



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

March 2013

bluemontcivic.org

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Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Executive and General) 7 pm, Arlington Traditional School (ATS)	3/21
Streetcar Town Hall 6:45 pm, Kenmore Middle School	3/27
Meeting w/Safeway Developer 7 pm, location TBD	TBD
ACE Potomac Watershed Cleanup 9 am, register at 703-228-6406	4/6
BCA Meetings (Executive and General) 7 pm, ATS	4/24
AFAC Neighborhood Day Food Drive (U.S. Mail carriers will pick up food left in bags on your doorstep)	5/11
BCA Meetings (Executive and General) 7 pm, ATS	5/22
BCA Annual Meeting/Election 7 pm, ATS	6/26



Connolly & Associates Drilling Services obtaining soil samples at Bluemont's Safeway in Feb.

Unmistakable Signs of Safeway Redevelopment

After a drilling crew was spotted taking soil samples and surveyors taking measurements at and near Bluemont's Safeway, developer Mark Silverwood acknowledged that he has been working since last fall with Safeway to put together a redevelopment plan for the site. (Longtime members may recall that Silverwood proposed redeveloping our Safeway back in 2002, a plan that involved razing the entire block—including the adjacent residences.)

Silverwood described the soil sampling and survey work as "due diligence" tasks being performed before any contracts with Safeway are signed. According to Silverwood, he proposes to construct a 20-foot-high retail level (for Safeway, Starbucks, and another small retail tenant) with 3 to 4 stories of apartments (approximately 159 units) above, including some affordable housing units. Consistent with Safeway's request for proposal guidelines, his plans call for two underground parking levels: one dedicated to Safeway customers, the other to apartment tenants. All vehicles will enter/exit on N. Edison Street. Pedestrian entrances would be located at both N. Edison and N. Frederick Streets. (See the related Safeway Task Force update on p. 3.)

Because the project was moving forward without any formal notice of a winning bid from Safeway, the BCA Executive Board sent a letter to Safeway on March 4 noting the community's concerns about having a tall, mixed-use building in the middle of Bluemont. A copy of this letter is on the BCA's website (www.bluemontcivic.org).

**Next Meeting:
Thursday, March 21**

BCA Meetings at a Glance



Marymount To Redevelop “Blue Goose”

Join us (on the 3rd Thursday in March) at Arlington Traditional School (ATS). Dr. Ralph Kidder, VP for Financial Affairs, and Dr. Chris Domes, VP for Enrollment and Student Development, of Marymount University will present redevelopment plans for 1000 N. Glebe Road, known as the “Blue Goose” building.

This site plan calls for demolishing the existing building and replacing it with a 9-story, 165,000 sq ft office/education building and a 15-story, 270-unit residential building. The latter will not be a student residence hall—it will be a market-rate apartment building. There also will be three underground parking levels, a large public plaza at the corner of N. Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive, and a large courtyard between the buildings.

Staff Planner Samia Byrd and Planning Commissioner Steve Cole will be working on this site plan (SP #64) with Marymount and The Shooshan Company.

NC Funding for Wilson Improvements?

On 3/21, BCA members also will discuss the possibility of using Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Program funds to help implement the proposed sidewalk and street improvements along Wilson Blvd. Special guest county staff member Tim McIntosh, the program manager for NC projects, will join the discussion.

Last year, the BCA voted to ask the county to reconfigure Wilson Boulevard (from N. George Mason Dr. to Four Mile Run) and improve sidewalks so that they meet county and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The proposed reconfiguration involves converting the four current travel lanes into one lane in each direction, a new two-way center turn lane, new bicycle lanes, and ultimately, new planting/utility strips and wider sidewalks without obstructions. According to county traffic engineers and other experts, such a configuration could improve safety for all roadway users without increasing motor vehicle travel times along Wilson.

NC funds can be used for qualified capital projects that Arlington civic associations may request. The associations compete with one another to accrue points that push their projects to the top of the queue. Despite repeated calls for new projects, the Bluemont neighborhood currently has no active project in the NC funding queue.

To qualify for civic association approval and NC funding, a typical project (often curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements for a single block) has a volunteer block captain to shepherd the project through the process. He/she circulates a petition of support and obtains approval from neighbors for the project. Because the BCA is without an active project, members are considering whether to ask for NC funds to kick-start Wilson’s reconfiguration.

Jan./Feb. Meeting Highlights

1/23/13: The following were elected at the Executive Board meeting—Mark Haynes 1st VP, Dan Laredo 2nd VP, and David Hughes Civic Federation Alternate Delegate. Congratulations to all and thank-you to John Herickhoff and Sam Ferro for their past service. Full Circle Montessori School presented its proposal to start a Montessori program at the Jordan Apartments.

