

**BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**APRIL 24, 2013**  
**Arlington Traditional School**  
**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Attendance: George Rovder, President; Dan Laredo, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP; Nancy O’Doherty, Treasurer; Larry Smith, Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Representative; Suzanne Sundburg, Civic Federation Delegate; Dean Foster, Civic Federation Alternate; David Hughes, Civic Federation Alternate; Laura Brothers, Webmaster; Alan Sundburg, Bylaws Review Committee Chair; David Van Wagner, NC Plan Drafting Group Co-Chair; James McMullin, member taking minutes; approximately 175 BCA members and several guests. [Note: Mark Haynes, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, joined the meeting after it was under way.]

**Pre-Meeting:**

As BCA members entered the school library both before and after the general membership meeting began, they were requested to check in and received a ballot once their membership status was verified. The ballots were for votes regarding BCA’s position statement for the Safeway Redevelopment. Brothers and Bernadette Wolford conducted the check-in.

Rovder called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 pm and introduced the agenda for the meeting. Various Executive Board members introduced themselves and announced their position including Laredo, Smith, S. Sundburg, and O’Doherty.

Rovder announced that one of the primary goals of the evening was for the BCA to vote upon and adopt an official position regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Bluemont Safeway site. He also noted that the BCA currently had no NC project in the funding queue and that the membership would be voting later on at the meeting to adopt the Wilson Boulevard reconfiguration/sidewalk improvement project as the association’s first-priority project.

Rovder reminded the membership that the Executive Board could take action in between membership meetings when an opportunity could otherwise be lost. He added that the Executive Board had voted to approve a letter outlining the BCA’s position on the site plan amendment requested for 800 N. Glebe Road. This letter was sent to the County Board prior to its April meeting, at which time County Board members were to make a decision on the amendment. Rovder stated that a copy of the letter was already, or soon would be, posted to the BCA website.

Rovder then called for candidates for the upcoming election in June. In particular, the BCA was seeking a new Secretary, a Webmaster, and a new web designer. He added that the membership would vote later on in the meeting to appoint members who had volunteered to serve on the 2013 Nominating Committee.

**Reports from Officers / Representatives/ Liaisons / Committee Chairs**

NC Report: Smith reported on the County Board meeting he had attended the night before during which the Board considered the amendment to the site plan conditions for 800 N. Glebe Road (the former Peck Chevrolet site). The amendment allowed Virginia Tech to operate a conference facility in space that had been intended for a Staples store or other retail. Smith said he had urged the Board to not permit the site plan conditions to be changed because Staples’ return had been one of the few community benefits within the site plan. However, if the change was to be permitted, then community groups, including the Ballston Science and Technology Alliance’s (BSTA’s) Café Scientific, should be permitted free use of the facility

on a limited basis — a request that had already been rebuffed by the applicant’s attorney. Further, he reminded the County Board of the BCA’s past cooperation for this site’s redevelopment. Ultimately, the County Board approved the amendment plus a condition for a small donation to offset a fraction of the cost for Café Scientifique’s use of the space, but Smith noted that the arrangement was so “complicated” that not even the County Board members understood it. Rovder recognized that Smith had spent over 3 hours at the County Board meeting in order to speak — in addition to having attended numerous NC meetings through the years on behalf of the BCA.

Note: the Treasurer’s Report had been submitted electronically to the Executive Board prior to the meeting. S. Sundburg distributed copies of a paper on the county’s internal audit function drafted by her for the Civic Federation’s Revenues & Expenditures Committee. See the Executive Board 4/24/13 minutes to review copies of these documents.

Safeway Task Force (STF) Report: Van Wagner explained that the STF’s charter authorized the task force to help the membership formulate an official BCA position regarding the redevelopment of the Safeway site. He noted that over the past year, the BCA via the STF had held two town hall meetings and received residents’ comments via the STF website. Further, on April 3, 2013, there was a presentation by Silverwood and Safeway representatives to the BCA and the Bluemont community. The responses received at these meetings as well as the results of a 2010 survey of Bluemont area residents on this subject provided the basis for the three position statements and introductory language for each that was to be voted upon during the meeting. If a majority supported a position statement that was subsequently adopted by the BCA, then that position statement would be sent to Silverwood (Safeway’s intended site developer), Safeway, and the county. He then read the introduction and the three position statements generated by the STF and presented for voting at the meeting. Copies of these three position statements, including the common preamble, had already been distributed to the membership. (See Attachment 1.) He emphasized that the introduction was the same for all three positions because it reflected the results of the 2010 survey.

