

## **MEETING MINUTES**

Bluemont Civic Association (BCA)

General Membership Meeting

June 12, 2002 at Arlington Traditional School

Return Comments/Corrections to John Huennekens jhuenn@gwu.edu

**ATTENDEES** (No Sign-In Sheet – 18 people voted for President)

My Notes refer to :→ Robert Atkins, Bernard Berne, Judy Collins, Judah Dal Cais, Carl Hallinan, John Huennekens, Gerry Procanick, Carol Spicer, Barbara Szydla

### **AGENDA TOPICS:**

- 1) Wilson Boulevard, Commercial District Charette
- 2) Announcement, Friends of Washington Boulevard
- 3) Treasurer's Report
- 4) Proposal To Amend By-Laws of the BCA
- 5) Bluemont Junction Railroad Exhibit
- 6) Election of Officers
- 7) New Business

Carol Spicer presided over the meeting.

#### **1) WILSON BOULEVARD, COMMERCIAL DISTRICT CHARETTE**

Carl Hallinan reported on the Wilson Boulevard Committee's planning charette held on June 11. Unfortunately, your Secretary arrived late and missed Carl's report, but due to the importance of the event, I'll provide my own summary. The best news is that the charette was very well attended – more than 100 people. Although the program schedule slipped and cut into the time available for breakout group discussions, participants did have the opportunity to express their views and concerns on the present and future characteristics of their local shopping district. As of June 12, there was no summary report available of the "sense of the charette". However, the facilitators will work on summarizing the discussions of their respective breakout groups, and an attempt will be made to develop a summary of the Bluemont neighborhood's viewpoint, as expressed at the charette.

Here's a blow-by-blow description

When participants arrived at the meeting, they registered, were assigned to a workgroup, and were given handouts and dots. Snacks and drinks were provided gratis by Safeway, thanks to the efforts of Rob Waffle. Carl Hallinan opened the program and introduced Eric Davis, who explained the ground rules (no head butts, no biting, etc.) Then a group of speakers gave presentations on the following topics –

History of Bluemont Commercial District – John Huennekens

Zoning and Planning Regulations – Gerry Procanick, (in lieu of Monica Craven).

Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Infrastructure – Charles Denny from DPW

Public Economic Development – Peter Bass from county's Economic Development office.

Commercial Development – Mark Silverwood, developer; and Maureen McAvey from Urban Land Institute

Then Eric Davis conducted a "red dot, green dot exercise". Eric prepared two posters with photographs from DC-area commercial districts that exhibited variations on common features such as roadways, sidewalks, awnings, parking types, high-rise/mid-rise, etc. Participants were then given time to affix their red and green dots to the pictures of features they liked and disliked.

Participants then were directed to go to their assigned breakout group. Each of the six groups were guided by a facilitator – A) Eric Davis, B) Margot Thomas, C) Craig Deering, D) Richard Young, E) Gerry Procanick, and F) Tim Lynch. All groups were asked to begin with 2 questions – What degree of change would they like to see (from property owner fix-ups, through significant redevelopment); and How soon they would like to see some changes (from ASAP, through within the next 20 years). Each group was then asked to consider some follow-on questions – A & B) The Degree of Redevelopment (zoning types, building size, expansion of commercial district); C & D) Features and Amenities (business types, public space features); E & F) Transportation Features (pedestrian routes, traffic lanes, parking types).

Next, the a representative of each group reported on their discussions. There was not really enough time for Eric Davis to summarize and consolidate the workgroups conclusions, but here are some of the conclusions I jotted down during the reporting session. All of the groups indicated a desire to see some

changes happening within the next 5 years or so, and most seem resigned to the need for some combination of rezoning and denser construction to effect that change. However, all of the groups indicated a desire to keep the Bluemont district a neighborhood shopping center, and expressed an aversion to creating some type of "destination" that would attract more traffic, noise and congestion. I was struck by the amount of support various groups showed for maintaining a Safeway supermarket. Many of the groups also expressed a preference for small independent businesses, vs. national chains. Improvements to parking and pedestrian safety seemed to be the top priorities for the groups.

Anyway, by the time I showed up at the June 12 General Meeting, Carl Hallinan was concluding his remarks with a promise to produce a report on the conclusions of the charette.

## 2) ANNOUNCEMENT, FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON BOULEVARD

Bob Atkins reported that he had been contacted by someone representing a new group called the "Friends of Washington Boulevard". The group hopes to unite various civic associations with the goal of monitoring and advocating for improvements to that street. Bob will pass along the name and number of the contact person to the new BCA president.

