

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 24, 2013

Fire Station #2

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Attending: George Rovder, President; Mark Haynes, First Vice-President; Laura Kirkconnell Secretary; Nancy O'Doherty, Treasurer; Suzanne Sundburg, Civic Federation Delegate; Alan Sundburg, Bylaws Review Committee Chair; Chris Healey, NC Representative and Sidewalk Safety Task Force Co-chair; David P. Van Wagner, Safeway Task Force Co-chair; Laura Brothers, Webmaster

Rovder called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Rovder called for and received a motion to approve minutes, which was seconded, and the Executive Board minutes for June 26, 2013, were approved unanimously as prepared.

The minutes from the off-schedule Executive Board meeting, held on July 10, 2013, with Safeway had not been previously distributed to all Executive Board members, so the board decided to table consideration of those minutes and will consider them at the August 28 meeting.

Summary Reports of Officers:

President: Reported on the July 18, 2013, Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting for the Marymount project (at Fairfax and Glebe), which he was the only BCA rep to attend. Their plan to build remains similar to the proposal Marymount presented to the BCA on March 21. The current General Land Use Plan (GLUP) allows a six-story building at the site. By meeting Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards and providing affordable housing, they are asking for an upzoning that would allow them to build a 9-story office/school building and a 15-story apartment building on the site. This will include apartments rented to anyone at the market rate and the leasing commercial office space for space not utilized by Marymount for its offices and classrooms. The rules for getting this additional height and density are nebulous. The President said he had asked County officials for the list of "community benefits" that the County Board uses when deciding to grant additional height and density, but he did not get an answer. BCA, he said, would have to look at the trade-offs when considering its position on the increase of additional height and accompanying density (from the current floor area ratio [FAR] of 2.5 up to 3.5 and 4.6 FAR for the two new buildings, respectively).

Those present noted that the site is already surrounded by high buildings, but there are concerns about additional traffic, including the fact that a proposed entry/exit point for vehicles from the site feeds into an on-/off-ramp for I-66, and the intersection already regularly backs up due to overcrowding. As has been noted in discussions about this since at least 2008, BCA members are concerned that the intersection is already overloaded and dangerous for pedestrians and cars and that the intersection would be overwhelmed by the additional traffic from the proposed density of apartments and commercial offices. Concerns were expressed that the pressure to avoid backups for vehicles will mean that pedestrians will not be allowed enough time to get safely through the intersection. One member noted that Marymount had been talking about reserving some apartments for graduate housing, but it had now switched its plans to commercial apartments.

It was noted that years ago, the Civic Federation requested the County provide better accounting for the rules/considerations for granting such bonus density, but nothing was done and the rules remain opaque. There is no accounting for how promised community benefits are actually applied.

The BCA President reported that the Vice-President for Financial Affairs at Marymount, Dr. Ralph Kidder, had asked him to lunch, but the BCA President told Kidder he would need to invite more BCA neighbors because the BCA President's personal view of the site plan does not determine the BCA's position on the site plan.

Board members and Committee Chairs discussed possible trade-offs that BCA members might want, including a pedestrian ramp, a second entrance to the Ballston Metro station, handicap accessibility all the way from Bluemont to the Ballston Metro, lighting at night for the walking paths from the Holiday Inn at Fairfax to George Mason and Wilson (creating such space as a gateway to Bluemont to welcome people to the Bluemont neighborhood), and community meeting space. One member said we should find out the view of office buildings in the BCA area. Those present thought the danger posed by additional

traffic would likely be the main concern for Bluemont. It was suggested that BCA should ask for remedies to make it safe as a trade-off for the requested additional density. It was suggested that the Sidewalk Safety Committee talk about it during their next meeting, but it was noted that the meeting would not be held until the third Saturday of September (after the September 16, 2013, SPRC meeting for Marymount takes place).

VOTE: The President moved that the agenda for the September 26 general membership meeting include an invitation for volunteers to join a special committee to come up with a draft BCA position on the Marymount request for additional height and density. Then, the membership can discuss that draft position at a future general membership meeting and take a vote on the position at the following general membership meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The President discussed the Monday, July 29, 2013, SPRC meeting for The Springs at 4318 N. Carlin Springs Road, where the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) would be seeking County approval to turn a 3-story building with 27 apartments into a taller building with 104 apartments. The project is in the Buckingham neighborhood, but it borders Bluemont. The President recommended that BCA participate in the discussion, but that it defer to Buckingham Community Civic Association's position.

The 1st Vice-President: Reported on what he had learned from a person worked as an estimator in the construction business regarding the cost of above-ground versus below-ground parking at the Safeway site. The 1st Vice-President was told that above-ground structured parking for the site could be 30–50% cheaper than underground parking, unlike what Safeway had estimated. It was noted that Safeway uses street-level and above-ground parking at other Safeway stores in the Washington, DC, area. The 1st Vice-President said he would continue looking into this and would report back to BCA.

