housing, and business, as well as how development fits with proposed plans for the Harris Teeter and American Service Center sites. Studies are part of the County's long-term planning process.

In response to an audience member's question about parking related to the retail space, the Crimson representative shared that there is likely to be only one retail tenant, so parking demand should be limited. The developer stated that they have met the County standard for underground and street-level parking availability.

An audience member expressed a concern that they provide good pedestrian access around the site all through construction, including shoveling sidewalks and adjacent streets in the winter. Other concerns about pedestrian safety were also expressed. For example, meeting participants wanted to know how wide the sidewalk will be. The architects stated that sidewalks would be 11 feet wide along Glebe and 13 feet along Carlin Springs Road (minus 6 feet for tree blocks).

With regard to milestones, McKeeby hoped they would get to the Planning Commission in January or February 2012. Bluemont has a seat at the table during planning review; Judah or a designee will represent the BCA. Judah suggested that the group talk off-line about who should represent BCA.

Officers and Representatives Reports

Judah gave a President's report. He recapped what happened at the Executive Board meeting, which transpired just prior to the General Membership meeting. His summary included that next time Avis and Michelle (Safeway representatives) call him, 1 or 2 other Executive Board members would be invited to participate in the conversation to promote transparency. The hope is that in 3 to 4 weeks Avis or Michelle will get back to Judah with information on what they are thinking for the Safeway site. From that point, the BCA membership can figure out as an association how to respond.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative Larry Smith shared that at the last NCAC meeting there was a 1.5-hour presentation on the new County sign ordinance. The County is establishing a committee, and BCA members are invited to participate, if anyone is interested. The new ordinance includes some minor changes to what businesses can put up (e.g., limits on how often electronic signs can flash/change, to ensure driver safety). The Arlington County Board will consider some of the sign ordinance changes at its December meeting. BCA members can still submit micro-projects to the NCAC.

Civic Federation Representative Suzanne Sundburg stated that the Civic Federation will be meeting at Swanson's auditorium on November 1, and the main order of business will be considering the revision of Arlington's sign ordinance. Also, on Thursday, Oct. 27, at 7:00 p.m., Arlington County

staff will be holding a public presentation to review the 50% design plans for of the Ballston Beaver Pond.

David Van Wagner gave an update on the Neighborhood Conservation Plan update process. He stated that the committee is beginning the drafting process after taking time to research chapters.

Unfinished Business

A “draft” watermark was added to the village center artist renderings placed on the BCA website. A member raised a question about adding a link on the home page to the agenda for upcoming meetings. In order to put the agenda online a few days in advance, Judah needs officers’ help in finalizing the agenda early enough. Chitra volunteered to help with confirming speakers.

New Business

George Rovder presented his ideas for putting together a policy on how BCA will work with developers. At an Executive Board meeting over the summer, BCA Civic Federation delegate Bob Atkins pointed out some pitfalls of George’s previous motion. Although nothing was shared in writing at this time, George raised the topic to gauge interest and get ideas on the wording of the policy. A discussion ensued with the meeting participants. Article VI, Section 7 of the by-laws, which gives some parameters for conduct when meeting with external officials, was reviewed. It states the following:

The President may present views of the Association at public fora or in written communications to elected or appointed officials, provided that prior authorization for such action has been given by a majority vote of members present at a General Membership or Special Meeting or by the Executive Board of the Association. Members of the Executive Board, with the exception of the President, shall perform such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Executive Board.

A participant suggested that we may want to add discussion of a new policy as a part of updating the BCA by-laws more generally. Another participant suggested that there was a concern about blurring of the lines between personal views and representation of BCA organization views. Yet another person shared a concern that the few people in the room were speaking for an entire community that’s not well informed. Robbie Guenther from D&V Service Center (the Liberty gas station) volunteered to provide bulletin board space at his gas station to help with raising public awareness. Larry Smith further suggested that we might be able to ask for another kiosk through the micro-project process.

Richard Viola, North Carlin Springs Drive Overpass Construction

Mr. Viola presented plans for Arlington County’s work with the State of Virginia to fund a bridge replacement project. The N. Carlin Springs Road overpass is badly in need of replacement within a few years. Mr. Viola came to BCA as a part of the transportation department’s effort to garner community ideas and interests before solidifying construction plans.

The County is currently considering four plans and has been sharing these at community meetings. Some comments from a prior meeting were distributed, including issues about pedestrian access and safety, bike-ability, noise/vibration from bridge, and visibility problems.

Some alternatives that were shared included keeping the same bridge width/footprint—only 3 lanes with a pocket for a left-turn lane onto N. George Mason Drive—while another plan would extend the bridge (64 to 69 feet wide) to 4 lanes of traffic. Traffic flow necessitates at least 3 lanes, especially accounting for some increase in traffic over time. The County has secured enough money to implement one of the four plans that were shared. Anything larger would require more funds, and it would not likely be accepted by the neighbors who are concerned about noise and vibrations should the bridge be closer to their homes. One person expressed a preference for only one lane going westbound from N. Glebe Road to reduce confusion over who is turning onto the northbound off-ramp to N. George Mason Drive.

Residents are free to send comments to rviola@arlingtonva.us. The BCA can take a vote and send combined comments, or individuals can write in separately.

Major project milestones include working through issues and getting comments this fall. Then by the start of 2012, the County will narrow it down to one option to finish the design process with community input on aesthetics of the area, lighting, the look of the bridge, etc. It will be early 2012 by the time the County processes all contract bids and late 2012 by the time construction begins.

Audience members asked about a separate issue—news of the County’s efforts to change N. Glebe Road street crossings for pedestrian safety. Viola stated that construction would start in early 2012. Pedestrian crossing plans can be found at the County Department of Environmental Services website, under Transportation Planning, then by searching for “Glebe Road Pedestrian Improvements.”

John Peck Presentation

John Peck, a native of the neighborhood, spoke about his graduate school student project, in which he came up with an architectural plan for the Safeway site independent of any knowledge of BCA’s efforts. He presented a partially submerged site plan that doesn’t take into account realities or all County codes. His rendering represents hot design ideas in architectural circles and are available for BCA consideration.

Adjournment

The BCA General Membership meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.