## 3) TREASURER'S REPORT

Carol Spicer reported that BCA expenses were under budget for the past year. There are 333 paid up members, plus 12 new members who joined last night at the charette.

## 4) PROPOSAL TO AMEND BY-LAWS OF THE BCA

Carl Hallinan distributed a draft of proposed changes to the By-Laws of the BCA. He contacted other civic associations in the NCAC and asked for a copy of their by-laws. He received 20 responses. The goal of this effort is to clarify the rules related to membership, voting procedures, and duties of the officers.

\* Motion \* by Gerry Procanick, seconded by Bob Atkins

" That the question of by-law changes, along with the question of what would be the implications to the by-laws if BCA incorporated as a 501(c)8 non-profit, be referred to the Executive Board for review; and that latitude be granted for the Executive Board to refer these matters to a separate bylaw committee. " During the discussion, Gerry mentioned that he could draw up incorporation papers, and said that incorporation is not an expensive process. Among the benefits are: a reduction in liability, say if a lawsuit arose because of an injury during the Halloween parade; financial matters related to the size of the BCA budget; and ability of BCA to obtain a tax number and own a bank account.

\* Motion Approved " unanimously.

## 5) BLUEMONT JUNCTION RAILROAD EXHIBIT

Bernard Berne noted the fact that the BCA voted in support of the construction of a railroad exhibit at Bluemont Junction about a year ago. He suggested that the new president of BCA should try to prod the county staff into taking some action. At the time of last year's vote, Dick Walker of the Parks Dept. had promised to met with the BCA and discuss ideas for the exhibit. He suggested that Mr. Walker be invited to a future BCA meeting.

## 6) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Gerry Procanick announced the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates for BCA offices during the 2002/2003 term.

Gerry nominated the following individuals for their respective offices, and Judy Collins seconded.

The nominees were: Carl Hallinan for President, Judy Collins for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Talmadge Williams for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice president, Carol Spicer for Treasurer, John Huennekens for Secretary, and Margot Thomas for NCAC Representative. Four persons were nominated for the position of delegate to the Civic Federation – Bob Atkins, Ed Fendley, Talmadge Williams, and Rob Waffle. Four others were nominated as alternate delegates – Adrienne Pilot, Ellen Armbruster, Rick Hodges, and Dan Laredo.

Some discussion ensued as to whether the position of alternate representative to the NCAC is elected or appointed. It was decided that it is not an elective position.

Bernard Berne nominated himself for the position of President. Barbara Szydla seconded.

Bernard Berne also nominated himself for the positions of NC Rep and Civic Federation Alternate, in the event that he is not elected to the position of President. Barbara Szydla seconded.

\*Motion\* Bob Atkins moved that all nominations be closed and that the Nominating Committee's candidates for the positions of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, be approved. Judah Dal Cais seconded.

\*Motion Passed\* unanimously

Discussion then turned to the election of President. It was determined that the current by-laws require a secret ballot. Paper ballots were distributed, collected, and counted, and the results were:  
Carl Hallinan 15 votes, Bernard Berne 3 votes.

Ballots were distributed, collected, and counted for the office of NCAC Representative, and the results were:  
Margot Thomas 15 votes, Bernard Berne 3.

\*Motion\* by Bob Atkins, seconded by Judah Dal Cais

That since there are only 4 nominees for the 4 positions of Civic Federation delegate; that the Nominating Committee's suggestions be voted on as a single slate.

\*Motion Carried\* unanimously

The vote for the Civic Federation Delegate slate was unanimous.

Paper ballots were then circulated for the election of new alternate delegates to the NCAC. The results were" 17 votes for Adrienne Pilot and Rick Hodges, 16 votes for Ellen Armbruster and Dan Laredo, and 4 votes for Bernard Berne.

#### 7) NEW BUSINESS

\*Motion\* by Bob Atkins, seconded by Adrienne Pilot :--

" that the President of BCA work over the summer to ensure that BCA is a co-sponsor with other nearby civic associations, of a "Candidates Night". "

This year, Arlington will hold elections in the fall for the positions of County Board Supervisor and School Board Member. There are also several local bond referendums, and the Northern Virginia transportation sales tax referendum.

\*Motion Approved\* unanimously

THE MEETING ADJOURNED