



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

May 2013

bluemontcivic.org

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Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	5/22
Memorial Day/Constitution Bell Ringing 12 noon	5/27
Bylaws Review Committee Meeting 9 am, Two Chefs	6/2
Mary Ann Redmond Concert 8 pm, Lubber Run Amphitheater	6/14
ACE Bluemont Park Solstice Workday 6:30 pm (N. Manchester & Wilson Blvd.)	6/20
BCA Annual Meeting & Election 7 pm, ATS	6/26
BCA Executive Board Meeting 7 pm, Location TBD	7/24

Final Vote on Bluemont's NC Plan



Completed sidewalk, curb, gutter, paving, and lighting project on N. Frederick Street

Members will vote on one of the community's most important documents—the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan—at the 5/22 BCA general membership meeting. The NC Plan Drafting Group presented its draft of the proposed NC Plan to members at the BCA's 4/24 meeting, at which time members passed a motion to vote on the plan at the May meeting. This draft document, which has now been reviewed by county staff, is available for review on the BCA's website and on the drafting group's website (<http://bluemontncp.wordpress.com>). Because Bluemont's NC Plan represents residents' views and their vision for the community, all adult Bluemont residents, BCA members or not, may vote on the plan.

The NC Program is a unique, grassroots initiative that utilizes county bond funds for capital improvement projects in neighborhoods. With a regularly updated NC Plan, Bluemont residents can tailor future neighborhood improvements to meet community needs. Among possible improvements are the installation of sidewalks, curbs, gutters, traffic-management and pedestrian-safety infrastructure, park improvements, and other similar projects. Bluemont's last NC Plan was issued in 1999.

The draft NC Plan includes recommendations that were derived from a 2010 Bluemont-wide survey and from the drafting group's on-the-ground research to inventory community infrastructure needs. In order to encourage community involvement and to make the production of the updated NC Plan as transparent as possible, the drafting group has been periodically posting sections of the proposed NC Plan on its website. As currently proposed, the draft NC Plan makes 40 discrete recommendations regarding neighborhood improvements and future planning. It also depicts over 150 street-condition, traffic-management, and transportation-related issues within Bluemont that need to be rectified.

Suggested amendments to the NC Plan may be offered at the 5/22 general membership meeting. Residents who plan to offer amendments are strongly encouraged to prepare in advance and provide the precise wording of their proposed amendments so that members can read and give these proposals due consideration at the meeting.

**Next Meeting:
Wed., May 22**

**Vote On NC Plan,
Members-Only Vote On Bylaws**

BCA Meetings at a Glance

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 22

Horwitt Invited, Vote on NC Plan & Bylaws Changes

Join us at Arlington Traditional School (ATS) on May 22, 7 pm, for the BCA Executive Board meeting (all members welcome). The general membership meeting begins at 7:30 pm. We've invited the Reevesland Learning Center's Joan Horwitt, who founded Lawns 2 Lettuce 4 Lunch to help local elementary students learn about growing and eating healthy foods. She is working to repurpose the Reeves family home (part of the last working dairy farm in Arlington) as a place where children and adults can learn about growing and enjoying their own food.

At the May meeting, attendees will vote to approve the Bluemont NC Plan (see p. 1 for details), and members will vote to adopt two changes to the bylaws and two new standing rules (see p. 4 for details). Also on the agenda will be a discussion of the proposed potluck community picnic. Organizers are looking for volunteers to help.

Help Needed:

BCA Webmaster & Developer



We are getting ready to redo the BCA website. We need people with web development and design experience to help us develop a website that will be easy for our volunteer board and webmaster to service. We are also looking for a replacement webmaster who can manage the site. Can you help? Email Webmaster@bluemontcivic.org for more information.

April 24 Meeting Recap

An unusually large crowd attended the 4/24 meeting, where members considered the Safeway redevelopment proposal as well as two other matters up for a vote.

Safeway

The Safeway Task Force (STF) presented the membership with three possible options: Option A, which supported existing C-1 zoning with a 35-foot height limit; Option B, which offered conditional support for rezoning with a 45-foot height limit; and Option C, which supported the Safeway-Silverwood redevelopment proposal presented to the membership on 4/3.

Members lined up at the microphone to debate and discuss the pros and cons of various options. Several amendments were considered, but members ultimately rejected them. Members adopted Option A as the BCA's formal position. For more details, see the article on p. 3.

