

NEXT GENERAL MEETING 5/24/06

- **Guest Chris Zimmerman**
- **Your Input and concerns**
- **And more! See page 2**

Left: BCA banner carriers in the Neighborhood Day Parade. Details next issue.

Apr. 2006 A Public Service of Your Bluemont Civic Association

www.bluemontcivic.org

UP-GLUPING AND REDEVELOPMENT:

Density at the Peck/Staples Site

At the May 9 executive board meeting, developer JBG unveiled its revised preliminary development proposal for the Bob Peck Chevrolet (corner of Wilson and Glebe) site, which now encompasses the adjoining Staples site as well. JBG finalized its purchase of the Peck property in January at a cost of \$26 million (as reported in the Post's Arlington-Alexandria section). In response to one member's plea to save at least part of the Peck building, JBG replied that the materials used to construct the Peck building were at the end of their lifespan and the building would be completely demolished. ➔ 3

PHOTO BY SAM FERRO



Say good night, Bob. JBG will attempt to (hopefully) pay homage to our doomed landmark in its replacement.

Zimmerman To Attend May 24 Meeting

Please join us on Wednesday, May 24, 7 pm, at Arlington Traditional School (ATS) for the next general membership meeting. Our guest speaker will be County Board member Chris Zimmerman, who is up for reelection this fall. With imminent redevelopment headed our way (see the related story about the Peck/Staples site), this will be a good opportunity to discuss the County's commitment to the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and restricting dense development west of Glebe Road. ■

DESPERATELY Seeking Volunteers! BCA Elections Take Place in June

As a group, we've been extremely lucky to have several volunteers (serving as officers, representatives, and committee chairs/ members) who have served year after year. Now these hard-working volunteers are burning out. They've been working on Bluemont's behalf, and they need a well-deserved break. In particular, Secretary Laura Kirkconnell will be working outside the United States for an extended period and will, therefore, not be running for reelection. Long-time NC Representative Kate Mesches has given notice that she can no longer serve, and Civic Federation Representative Bob Atkins (who has served BCA in countless ways for countless years) also plans to retire.

We need you — new people with new ideas and enthusiasm to lead us in the coming months and years. The BCA Nominations Committee is asking ➔ 4



5201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22205
(703) 525-0440

D&V AUTO SERVICE CENTER

Complete Auto Repairs
Domestic & Foreign Cars
Major Credit Cards Honored
Snow Plowing

Budget Truck Rental
(703) 525-0724

Did We Deliver?

BCA extends an enthusiastic thanks to the volunteer newsletter distributors who hand-delivered the April newsletter to all residents living within BCA boundaries. (Usually, BCA News is mailed to members only, to keep costs down.) According to Treasurer Judy Collins, a mix-up led to some newsletters not making it on schedule. If you did NOT receive the April newsletter, please contact Judy at jc.swings@verizon.net or 703-276-0124. She will make sure that you receive a copy. ■

BCA Neighborhood News



is a service of
YOUR community
civic association.

bluemontcivic@verizon.net

President

Judah dal Cais
703.528.1551 | jdalcais@verizon.net

Second Vice President

Talmadge Williams
703.522.5575 | ttwrec@aol.com

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative

Kate Mesches
703.525.8262 | mesches@aol.com

Treasurer

Judy Collins
703.276.0124 | jc.swings@verizon.net

Secretary

Laura Kirkconnell
lkirkconnell@hotmail.com

Past President

Carl Hallinan | carlhallinan@comcast.net

Civic Federation Representatives

Delegates: Bob Atkins, Talmadge Williams, Ed Fendley, Rob Waffle

Alternates: Adrienne Pilot, Ellen Armbruster, Judah dal Cais, Dan Laredo

BCA COMMITTEE CHAIRS & REPRESENTATIVES

Webmaster

Carla Cathey

Newsletter Editor

Suzanne Sundburg, Carl Hallinan
pro.wordsmith@verizon.net, carlhallinan@comcast.net

Newsletter Design/Layout

Sam Ferro | sam@ferroplusferro.com

Newsletter Distribution

Judy Collins

Wilson Boulevard Safety Committee

Bob Waffle | waffle@earthlink.net

Wilson Boulevard Revitalization Working Group

Judah dal Cais | jdalcais@verizon.net

Ballston Partnership Representative

Talmadge Williams | ttwrec@aol.com

Metro Liaison

Henry McFarland | hmcFarland@hotmail.com

Emergency Preparedness Liaison

Scott Tate | scott@scotttate.com

AT THE APRIL 26 BCA GENERAL MEETING...