Safeway Position Statement Discussion & Vote: Van Wagner explained the process for the meeting to select the BCA’s position. First, he said there would a vote by the membership for each option. If there were no majority, then the top two options would be voted on again until there was a majority winner. Then, there would be a final vote to confirm majority support for the position selected from among the three options. S. Sundburg showed the members what the ballots looked like and noted that members would receive a different ballot for a second voting round upon turning in a ballot for the first round. Van Wagner and Rovder responded to procedural questions. They noted that the votes would be tabulated during the meeting by Brothers, Wolford, Hughes, and others. Rovder explained that the audience could comment on the options before the vote and suggested that at least one person speak in favor of each option. Rovder noted that comments would be limited to 1 minute per person in order to allow all those present to express their views.

Rovder then opened the floor to comment and directed that each person who wished to comment to form a line and, when taking his or her turn, to please use the microphone provided. He reminded members that all three options could be modified by amendments from the floor.

Comments / Discussion of Option C:

Member Ryan Arnold protested that Option C had been added at last minute with no introductory language tailored specifically to it. Member Craig Deering then objected to its inclusion as an option and made a motion to strike Option C, which was seconded.

Among other things, some members argued that Option C should remain as it was the only option to embrace the full proposal put forth by Safeway and Mark Silverwood. Removing Option C, they argued, would potentially weaken the results of the vote because the membership would only be able to vote on options in opposition to the full Safeway/Silverwood proposal.

Rovder called for a voice vote on the motion, which failed.

#### Comments / Discussion of Options A, B, and C:

- In favor of Option C as it provides the BCA with greater “moral” authority to negotiate concessions during the site plan process. Taking a position opposed to development diminishes the BCA’s influence in the site plan process. Further, the BCA must not adopt a “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) mentality.
- Options A and B are intractable and place the BCA in a “corner.” It is too early to take a position — we all want redevelopment and Option C allows our voice to be heard throughout the process.
- Owned a house in Bluemont for 24 years and just returned to the area. Noted that Arlington has become very crowded and is concerned that development will just continue and will destroy the residential character of the neighborhood. Believes the BCA should make a strong statement opposing increased density early on.
- Options A and B still permit development. No reason for Safeway to be given greater density than allowed under A and B, which are representative of the General Land Use Plan.
- Need to protect this neighborhood — other neighborhoods are doing so. Option A permits us to protect ourselves and is the best negotiating stance.
- There have been plenty of recent examples of neighbors stopping development — we have a voice and need to exercise same.
- In support of Option A — need to stop Silverwood company from adding additional apartments and thereby changing the neighborhood.
- There is compromise available during the site plan process. Supports Option B since it doesn’t present a “no” to the developer but puts them on notice that negotiation is expected.
- Stated that real issue is whether the BCA is going to let Safeway do what it wants or we are going to “stand our ground.”
- Supports Option A because additional apartments results in traffic and congestion.
- Supports Option C — believes the apartments will occur and thus we need to set a tone of welcoming these new neighbors. This additional development will be a positive for regional and local reasons by helping provide additional housing and locating close to Metro to help reduce pollution etc.
- Supports Option A — need to stop “Ballston encroachment.”
- Vehicle noise at night is a current problem along Wilson from a particular restaurant. Awakens sleeping children.
- We are experiencing record hot summers — additional concrete will make it hotter. Sierra Club states that this type of development will decrease property values.
- Lives on 8<sup>th</sup> Road North, and the proposed development adjoins his backyard. This ballot is about zoning, and if the developer is provided the zoning, he will not listen after gaining desired zoning.
- Safeway has not committed to not withdrawing from the site once the land is upzoned. Need assurances from Safeway.
- If voting for Option A, this may remove the incentive for the developer to engage in a site plan process and instead pursue a by-right development in which the BCA will have no input.
- The introductory paragraph conflicts with Option C. Further, Safeway has not committed to reoccupy the site.
- Suggests that Options A and B be changed so they are “positive” and not “negative.”
- The proposed development will contribute to school overcrowding.