2/27/13: Bluemont’s police liaison noted an uptick in house robberies and larcenies from vehicles. She advised residents to lock doors and secure windows, remove valuables from vehicles, and notify police of any suspicious activity. Members voted to propose to the county that Peck site plan funds be used for traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures in the area of N. Wakefield, Tazewell, Vermont, and 7th Streets south of Wilson, and the adjacent Wakefield & Wilson intersection.

Approved and draft meeting minutes are posted to the BCA website.

Committee/Liaison/CivFed Updates

Discussion and April Vote on BCA's Safeway Position

BCA's Safeway Task Force (STF) recommends continued discussion of the two proposed position statements on Safeway's redevelopment that the STF unveiled in February. The STF is calling for the membership to vote at the 4/24 general membership meeting to select the BCA's position. In drafting its proposed position statements, the STF relied on the 2010 NC Plan Survey results, comments from two well-attended public town hall meetings, consultations with county staff and Safeway representatives, comments posted to the STF's WordPress site, and internal task force deliberations. The two position statements are posted on the BCA website.

In brief, each statement emphasizes that the BCA strongly supports Safeway's continued presence at the site and that we want to work closely with Safeway as the redevelopment plans proceed. Each statement also articulates the community's widely held and deep concern that an excessively tall building is not appropriate for the site—noting the traffic, parking issues, noise, and other problems that may accompany the increased density.

One option concludes the following: "The BCA will object to redevelopment beyond the existing C-1 zoning classification." (C-1 zoning does not allow for housing or mixed-use development and would also limit the building height to 35 feet).

The other option concludes the following: "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 encourages all members to attend its March and April meetings to participate in ongoing discussions and a final vote.

Parks & Rec Liaison Update: Lacey Woods

The county plans to rebuild the picnic shelter closest the fire circle at Lacey Woods Park based on reported deficiencies: a failing roof rafter, cracked concrete under the shelter, and a lack of compliance with current ADA standards. The county also plans to overlay a path of synthetic material down the middle of the gravel maintenance road to improve accessibility.

Because these changes apply to a forested section, the shelter's new design should be consistent with the natural character of this area, and trees must not be damaged during construction.

At press time, the preliminary shelter designs have not yet been posted to the county's website. If you wish to see them, please send Parks & Rec Liaison Nora Palmatier an email at norapalm@verizon.net; she will notify you once they can be accessed. Nora will be on hand at the March meeting to answer questions and provide details.



We Need YOU!!!

Please consider volunteering for one of these open positions:

- Association Secretary
- Newsletter Editor
- Nominating Committee Member (at least 3 needed)

Please contact Pres. George Rovder at president@bluemontcivic.org or 1st VP Mark Haynes at firstvp@bluemontcivic.org if you want to learn more or volunteer to serve.

Bylaws Review Committee Update

The Bylaws Review Committee (BRC) has held three meetings to consider and discuss potential revisions to the Association's bylaws. The BRC will recap its work to date and offer its initial recommendations to members at the March meeting.

Specifically, the BRC will present proposals for:

- establishing a 3-year term limit in the bylaws for the offices of the President and 1st VP,
- adding "third parties" to existing bylaws provisions requiring Association authorization to present the Association's views/positions to public officials, and
- using standing rules to govern the conduct of Association elections and prior notice of Association votes.

Whereas the bylaws govern the Association's structure, standing rules (along with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised) may be used to govern the conduct of meetings. The proposed standing rules for the conduct of elections and notice of Association votes are designed to address members' expressed concerns over how Association elections and meetings have been conducted in the past.

The BRC is still reviewing and considering several additional issues, including simplifying the dues structure, conforming differences between electronic and cash dues payment, refining nominating procedures, and revising duties for officers under the bylaws.

BRC meetings are open to all BCA members: The next meeting of the BRC will occur on 3/24, 9:00 am, at Two Chefs Restaurant. The BRC also welcomes comments and questions on bylaws-related matters at <http://bcabylaws.wordpress.com>.

CivFed Update: Noise Ordinance Revisions

In response to a 2009 Va. Supreme Court decision gutting the "reasonable person" standard for noise ordinances, Arlington is now revising its own ordinance. Whereas there are some useful new provisions, like a provision to control how long a dog can bark, the revised ordinance language flip-flops where disturbing noises can be measured.

No longer will noise be measured at the site where the complaint is registered. Instead, noise will be measured at the site from which it originates. Essentially, the decibel level of a noise you are experiencing outside or inside your home has been rendered irrelevant.