- Lis Pederson of the Arlington Chapter of the American Red Cross discussed emergency planning and displayed emergency kits and “grab and go” bags. She also provided tips and brochures to aid in members’ preparation of their own kits and plans. Information on the Red Cross’s basic first aid/readiness kits are available online at http://www.arlingtonredcross.org/html/first_aid.html, and can be ordered from the local ARC office.
- BCA members in attendance took a “field trip” just outside the meeting location at Fire Station 2 to view the site of the new Emergency Transmission Radio Antenna on the adjacent berm behind the Constitutional Bicentennial Bell. Members voted to approve the location. See related story below.
- Members discussed development at the Bob Peck and Washington Motors sites and the implications of those plans for the residents in the shadows of those projected buildings.

AT THE MAY 9 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING...

- JBG presented plans for the Staples/Peck site. See cover story. Their revised draft plans are available at www.bluemontcivic.org.
- Consultants and County Staff provided guidance on how BCA can more effectively attract the type of development it wants by devising a comprehensive vision and plan. Details to come.

AT THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING (MAY 24)...

- County Board Chairman Chris Zimmerman will be on hand to hear and discuss BCA’s zoning and other concerns.
- BCA is seeking for someone to step up and volunteer for either the Secretary or Neighborhood Conservation position in 2006-2007.
- And as always, the floor will then be open to concerns, input and requests from you — the residents of our neighborhood. The Board of BCA is here to listen and serve you.

When Do We MEET?

Glad you asked! BCA general membership meetings are routinely held at 7 pm on the fourth Wednesday of each month from September through June (in case of holiday conflicts, other days may be selected). Whenever possible, we meet at Arlington Traditional School (ATS). The date, time and place of meetings are usually printed in the monthly newsletter prior to each meeting. The BCA executive board also meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, usually at ATS. All BCA members are welcome to attend executive board meetings.

Antenna Update

Back in February ‘05, Jim Pebley (Arlington Citizen Corps Council Task Group on Public Emergency Communications) and Captain Thomas Panther (Office of Emergency Management) presented the proposal for a 10-to-100-watt AM radio transmitter (on the dial at 1700 AM) and a 49-foot monopole antenna (about the size of a flag pole). The pole originally would have been located at the rear of Fire Station 2, at 4805 Wilson Boulevard, about

20 feet from the bike path. The pole/transmitter (earmarked in federal Homeland Security funds) will broadcast instructions and crucial information during emergencies, even if the power and cable are out. At the February meeting, the membership agreed to support the project.

This spring, however, the County notified BCA that Dominion Virginia Power owns the right-of-way for the site. Dominion Power refused to allow the pole to be erected in its right-of-way, ➡ 4

► **Peck/Staples Site,** FROM P.1

JBG also reported that it now has the Staples site and the two homes on east side of N. Wakefield Street under contract, for a total of approximately 170,000 square feet or 4 acres of land. The new plan includes a 12-story office building on the Peck site (with an accordion-fold awning reminiscent of the Peck building's design), an 8-story office building on the Staples site, and six 4-story colonial-style townhouses on Wakefield Street (behind the office buildings).

The County insists that the office buildings include ground-floor retail space (although JBG has yet to rent any of the ground-floor retail space in the new Regent building, at the corner of N. Fairfax Drive and Glebe Road). JBG will attempt to keep Staples as a tenant. The proposal also calls for a park or greenspace area between the office buildings that will open onto Glebe Road (to link up with the other mid-block parks between there and N. Taylor Street).

Despite JBG's efforts to address some previously expressed concerns (greenspace, more traditional style of townhouses, and incorporating a design element to reflect the Peck building's architecture), the project still greatly exceeds the by-right density limits imposed by current zoning and the County's own General Land Use Plan (GLUP). In short, the GLUP calls for the dense development of the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor to end on the east side of Glebe Road. Building height and density is supposed to decrease as the distance from the Metro stop increases.

The 12-story building (if approved) would be taller than the Westin and the new National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) building on the opposite side of Glebe. By-right development for the Peck portion of the site would limit the building height to 45 feet; however, JBG proposes a building height of approximately 175 feet. Because several parcels have been assembled, the current zoning ranges from C-2 (commercial zoning) to R-5 and R8-18 (single-family residential and townhouse zoning). JBG will ask the County to approve commercial zoning of CO-2.5, which would mean greatly expanded height and density beyond what would be permitted by-right or under the GLUP (what we euphemistically call "up-GLUPing").