Member Craig Deering asked to modify the language of Options A and B to give them a positive tone, stating what type of development BCA would support, rather than a negative tone opposing the type of development described. Rovder read Deering's alternatives for Options A and B, and then he read the original language. He then asked if there was a motion to vote on the options as they were originally written or to support the proposed Deering's rewording of Options A and B.

Van Wagner made a motion to vote on the three options as they were originally written, which was seconded by Hughes. Deering made a motion to amend Options A and B, which Hughes also seconded.

Discussion of the Motions for A and B:

- A member noted that a rewording of the options from the negative to the positive may change the meaning of Option B.
- A member requested that the proposed changes to the options be read aloud again.

Rovder read the original proposals aloud. Then he read the changes, which included the same preamble but changed the words to "the BCA supports redevelopment within the existing zoning classification" instead of the negative existing language. Further, the proposed changes to Option B were as follows: "BCA supports redevelopment within the site plan process if there are strong assurance that negative impacts ...."

- A member commented that the preamble to Options A and B was already positive and in favor of redevelopment, so BCA should keep options as they were to serve as very strong statements cautionary of redevelopment.

Rovder called for a voice vote of amended language, and announced that the "no's carry." Subsequently, a show of hands was requested and granted. Larry Smith counted and announced that there were only 50 votes — a minority — in favor of the amended language. Rovder again announced that the "no's have it" and the current option wording stood.

Rovder asked for a voice vote in favor of ending discussion and voting on the options. He announced it was a unanimous "yea."

S. Sundburg reviewed the voting process, which was to write the favored option on the provided first-round ballot, fold it, turn it in to a person collecting the ballots, and then receive a second-round ballot.

Voting then occurred with various BCA members assisting Wolford, Brothers, and S. Sundburg in collecting and tallying the ballots.

Rovder explained that the membership would continue with business while the votes were tallied, but he asked members to volunteer to observe the vote counting. He noted that the BCA had to leave the room in 1 hour, so the meeting needed to proceed.

NC Plan Drafting Group: Van Wagner distributed copies of the proposed draft NC plan in addition to revisions suggested by county staff. He explained that the NC Plan would be used by the county to guide funding for neighborhood improvements. The actual plan is over 200 pages and so the county didn't print many of those. Van Wagner moved that the draft NC Plan be voted upon in the May BCA general membership meeting and noted that all Bluemont area adult residents — not just BCA members — would be eligible to vote on the NC Plan. He reported that upon BCA and county staff approval, the Plan would eventually go to the County Board for acceptance and then would be used by the community for approximately 10 years. He noted that it would serve as a guide for the County Board when considering

development, changes, etc. He noted that the full 200-page plan was posted on to the NC Plan website and was accessible via the BCA website. The address was printed at the top of the handout. He asked that if there were any amendments or discussion, people should please send the changes via the website before the May meeting and should prepare very specific wording of amendments so that hopefully the plan and any amendments could be considered for adoption at the May BCA meeting.

A member made a point of information: In the URL cited at the top of the NC Plan summary, the letter “d” was missing in “wordpress.”

#### Q&A on the NC Plan:

**Q.** Regarding the transportation section in the NC Plan, was a consultant used for this? **A.** Van Wagner said that the NC traffic/transportation comments were based on NC Plan Drafting Group members who walked the streets to take note of any deficiencies. Further, some information was picked up from suggestions made to the Sidewalk Safety Task Force. Some of that task force’s information came from county traffic engineers about 10 years ago.

**Q.** What is the required sidewalk width for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance? **A.** Van Wagner demurred and said there was some question regarding current sidewalk width requirements.

A BCA member thanked the task force who had worked on the NC Plan for the past several years.

Member Laura Kirkconnell made the following motion: “All Bluemont adult residents should vote to adopt the draft NC Plan at the May BCA general membership meeting.” The motion was seconded by Hughes. A unanimous voice vote in favor of the motion was announced by Rovder.

