

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
General Membership Meeting
April 25, 2012, 7:30 p.m.
Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 pm. Present in addition to dal Cais was Vice-President George Rovder; Treasurer Judy Collins; Secretary Chitra Kumar; Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Representative Larry Smith; and Civic Federation delegates and alternates Suzanne Sundburg, Bob Atkins, Sandy Munnell, Sam Ferro, Ed Fendley, and Dean Foster. Others in attendance included invited guests Zanna Worzella and Tina Leone as well as NC Plan Update Committee Chair David Van Wagner and BCA members Caroline Haynes, Richard and Caroline Young, John Herickhoff, Alan Sundburg, David R. Hughes, Allen Wood, Lisa Eberhardt, Maura Quinn, Kate Mesches, Kate Mattos, Barbara Wein, Diane Schwartz, Rob and Renée Henninger, and 12 others, including one Bluemont resident who was not a current member. Many attendees joined the meeting after its official start.

Capital Bikeshare/BikeArlington Presentation

Zanna Worzella, BikeArlington's Events and Outreach Coordinator, spoke about the mission and benefits of the BikeArlington program under Arlington Department of Environmental Services. Among the benefits she described are that biking is good for the environment, is inexpensive, can save time, and provides physical exercise.

BikeArlington works with a lot of employers in the area to provide access to showers and bike storage. New buildings that are Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified have to have showers. Forty percent of all bike trips in the United States are about 2 miles (10 minutes). Two miles is the perfect biking distance that Arlington wants to encourage, especially for Bluemont. Bluemont is in an ideal location because it has two major commuter bike trails, and Clarendon and even Fairfax County are within 2 miles.

Capital Bikeshare is a network of bikes used to get you around short distances. Take a bike from one station and drop off at another location. You don't have to be tied to using the bike on your return trip. There are two types of membership: Casual and Registered (duration is 24 hours or 3 days). Registered members receive a key fob they can use at any time (duration is 30 days or annual).

The program promotes safety because of its importance to increasing the acceptance of biking. BikeArlington offers safety seminars taught by certified League Cycling Instructors, mostly focused on riding in traffic, equipment maintenance (e.g., fixing a flat tire), and best biking directions. They will be in Ballston at the Central Library in July. There is a real-time way to check on the availability of bikes and empty docks at each of the stations.

The program encourages people to get involved. The WashingtonAreaBikeForum.com is a great resource on all issues related to biking. BikeArlington.com/Crowdsourcing is a way to vote on where to put in new stations. BikeArlington is doing a six-year plan and accepting input into which neighborhoods they will expand. BikeArlington is also on

Twitter and Facebook. The website is BikeArlington.com. Two-wheel Tuesdays is a great forum to get started with biking, especially if you are nervous about biking in traffic. The more you practice, the safer you get.

The two closest stations for Bluemont are behind Fire Station #2 near N. George Mason Drive and Wilson Boulevard and at the plaza near the CACI building in Ballston.

One participant asked what happens if there's no space to dock a bike at destination. How can a rider figure out where to return the bike, and will the rider be charged for the additional minutes? Riders can get an additional 15 minutes when they arrive at a bike stand and must travel to another stand.

Tina Leone, Executive Director of Ballston Business Improvement District (BBID)

Judah dal Cais welcomed BBID Executive Director Tina Leone to the group and thanked Carla dal Cais for arranging Leone's visit. Leone told the group that she has been putting together a strategic plan for Ballston. She wants to create a sense of place in Ballston that differentiates it from other communities in the area. The BBID has been researching and interviewing different branding companies. They selected the Pappas Group, a local business, to assist the BBID with its branding effort. The current thinking is they want to embrace the science and technology theme, based on the presence of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), and other science and technology organizations in Ballston. The BID is funded by commercial property owners to improve their commercial property value, fill up their spaces, and as an ancillary, also improve residential values.

Along with marketing and branding, the BBID will host/sponsor events. For example, the BID has inherited the "Taste of Arlington," which will continue to benefit local charities—this year, those charities are VA Hospital Center, Phoenix Houses of the Mid-Atlantic, and the Arlington Community Foundation. In addition, the BBID will resume the Ballston Arts and Crafts Market in May, holding it every second Saturday of the month through October. The Ballston Farmer's Market will start in June and be held every Thursday through October.

Leone stated that the BBID wants to create a retail committee and a place-making committee to bring together all the changes/improvements being made. After a period of planning, the neighborhood will see a more visible presence of the BBID. Leone is expecting the brand to be visible over next few months. Their office will be located at 901 Glebe, suite 806, with operating hours of 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Right now, there are just two employees, but Leone will be hiring one more in a few weeks. She hopes to have a budget in fiscal year (FY) 2013 of \$1.5 million. Leone will be working with the County on a place-making plan, which should be seen in September or later, for example with the location of a neighborhood gateway.