Wilson Sidewalks: New NC Project

By unanimous voice vote, members selected the improvement of sidewalks along Wilson Boulevard (between George Mason Drive and Four Mile Run) as Bluemont's first-priority NC project. The project calls for a redesigned roadway to include a new two-way center turn lane, dedicated turn lanes at intersections, periodic safety islands, one through-lane in each direction, and new bicycle lanes.

With space created by this reconfiguration, utility poles and other obstructions would be moved from existing sidewalks to new landscaped utility strips. The Sidewalk Safety Committee and the BCA Executive Board will work with county staff on funding and design issues. On 5/5, President Rovder sent a letter to NC Program staff member Tim McIntosh informing him of the membership's decision. The committee and staff will

present design concepts to the community for review and comment as the project's design process progresses.

Nominating Committee

Members submitted 50 ballots 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). See the call-for-candidates article on p. 4.



A slice of the standing-room-only crowd on 4/24

From the Committees

The BCA Adopts an Official Safeway Position

At the BCA's well-attended 4/24 meeting, members cast votes for one of three possible BCA positions recommended by the Safeway Task Force (STF). The STF drafted these three options in response to the proposed redevelopment of Bluemont's Safeway at 5101 Wilson Blvd. They were synthesized and developed from all the feedback and comments submitted by members and residents who attended three well-advertised, well-attended neighborhood meetings held within the past year, including a final meeting on 4/3 at which Safeway representatives and developer Mark Silverwood presented their proposed redevelopment plans.

Visit http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/STF_Ballot_April_24_2013_Vote.pdf to read all three options that the membership considered.

Of the 173 votes cast, the vote totals were as follows: Option A=98 (56.6%), Option B=43 (24.9%), and Option C=32(18.5%). After the votes were counted and announced at the meeting, Option A was then adopted as the BCA's official position by an overwhelming voice vote. Importantly, the voting percentages mirror the results of the 2010 NC Plan survey, which included several questions designed to help gauge residents' comfort level with the potential redevelopment of Bluemont's Safeway and other nearby commercial sites.

On 5/3, President Rovder sent a letter to County Board Chair Walter Tejada announcing the BCA's position. Below is the newly adopted BCA position on the redevelopment of Bluemont's Safeway that was included in the letter:

"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



On 4/30, Clendenin Environmental & Geotechnic Consultants measure water flow beneath Safeway's parking lot in anticipation of redevelopment

to single-family residential homes. This point has been emphasized on two recent surveys of Bluemont residents.

"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."

Bylaws Changes Up for a Vote

After careful review, the Bylaws Review Committee (BRC) has recommended its first set of revisions to the BCA bylaws. A motion was passed at the March meeting to advertise the two changes to the bylaws and two new standing rules in the April newsletter, followed by a vote at the May meeting. The existing bylaws specify no constraints on contact between the president and private property owners, developers, retail establishments, or other private entities. The recommended changes close this loophole and enact term limits for the positions of president and 1st vice-president. The standing rules regulate the conduct of the June elections.

To review the wording of the proposed changes and an explanation of each, please see the April newsletter (pp. 8 & 10) at http://www.bluemontcivic.org/newsletters/BCA_News_201304.pdf. You may also review the existing bylaws (last revised in 2005) at http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA_Bylaws_2006.pdf.

Any revision of the bylaws requires both advance notice and a 2/3 vote of the members present at a general meeting for approval of the revision. Therefore, this will be a members-only vote, and no amendments from the floor can be made.

The BRC looks forward to recommending additional revisions to the BCA bylaws this fall. To follow the committee's progress, visit its website at <http://bcabylaws.wordpress.com>.

Select Your Free Tree NOW!



Wouldn't you like a FREE shade tree planted in your yard this fall by a professional tree service? All you have to do is add water to maintain it. Choose from among 35 species at <http://www.arlingtonenvironment.org/community-action/trees/>. Then, contact neighborhood coordinator David Queen at daqmtg@yahoo.com or Nora Palmatier norapalm@verizon.net for assistance in selecting and registering your choice. The contact deadline to order your free tree is June 14.

Candidates Sought for June Election



*Nominating Committee Chair
Barbara Wien at the 4/24 meeting*

The BCA Nominating Committee seeks candidates to run in the BCA's election to be held at the June 26 Annual Meeting. Terms run from June 26, 2013, until the June 2014 election. The committee hopes to broaden participation, engage new people, and encourage diversity.