Safeway Site Voting Results: Rovder announced that the results of the vote on the Safeway site were as follows: Option C=32, Option B= 43, and Option A=98 (more than 50% of the vote, with a total of 173 votes cast.)

Rovder then asked for a motion to vote to adopt Option A as the BCA’s formal position on Safeway’s redevelopment via an up or down voice vote. Deering made the motion made and Kirkconnell seconded it. There was an overwhelming voice vote in favor to adopt Option A as the BCA’s position on Safeway.

BCA NC Project: S. Sundburg distributed copies of the motion, which the membership had approved at the March meeting and advertised in the April newsletter. (See Attachment 2.) Rovder announced a voice vote to adopt, as advertised, the motion to make the reconfiguration of Wilson Blvd. and improvements to its sidewalks the official BCA NC project to be submitted to the NC Advisory Committee for funding consideration. Rover then announced that the “ayes” had it, and the motion was approved as the BCA’s first-priority NC project. He expressed gratitude to the Sidewalk Safety Task Force and NC committee members.

#### Report on Lacey Woods Park Renovation Project:

Joshua Serck, Landscape Architect for Arlington County, shared information regarding the replacement of a picnic shelter at the southeast corner of the park and an upgrade of the existing gravel access path. He noted that this project was originally scheduled for 2012 but was pushed into fiscal year 2014 for funding purposes. The access path and picnic shelter must be improved to meet ADA requirements, and the existing structure has deteriorated beyond feasible repair. To meet ADA access, the county will pave the existing gravel access path now used by county maintenance vehicles. They hope to start construction in the late fall or winter of 2013.

Q&A on the Lacey Woods Project:

**Q.** Will the county demolish the existing structure? **A.** Yes, the structural designer advised that the existing structure needs to be replaced. The county will keep the same footprint and will be sensitive to the woods in that area. The existing concrete will be the same dimensions. Further, the county will replace the grill and drinking fountain and will place signage on the street.

**Q.** Was any environmental analysis performed on use of asphalt on the access path? **A.** The county considered using permeable “FLEXI-PAVE” pavement, but the path soils are already compacted, and it was determined that using asphalt would actually minimize tree root damage.

**Q.** Will the heritage trees be protected? **A.** The heritage trees are on the opposite side of the park and machinery will be kept away from that area.

**Q.** Where will the asphalt be located? **A.** Paving will occur on the path from the playground to the shelter, but the fire circle area will remain gravel. And the path to N. Edison Street will remain as is. The paved path width will be at least 8 feet.

**Q.** Is the new structure similar to old one? Will there be a fireplace? **A.** There will no longer be a fireplace or room behind it, nor any bathrooms, but it will have the same number of tables. In addition, the staircase from the sidewalk along George Mason Drive will remain.

**Q.** How will construction vehicles access the area? **A.** Construction vehicles will access the site from N. Frederick Street via the current gravel path. Plans will be posted on the county’s website.

Unfinished Business:

Rovder announced the vote for appointment of volunteers to the Nominating Committee. Ballots listing the names of the nominees (see Attachment 3) were distributed. Rovder added that the committee’s purpose is to generate a slate of candidates for election to BCA Executive Board position during the June Annual Meeting. A total of 50 ballots were cast and tallied to elect BCA members Barbara Wien, Kate Mattos, and Carolyn Carlson to the 2013 Nominating Committee (2nd VP Dan Laredo received one write-in vote).

Someone asked what had happened to the proposed kiosk notice board to be located near the intersection of Wilson and George Mason. NC Representative Smith reported that county approval may take a year, but he promised to follow up with county staff regarding the same.

New Business Items:

Van Wagner inquired whether the BCA would hold its traditional barbecue on Neighborhood Day, May 11. He noted that it has been held for many years. S. Sundburg noted that a new county policy required that groups using public property, including BCA, must secure liability insurance if an open flame was to be used. Thus, using county property such as Fire Station 2 for the event would be a problem. She further noted that Bluemont/Bon Air Walkabout with County Board Chair Walter Tejada could serve as the BCA’s spring social event.