Question by participant: Your boundaries include four neighborhood associations. How will you keep them engaged? A: We are creating a neighborhood advisory council and looking for appropriate representatives. Not opposed to having a group of civic association representatives come talk to Tina directly.

Q: Expanding the BID's boundaries has been mentioned by the head of Arlington's

Economic Development Office. Do people know about the added tax burden on small businesses? A: Currently, the BID is starting small since we are in start-up mode. It is not interested in incorporating Virginia Square into its boundaries, as Virginia Square is made up of largely residential properties. In perspective, the BID tax is 0.045% per 100 sq. foot, whereas County business add-on tax is 12%.

Q: Ballston Mall redevelopment is a priority. What are plans?

A: Leone commented that she was not at liberty to say, but indicated that there's a roadblock. The mall's owner wants to improve it and make it a town center. The plans are great. The mall owner is on the BID board.

Q: What is relationship between BID and County?

A: They are like our parent. The BID falls under the Arlington Office of Economic Development. The County/AED administers the BID's budget and approves the workplan; we utilize their resources and consult with them, so we don't reinvent the wheel.

Q: Is a western entrance to the Ballston Metro part of your plan?

A: It can be on the table as part of place-making plan. Leone said she would be happy to explore it.

It was noted that BCA member and former representative to the Ballston-Virginia Square Partnership Talmadge Williams has been appointed as a BBID Member-at-Large.

Officer-Delegate-Representative Reports

Civic Federation delegate Sandy Munnell reported that Civic Federation Schools Committee (of which she is a member) had provided input into the Arlington Public Schools (APS) and County budget process for fiscal year (FY) 2013. The next thing the committee will look at is the school capacity issue. Munnell briefly reviewed the option that APS is considering to relieve school overcrowding. She announced the public hearing scheduled for May 24 and the public meeting on May 8, sponsored by the Kenmore PTA and the Carlin Springs Civic Association, to discuss issues related to the new elementary school proposal, which is to be located on the Kenmore Middle School property.

Civic Federation delegate Suzanne Sundburg referenced the printed highlights of the April Civic Federation meeting (copies available on each table), which recapped the Civic Federation's FY2013 budget recommendations to the County.

Vice-President George Rovder asked for members to volunteer to help at the Neighborhood Day community barbecue to be held on Saturday, May 12.

Treasurer Judy Collins reported the number of paid members as 200+. She noted that the civic association had the money to pay for all the item in the funding motions that were being considered and said members could feel free to vote based on the merits of each motion.

Newsletter Editor Carla dal Cais noted that she was accepting articles for the upcoming May edition of the newsletter.

John Herickhoff, a member of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee was still looking for nominees to run for President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Civic Federation delegate Bob Atkins reported on the recent Reevesland Learning Center public meeting that was held in March. The County will issue a request for proposal, most public alternatives for the house will cost over \$1 million. However, the county is looking for a group that can implement one of these alternatives without using public funding. Atkins speculated that the plan was not viable and the process would have to be restarted again in the fall.

NC Representative Larry Smith mentioned the availability of funding through Arlington County's Park Enhancement Grant (PEG) program. This competitive small grant program would provide up to \$15,000 for a neighborhood park improvement project that involves no engineering or design work, similar to the micro-projects. Larry raised the need to vote on a project idea at the May meeting in order to meet the June 15 filing deadline for the letter of intent. No specific project proposal was settled on at the April meeting, so ideas will be discussed and voted on at the May meeting.

NC Plan Update Committee Chair David Van Wagner noted that two more sections of the NC Plan would be rolled out in May or June. He noted that only one comment had been received via the WordPress page set up for the NC Plan, and said that he didn't consider that the draft chapters were okay simply because no one was commenting on them. He urged members to read the draft materials and to provide feedback to his committee, either via the WordPress page or via the NC Plan link on BCA's website.

Ed Fendley, co-chair of the Task Force on Arterial Roads Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety, reported that the task force has been meeting monthly and will continue to meet on the third Saturday of each month at Two Chefs restaurant. All interested members are invited to attend. The Task Force will report its findings to the membership in the fall.

President dal Cais presented the idea of establishing a discount program for BCA members at local commercial establishments as an incentive for increasing membership. Judah said that BCA member Kate Mesches had done research on producing 500 keychain tags (similar to the point-of-purchase discount tags distributed by local grocery stores) to identify members' eligibility for discounts at Bluemont businesses. The program would start with Fettoosh, a local restaurant, and it was hoped that other merchants would be willing to participate.