Treasurer: The Treasurer reported that BCA's accounts are current, and she is in the process of making some deposits. She discussed which ads (Westover Farmers' Market) would be run in the newsletter to be distributed neighborhood-wide, as opposed to those ads scheduled to run in all editions of the newsletters. She also noted the need to clean up the membership list. Cleaning up the list is time-consuming, but she has found a possible volunteer to serve as Membership Chair. She will work with the new volunteer, Jonn Lau, who will help rebuild the website. The website's dues payment system (PayPal) and membership list systems are archaic, making routine work and postings difficult. The Treasurer does not receive a report from PayPal when members renew electronically. Lau will meet with the President on July 25 to discuss the website.

The President reported that after repeated attempts to correct the problem and considering all other options, the only way to remove the existing account-holder's name (Dave Leichtman) from the BCA PayPal account was to shut the account down. BCA will have to reestablish the PayPal account for BCA to align it properly with the BCA bylaws. BCA may lose hundreds of dollars in automatic renewals when it temporarily shuts down the PayPal account. The Treasurer reported that about one-third of members pay via PayPal. The President said the PayPal account would be shut down August 1, unless Leichtman wanted it done sooner.

It was noted that the current PayPal payment structure violates the bylaws: It allows members to have a rolling renewal date for membership rather than a single calendar-year renewal date (Dec. 31). Allowing rolling renewal dates also makes more work for the Treasurer. BCA will announce to members via the listserv that PayPal will be suspended temporarily. The Bylaws Review Committee and the Treasurer also recommend that the annual dues rate be changed to a flat \$15 fee, regardless of when members renew, rather than continuing to allow dues to be prorated.

Secretary: The Secretary reviewed information she had e-mailed to Executive Board members about how she suggested she handle BCA records, and she recapped the comments she received in response. BCA bylaws require that the records be physically kept by the Secretary, so the President will transfer roughly 12 boxes of old records to the Secretary. The files reportedly include documents such as County reports that do not pertain to BCA. After discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary would go through the boxes and tell the Executive Board which documents did not pertain to BCA, and if the Executive Board agreed the Secretary would remove irrelevant documents from BCA files. Suzanne Sundburg noted that other civic associations had organized and retired their older paper records to the Arlington County Library for storage and public reference. There was discussion as to whether BCA should purchase cloud storage to back up its website and store other documents. The Secretary said she would be printing official BCA e-mails she received and storing them in the BCA's files.

Sidewalk Safety Task Force Co-chair: The Saturday, July 20, 2013, meeting was a good discussion. There is no clear path forward on improving the sidewalks east of George Mason to Glebe. The County installed a traffic signal pole in the middle of

a newly widened sidewalk at the corner of N. Wakefield Street and Wilson Blvd., making that section non-American with Disability Act (ADA) compatible. BCA and County Transportation Commission member Ellen Armbruster has objected to the pole's placement. There is leftover traffic-calming money from Peck-Staples site plan conditions, and the Sidewalk Safety Task Force gave the County a list of residents' recommendations on how to use the money. It was asked whether Task Force Co-chair Ed Fendley and former NC Rep. Larry Smith had reached out to the neighbors who had expressed concern about the need for further traffic-calming along N. Harrison Street at the May 22 general membership meeting, since perhaps their concerns could be relevant to the discussion of how to use the money. The Executive Board will contact Fendley and Smith to make sure the concerned Harrison Street neighbors have been contacted and will determine whether they have concerns relevant to the discussion of using this additional money.

Regarding the Wilson Blvd. sidewalk reconfiguration, it was agreed that BCA is required to push for its official recommendation that was approved by BCA members in a vote. This recommendation was to request re-striping of the pavement between George Mason and Four Mile Run as the first step.

Civic Federation Delegate: Suzanne Sundburg noted that there has been no news on the updating of the noise ordinance. The process to consider allowing the keeping of up to four hens in Arlington residential yards has just started. The next Civic Federation meeting is the first Tuesday of September.

Webmaster: The Webmaster reported that BCA needs to look at transferring documents to a better platform; she has already talked to volunteer John Lau, who will help with setting up a redesigned website.

Bylaws Review Committee: Alan Sundburg reported that the Committee met on July 14, and will meet next at 9 am on August 11 at Two Chefs. It expects to have several proposals for the September general membership meeting for members to consider. Sundburg added that BCA's standard practice has been to present the proposals to the membership first and then ask for consent to advertise the changes before the wording is included in the BCA newsletter. At the September 26 general membership meeting, the Executive Board can request that the membership hold a vote on the proposed changes at a future membership meeting, after they have been properly advertised in the BCA newsletter. It was suggested that having the membership vote on the proposals in December would allow sufficient notice as required in the bylaws and would provide time for members to discuss the proposals.