Members discussed having a Neighborhood Day picnic with cold food instead of a BBQ. A motion was made to do so on May 11, which was seconded by Smith. Rovder noted that someone needed to chair and organize the picnic. Haynes suggested a potluck in order to reduce the planning requirements. Haynes and Smith volunteered to help chair the picnic event. Another motion made to hold the event at a later date instead of May 11. The aye’s carried the motion.

Rovder made a unanimous consent motion to adjourn, and the meeting concluded at approximately 9:30 pm.

**BCA BALLOT ON SAFEWAY REDEVELOPMENT**  
**April 24, 2013**

**Options A and B for the Bluemont Civic Association**  
**Position on the Wilson Blvd Safeway Property Redevelopment**  
*(IMPORTANT: the first four paragraphs are common to both Options A and B)*

The Bluemont neighborhood is overwhelmingly comprised of single-family and other low-density housing. The residents of Bluemont highly value this community characteristic and the lifestyle associated with it.

The residents of Bluemont have enjoyed and benefited from the location of the Safeway grocery store on Wilson Blvd and strongly support the modernization of that store and the possible addition of additional retail and services to the location. We recognize that a redevelopment of the Safeway property could bring with it additional community benefits such as a coffee shop, new green space or gathering locations, wider and more convenient sidewalks, undergrounded utilities, street trees and/or additional parking.

Further, the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) supports the concept of a Westover-like "village center" that is small scale, pedestrian friendly and has a variety of local businesses and restaurants, and for which a re-developed Safeway could be a centerpiece. In this regard, the BCA also supports its existing local businesses.

With the exception of the edge development along Glebe Road in Ballston, there are currently no commercial buildings above two stories in the Bluemont neighborhood. We believe that a tall commercial building would be out of character in Bluemont, particularly when it is immediately adjacent to single-family residential homes. This point has been emphasized on two recent surveys of Bluemont residents.

**OPTION A CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS**

Absent very careful planning, limits and safeguards, a redeveloped Safeway property would bring with it increased density, traffic, parking issues in adjacent residential streets, noise, large trucks on adjoining streets accessing the loading dock and potentially serious traffic and safety concerns with the Arlington Traditional School. These impacts would negatively impact the quality of life in the Bluemont neighborhood.

Therefore, the BCA objects to redevelopment beyond the existing C-1 zoning classification. The BCA and Bluemont residents look forward to addressing these important issues with Safeway and its chosen developer throughout the redevelopment process.

**OPTION B CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS**

Absent very careful planning and safeguards, a redeveloped Safeway property would bring with it increased density, traffic, parking issues in adjacent residential streets, noise, large trucks on adjoining streets accessing the loading dock and potentially serious traffic and safety concerns with the Arlington Traditional School. These impacts would negatively impact the quality of life in the Bluemont neighborhood.

Therefore, the BCA will object to redevelopment beyond the existing C-1 zoning classification unless we have strong assurances that negative impacts to the neighborhood will not occur or will be mitigated. Further, the BCA will oppose a structure higher than 45 feet under any circumstance. The BCA and Bluemont residents look forward to addressing these important issues with Safeway and its chosen developer throughout the redevelopment process.

**OPTION C** : The BCA supports a redevelopment of the Safeway site that incorporates two levels of underground parking with approximately 400 parking spaces, a Safeway store taking most of the footprint of the site, more than 150 housing units, a building height of up to 65 feet and parking and delivery entrances on Edison and Frederick Streets respectively.

## Attachment 2

Neighborhood Conservation (NC) project motion:

The BCA decides that for purposes of the Neighborhood Conservation Program, the Bluemont neighborhood's priority project is to improve the sidewalks of Wilson Boulevard, as described in the resolution approved by the BCA at its October 24, 2012, meeting and conveyed to the Arlington County Board on November 9, 2012.

## Attachment 3

### BALLOT - ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

(BCA BYLAWS ARTICLE VI Section 3: At a General Meeting, prior to the annual meeting, a Nominating Committee of not less than three (3) members in good standing shall be elected by the members present.)

#### VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN 3

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>SAMPLE SELECTION</b> –mark an x next to no more than three names below.
	<b>Carolyn Carlson</b>
	<b>Kate Matos</b>
	<b>Barbara Wien</b>
	Write-in NAME: _____
	Write-in NAME: _____
	Write-in NAME: _____