The cost for producing 500 keychain fobs is \$294. A motion was made to approve an initial budget of \$300 to produce the fobs and start the program, which would run through December 2013. The motion passed with only one vote in opposition.

**Approval of February 22, 2012, Meeting Minutes;
March 28, 2012, Meeting Minutes Tabled**

With all questions having been answered and the meeting minutes having been finalized, the membership voted to approve the February 22 general membership minutes. Due to several outstanding questions regarding the March general membership meeting minutes, consideration of the March minutes was pushed to the

May meeting. However, a slate of motions discussed at the March meeting and advertised on BCA's listserv—and amended as necessary during the meeting—was approved by voice vote, as follows:

1. Motion to approve a budget of up to \$150 for food and supplies for the Neighborhood Day barbecue. (Motion was amended by increasing the budget from \$100 to up to \$150.)
2. Motion to approve a contribution of up to \$100 to Ashlawn Elementary School for its Fun Fair event.
3. Motion to approve a contribution of up to \$150 to Lubber Run Amphitheater Foundation 501(c)(3) for supplemental programming.
4. Motion to approve adding a website link for the Friends of Arlington's Planetarium 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to the BCA Website.
5. Motion to request a notice kiosk as an Arlington County-funded micro-project, with the stipulation that if the micro-project is approved, the kiosk will be placed in a high-traffic area within one of the parks near the intersection of N. George Mason Drive and Wilson Boulevard.

One of the seven motions discussed at the March meeting was tabled for further discussion until the May meeting at the request of BCA President dal Cais. The wording of the tabled motion was as follows:

Motion to authorize BCA officers to advocate on behalf of Bluemont Civic Association members that projects like the west entrance to the Ballston Metro station and other projects of importance to Bluemont be included in the Fiscal Year 2013–2022 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) bond issue.

Another of the motions discussed in March and advertised thereafter was not included in the April meeting agenda and therefore not voted on. The motion reads as follows: Motion to approve adding a website link for the Lubber Run Amphitheater Foundation 501(c)(3) to the BCA Website.

Bocce Ball Court Discussion and Vote

Many meeting attendees were on hand to discuss the final topic of the evening: the bocce/petanque court petition. Because President dal Cais was a supporter of the bocce ball court petition, he turned over leadership of the meeting to Vice-President George Rovder.

Members David Van Wagner and Richard Young presented a petition with the following wording for the membership to consider:

BLUEMONT PETANQUE COURT PETITION

We, the undersigned Bluemont residents, support the petition to construct a 4-meter wide and 15 meters (13' x 50') long Petanque-Bocce court along the Bluemont Junction Trail. At the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) general

membership meeting on April 25, 2012, this petition will be submitted to the BCA for approval. Upon approval, the petition will be forwarded to the Arlington County Parks & Recreation Department to fund design and construction. We request the BCA to create a working group to coordinate with the Parks department, and homeowners residing along the Bluemont Trail to determine the site location between N. Illinois and N. Emerson Street.

There was a lengthy discussion both in favor of the petition and against. Much of the dissent centered around the proposed location of the court, which would be very close to private homes along the Bluemont Junction Trail, and its potential to disturb the nearby neighbors. Questions arose as to the cost of the court, who would pay for it, and whether the court could be located away from private homes and still meet the objectives of providing a gathering spot and fostering a sense of community.

Although the bocce ball court proposal was close to a year old, those “for” and “against” it had found no opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss options and craft a compromise on the court’s location.

President dal Cais argued that there was no recreational place in Bluemont for adults to congregate and socialize, and that players wanted a central location they could walk to. He noted that he had already discussed the proposal with Parks and Recreation Division Chief Caroline Temmermand and Park Manager Lyndell Core, and he characterized them as being supportive.

Member Caroline Haynes noted that the 2010 NC Plan Survey distributed to community members had not included a question about the bocce court and that the project was not included in the NC Plan update.

As a result of all the outstanding questions and issues, petition presenter Richard Young asked that the motion in support of his petition be amended by removing the specific location—along the Bluemont Junction Trail between N. Emerson and N. Illinois Streets—so that other Bluemont locations could be considered. The membership voted 20 to 18 in support of setting up a BCA working group to coordinate with the County’s Parks and Recreation Division to identify an appropriate location in Bluemont for installing a bocce court.

Member Kate Mattos, who presented a petition opposing the bocce ball court, proposed a second motion asking the membership to specifically exclude from consideration the location along the Bluemont Junction Trail between N. Emerson and N. Illinois Streets. This motion was defeated by a vote of 22 to 19.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:25 pm.