Candidates are needed for the following positions (see full descriptions at http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA_Bylaws_2006.pdf):

President: Leads the BCA's decision-making process and oversees and manages

association operations. Chairs membership and Executive Board meetings and presents approved membership views and positions to public officials.

1st & 2nd Vice-Presidents: May chair meetings in the president's absence and perform other duties as assigned by the president.

Secretary: Records meeting minutes and prepares drafts for review at subsequent meetings. Provides final, approved minutes for posting to the BCA website and keeps a record of all association correspondence.

Treasurer: Maintains the BCA's books and financial records; handles its bank accounts, billing, and payments; records all financial transactions, including payment of dues, receipt of donations, etc.; and keeps the membership list current.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC)

Representative: Attends all NCAC meetings as the BCA's representative. Advises residents to help them identify NC projects and meet NCAC requirements for project approval and funding.

Civic Federation Delegates and Alternates (4 each): Represent the BCA at Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) meetings and serve on ACCF committees. Delegates also serve as ex officio members of the BCA Executive Board, reporting periodically to the board and the membership.

Send nominations to NominatingCommittee@bluemontcivic.org, or contact committee chair Barbara Wien directly with nominations, questions, or suggestions at barbarawien@verizon.net (703-522-3069) or Kate Mattos at klmattos@verizon.net.

Note: Only current BCA members (dues paid for 2013) are eligible to run for or hold office. The membership will accept nominations from the floor at the June 26 Annual Meeting.

Buildings Are Cast in Concrete, Site Plans Not So Much

In Arlington County, the site plan process is the mechanism through which property owners and developers may greatly increase their property's value by obtaining county approval for additional development scale, use, and density than would otherwise be permitted to them by right (within the property's preexisting zoning restrictions).

The Arlington County website states, "The majority of site plan review proposals are for hotel, residential, office and mixed-use development in certain high density zoning districts and typically within the Metro Station corridors." Whereas the site plan approval procedures include a public comment component, the process tends to favor the developer/property owner rather than the community.

Even after a developer or property owner has agreed to certain site plan conditions in exchange for more favorable increases in zoning and, sometimes, changes to the general land use plan (GLUP) that allow for more intense and more valuable redevelopment, an owner may come back and ask for changes to those conditions at any time in the future. This has happened twice recently with site plan (SP) #401 for the site formerly occupied by Bob Peck Chevrolet and Staples. One of the agreed-upon site plan conditions required the ground floor of the building at 800 N. Glebe Road to be reserved exclusively for retail use. The BCA supported the owner's request last year to convert a very small part of that space for use as an on-site leasing and property management office.

This year, the owner proposed converting a large percentage of the ground floor from retail to institutional use. In return for its support, the BCA asked for consideration in the form of free use of the space on a limited basis by civic associations and other public service organizations. The County Board approved the site plan amendment without the consideration the BCA requested.

When we assess a site plan request to erect the equivalent of a six-story building on Bluemont's Safeway site, it is perhaps worth remembering that site plan conditions are neither guaranteed nor permanent. Safeway and Silverwood Associates seek to increase density and use on this site to build a structure of up to 65 feet that includes a grocery store, 160 or more apartments, and 400 underground parking spaces. If granted, this building would become a permanent fixture in our community, but there is no way to guarantee that a grocery store will remain on site.

Contact Information

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

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Neighborhood Conservation Advisory

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And Much More!

Rose Garden Needs Helping Hands

The Bon Air Memorial Rose Garden is one of the premier, signature landscapes within Arlington County's Park system. Covering just one+/- acre, the space is used for weddings, artist's photography and painting sessions, pleasant strolls, lunch dates, and full-fledged picnics.

The rose garden has over 2,500 roses of approximately 135 varieties of hybrid tea roses, floribundas, bushes, and climbers. During the summer blooming season, rose blooms need to be "deadheaded"—also known as "cutting bloom"—so as to generate new blooms.

Arlington County's Landscape Unit needs volunteers to help keep the rose garden looking beautiful. Training and equipment is provided. In previous years, community volunteers have helped maintain this special garden and its reputation. In addition to appreciating the garden's beauty, volunteers have developed and expanded their rose-care knowledge and expertise.

Pruning begins in mid-June, and all work will be self-directed with volunteers providing assistance whenever they are able to contribute their time.

If interested in helping, please contact Patrick Wegeng, Environmental Landscape Supervisor, Parks and Natural Resources Division, at pwengeng@arlingtonva.us.



Walkabout participants enjoy the Bon Air Rose Garden