Ordinance enforcement is based on "zoning districts." And a large percentage of disturbing noise is produced in districts with the least stringent noise restrictions (typically commercial and mixed-use zoning districts).

What's more, the county's current draft fails to include all types of zoning districts—for example, R-C and mixed-use zoning districts are not listed. If left uncorrected, there would be no noise restrictions for these districts. The revised ordinance does not contain special restrictions for construction pile driving. And noise restrictions related to lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and other outdoor motorized lawn equipment have been removed from the ordinance.

The Civic Federation's Planning & Zoning Committee has suggested remedies to these and other oversights in the county's draft of the revised ordinance. If you are concerned about noise control and would like the county to consider correcting the ordinance language as the committee suggests, please contact Gary Green at 703-228-3232 or codeenforcement@arlingtonva.us and copy the county board at CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us. To review the county's draft of the revised ordinance, visit <http://building.arlingtonva.us/update/noise-ordinance/>.

Invasive Removal at Lacey Woods

Sat., 4/13, 10 am

Volunteers are needed to complete the invasive plant removal project at Lacey Woods Park. Meet at I I th Road North and N. Frederick Street. Wear gardening gloves and bring pruning shears if you have them. Don't miss this last session at Lacey Woods. To learn about upcoming invasive removal efforts, contact Parks & Rec Liaison Nora Palmatier at norapalm@verizon.net.

Other Neighborhood News

Bocce Update

Park & Recreation Commission Chair Paul Holland reports that on 2/26 county staff provided the commission with an update on the status of Judah dal Cais's private Parks Enhancement Grant (PEG) application for a bocce court. Staff has now conducted a site visit and reviewed potential locations for a court in Fields Park and along the Bluemont Junction Trail. Staff also has initiated a budget analysis for constructing the bocce court.

The commission was also informed that the County Manager has proposed no funding for the PEG Program in 2014. Overall, the manager proposes to cut the Parks & Recreation budget by \$900,000. The manager's budget also proposes a new \$10/hour rental fee for reserved use of county bocce courts. The commission will review the manager's budget proposal and will determine its position on these and other recommendations in March.

Documents produced last year by the BCA Bocce/Petanque Working Group will be posted to the BCA website.

Construction has begun on two new bocce courts at Glebe and Randolph Park—a new 1-acre park located at the southwest tip of the Ballston Common Mall property facing N. Glebe Rd. (across from the Goodyear site). Construction of the courts should be completed sometime this summer.

Peck-Staples Site Plan Amendment Proposed

The owner of 800 N. Glebe Rd. (the new building on the Peck Chevrolet site at Wilson and Glebe) has filed an application to convert up to 11,778 sq ft of dedicated ground-floor retail space to be used instead as conference center space for Virginia Tech (which occupies the new building next door).

Under the original site plan conditions, Staples was to return to the Peck site and occupy its ground-floor retail space as one of the "community benefits" offered to Bluemont in exchange for the significant increase in the zoning of the site. Due to a lack of street-level parking and other factors, Staples decided not to return. The applicant states that it has been unsuccessful in leasing the space and now wants to change the use permitted under the site plan conditions.

Because the change eliminates another promised community benefit, the BCA Executive Board is investigating the application.

Contact Information

Use the email addresses listed below to reach specific individuals electronically.

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Don't Miss Out!

Renew today to receive
Neighborhood News through 2013!



The Bluemont Civic Association: Who We Are

The Bluemont Civic Association is a not-for-profit civic organization that has represented the interests of the Bluemont Neighborhood since the association was established in 1945.

The Bluemont Civic Association is the only organization working exclusively on behalf of you and all Bluemont residents. We are your friends and neighbors, striving to make our streets safe for our children and other pedestrians, enhance our parks and preserve our environment, maintain property values, represent local interests and build a stronger sense of community.

Breaking News:

**Upcoming Meeting
 with Safeway Developer
 Mark Silverwood**

**Date in Early April and
 Location TBD!**
 (Check our website for updates!)

**Look inside for more
 on Safeway!**

RENEW TODAY!

Keep your current membership through December 2013.

If you can't renew online at bluemontcivic.org, fill out (or update) the form at right.

GO PAPERLESS AND SAVE TREES

Members may elect to receive BCA Neighborhood News electronically rather than by mail by simply checking this box. Be sure to provide your e-mail address! (All information is for BCA use only.)

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

- Bring this form and cash or a check for \$12.50 to the March 21 General Meeting, or
- Mail the form with your check to the Bluemont Civic Association at BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205.