Unfinished Business:

(a) **Newsletter Advertising Rates and Procedures: VOTE:** After discussion, a proposal was made and seconded whereby the Executive Board agreed unanimously that rates for advertising in the newsletter will remain the same and authorized Suzanne Sundburg to obtain a quote for redesigning the rate sheet. The Executive Board agreed to seek a volunteer advertising manager for the newsletter. The advertising manager would keep track of the ad schedule and insertion dates, etc., in addition drumming up more customers.

(b) **BLPC/School Construction:** The Executive Board agreed with George Rovder that it was important for BCA to have a representative on the Building Level Planning Committees (BLPCs) for the additions being built at Ashlawn, McKinley and Arlington Traditional School elementary schools. Based on recent participation, Rovder will ask Barbara Wien if she wishes to be on BLPC for Ashlawn Elementary. BCA has not been invited to send a representative to the BLPC for McKinley, but the Executive Board viewed the draft letter from Rovder to the McKinley principal about BCA sending a representative, and the board agreed he should send it. The President said he had not heard from the Arlington Traditional School principal about a BCA representative to that BLPC.

(c) **Marymount Redevelopment:** The Executive Board agreed this had been sufficiently covered during the reports of the officers and Committee Chairs.

(d) **Safeway Redevelopment:** The Executive Board agreed that Mark Haynes would circulate draft minutes from the July 10 Executive Board meeting with Safeway so that they can be considered. Task Force Co-chairs David Van Wagner and Mark Haynes indicated they would like to have another meeting of the Task Force, so they will review developments to see if there is sufficient fodder for a meeting. Smith agreed to contact Ed Fendley to see whether the Bluemont Forward group has heard from Safeway. Fendley had said that Bluemont Forward would be contacting Safeway and the County. BCA President Rovder is reaching out to County Planning officials. Bluemont Forward members say they want development somewhere in between

Silverwood's proposal and the by-right limits for redevelopment. Suzanne Sundburg said she heard from two reliable sources that Safeway is working with JBG, which tends to file its plans with the County before sharing them with the community.

(e) **Website:** The Executive Board agreed this was sufficiently discussed during the previous reports.

(f) **Bylaws:** The Executive Board agreed this was sufficiently discussed during the previous reports.

(g) **PayPal:** The Executive Board agreed this was sufficiently discussed during the previous reports.

(h) **Wilson Blvd. reconfiguration:** The Executive Board and agreed this had been sufficiently discussed during the previous reports.

(i) **Newsletter:** Suzanne Sundburg tentatively set the deadline to provide copy for the September newsletter on Friday, August 23. The board will have the draft copy to review by 27 and must approve it at their next meeting on August 28. The final text, including ads, must be approved by August 29, so that it can be printed on September 9 and distributed to carriers prior to September 14. Suzanne Sundburg will forward the schedule to newsletter designer Cindy Matlock.

VOTE: After discussion, and the making and seconding of the motion, the Executive Board agreed unanimously that BCA would contract with newsletter designer Cindy Matlock to design the newsletters for September through December at the rate of \$95 for the September issue, and \$65 each for the smaller issues.

President Rovder said Washington Gas had sent him a certified letter notifying the community of gas line upgrades to the performed, and he said that an article on the subject could be drafted for the September newsletter.

Meeting dates: The Executive Board wants to put the full year's meeting dates in the newsletter, but we have been able to confirm only the September 26 meeting with Arlington Traditional School. BCA will contact coordinator Lisa Payne when she returns in late August/early September, so that we can confirm other dates for the year. BCA will also reach out to Rob Swennes to determine a date for the Joint Candidates' Night, so the date can be published in the newsletter.

New Business:

(a) **BCA Records Management:** The Executive Board agreed that this had been sufficiently discussed in the previous reports.

(b) **Harrison Street Traffic-Calming:** The Executive Board and agreed this had been sufficiently discussed in the previous reports. Key was to determine whether Ed Fendley and Larry Smith and had followed up with the members concerned about traffic-calming.

(c) **Civic Federation Dues:** The Treasurer reported that the check to pay Civic Federation dues was in the mail.

(d) **Speakers at general membership meetings:** Deputy County Manager Jay Farr is scheduled to talk about the Wilson Blvd. lane reconfiguration at the September meeting. County Board member and candidate Jay Fisetete's water bottle presentation was postponed until November—after Election Day. The October speaker will be someone from the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, who will speak for 20 minutes on the APAH redevelopment proposal for 4318 N. Carlin Springs Road.

(e) **PA system—Should BCA purchase a portable microphone and amplifier for meetings?** Mark Haynes volunteered to look into prices.

(f) **Mailing labels:** Suzanne Sundburg advised the board to provide enough lead time when scheduling meetings so that Treasurer Nancy O'Doherty and newsletter distribution coordinator David Van Wagner has time to update the membership list and to print labels. For the March and July postcards, Sundburg had to produce/update labels manually, which took her until the wee hours to complete, in order to meet the deadline.

President Rovder adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.