In addition to the obvious neighborhood concerns about height and setting a precedent of accepting a huge density increase on the west side of Glebe (which may open the door to equally dense development on down Wilson Boulevard), the traffic impact will be significant. Ellen Armbruster (a BCA member and a citizen-volunteer on the County's transportation commission) noted that if the County were to accept JBG's request for the increased density, it would require JBG to cut new east-west and north-south connecting roads between Wilson Boulevard, Glebe Road, and N. Wakefield Street. Otherwise, the traffic on Glebe and Wilson would be utter gridlock (and that's not counting the traffic impact of the new NRECA building).

In the coming months, BCA members will need to review and discuss options and strategies for addressing this imminent development storm. At the March meeting, members discussed the fact that nearby neighbors will shoulder the lion's share of the immediate development repercussions (increased traffic, parking problems, views of the backside of tall buildings). Chris Zimmerman's timely visit at the May meeting will give us an opportunity to begin a dialogue with the County. ■

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

BCA Goes Native

At the March general membership meeting, members chose Virginia native plants as the theme for the landscaping associated with the Arterial Transportation Management (ATM) improvements planned for Wilson Boulevard between N. George Mason Drive and N. Frederick Street. BCA will ask the County to plant native perennial flowers such as Black-Eyed Susans and Echinacea (purple coneflowers) as well as dogwoods or cherry trees. This request will be in addition to the Association's earlier request for the removal of the bedraggled juniper bushes that are located near Bluemont's sign at George Mason and Wilson. ■

Motion Approved in March

At the March meeting, members voted to allocate \$50 to finance the Neighborhood Day barbecue this past Saturday, May 13. Details on the barbecue and parade will appear in the June issue. ■

Missing Link Still Missing

Unfortunately an inconveniently placed telephone pole disqualified the Missing Links sidewalk request for N. Frederick Street at N. 8th Road. Please remember that to qualify for the Missing Links program, there must be an existing sidewalk in place on either side of the "missing link." The program's parameters prohibit the following: any tree removal, a retaining wall, utility pole or other utility relocation, streetlight installation, or easement purchases. The County contact for Missing Links is Tim McIntosh at 703-228-3829. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Next General Meeting	5/24
Art Market at Ballston (10-4, 2nd Saturday each month)	6/10
Annual Arlington Community Bike Ride	5/27
May General Meeting	6/28

Later this year...

Planet Arlington — a big new performing arts series, starting with a World Music festival on September 2 at the Netherlands Carillon. Stay tuned!

More online: bluemontcivic.org

► **Volunteers Needed,** FROM P.1

members to step forward and run/serve as President, First Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Neighborhood Conservation Action Committee (NCAC) Representative, and Civic Federation Representative (as well as delegates and alternates). No experience or special skills are needed — just a few hours each month and an interest in helping your neighborhood.

In April, after repeated calls for volunteers, the membership voted to cancel our annual

Halloween parade after no one stepped up to organize it. Sadly, without the membership support we need in order to plan popular events such as this, they will not happen.

Please consider volunteering. It's a great way to meet people and learn more about what's happening in our neighborhood. If you might be willing to serve in one of these positions, please contact Nominations Committee member Bob Atkins at luddite2003@yahoo.com or call 703-527-8859. ■



Bluemont Civic Association
PO Box 5134
Arlington VA 22205

► **Emergency Antenna,** FROM P.2

forcing the County to relocate the pole's proposed position to a new site much closer to Bluemont's Constitution bell at the corner of Wilson and George Mason. Some members objected to the pole as being too unsightly to be placed so close to the bell.

President Judah dal Cais and Civic Federation Representative Bob Atkins met with the County to discuss the matter. (Technically, the pole can sited without BCA approval; however, the County wants to do whatever it

Tractor indicates approximate position of antenna next to Station 2. Height will be the same as the flag pole indicated with the dotted circle.



can to address neighborhood objections.) At this meeting, dal Cais and Atkins learned that the County could not override Dominion's decision, and asked for landscaping changes that would reduce the pole's visual

impact. They also requested that the large utility box (reportedly owned by Dominion Power) on the sidewalk in front of the bell be moved to a less obtrusive spot. BCA is still awaiting a final answer on relocating this box. ■