###### Bluemont Civic Association

*Representing Neighborhoods in and around Key school/Escuela Key, Lacey Woods Park, Bon Air, Fields Park, Balls Crossing, West Ballston, and all along the former Bluemont Division of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad*

#### P.O. Box 5134 Arlington, Virginia 22205

**www.bluemontcivic.org**

**General Membership Meeting Minutes**

at the Key School Library 855 North Edison Street and on Zoom

March 27, 2024; 7:30 PM

1. The President established that a quorum was present and read the politeness statement.

2. Members unanimously approved the minutes of the February 2024 meeting without changes.

3. Presentation by David Pearson (Head of the Arlington Historical Society

* David Pearson provided a presentation on the Arlington Historical Society [www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/AHS\_Presentation\_BCA.pptx](https://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/AHS_Presentation_BCA.pptx)).

4. Reports from Officers and Committee Chairs

* President’s Report (Henry McFarland)
	+ Water Line Inventory Concern:
		- A lot of questions on the water line. Henry contacted the County, and they improved their FAQ and sent a detailed response on water line inventory. Sent to members.
	+ Lot Coverage:
	+ Henry met with Takis Karantonis and three other Civic Associations to discuss the lot coverage study. He is on board with the study as a priority. Libby Garvey was quoted in ARLNow as commenting on this study. Henry noted that we sent a BCA letter to the county board on this topic.
	+ Henry brought up with Takis the traffic study on N. Carlin Springs road. Takis is interested in our thoughts on reducing the number of lanes from 4 to 3. Henry noted we were happy with the speed change (reduction)
	+ April Meeting Plan: (Key Elementary)
	+ Carolyn Haynes will talk about the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan and the City Nature challenge. Carolyn co-chaired committee that developed the plan.
	+ May Meeting Plan: (Key Elementary)
		- Takis Karantonis (County Board vice chair) will speak to us. We will send him a list of questions in advance.
	+ Family Fun day is May 19th.
	+ June Meeting Plan: (Lubber Run)
		- Patrick Hope will talk to us. We will send him a list of questions in advance.
* Nominating Committee:
	+ Henry proposed the following membership for this year’s nominating committee. A motion was made to vote on the committee, and it passed: 9 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.
		- Kathleen Reilly, Chair, katareilly@gmail.com
		- William Barratt bokamba@gmail.com
		- Chip Gurkin gurkinc@gmail.com
		- Matthew Harrison harrison.matthew622@gmail.com
		- Jeremiah Howard howardjeremiah182@gmail.com
		- Shakti Shukla, dearshakti@gmail.com
* **Treasurer’s Report (David Smith)**
	+ David reported on the bank balances and informed the membership of an upcoming April 10th Lubber Run watershed meeting planned by DES.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mar-24** |  |  |
| Previous Total: | $2,053.92  |   |
| Out: | ($10.98) |   |
| Out: | ($32.54) |   |
| In: | $240.00  | dues |
| New Total: | $2,250.40  |   |

* **ArNAC (Chris George)**
* Budget Subcommittee – advocating for more staff and contracting resources
* CIP - putting together a template that will be sent to the reps to be shared with the civic association and hope presidents of CAs will send out a request for budget of $14Mil (covers 2 years)
* Active Projects: Our funded project on 6th and N. Edison design is approx. 100% done in terms of drawings. Work would start this fall.
* Wilson and N. Lexington (pedestrian safety improvements) beginning preliminary work (example design)
* **CivFed Report (Dave)**
* A colloquium on funding in the County. There was no real discussion on funding reduction. There was some discussion about the state giving the county more authority. Takis and Libby lobbied against this measure.
* **Request for a Zoning Variance (Larry Smith)**
	+ Larry discussed a request he’s made to the County to subdivide a lot he owns into two (roughly) 50 foot lots. As part of the process, Larry is required to announce this requested change to the local civic association. Larry indicated that he will also speak to the nearby neighbors.
	+ Larry presented the variance request to the BCA (see graphic in addendum below)
	+ BCA board and members acknowledged that they understood Larry’s requests to the county with respect to the development. No objections came forward at the meeting.
* **EHO Committee Report (Henry McFarland for Kate Mattos)**

The number of applications for the whole County has slowed.  This might be due to the pending lawsuit, as well as confusion over the program.

In general, the EHO website shows that in Bluemont, three properties are listed, and 735 N. George Mason continues to be l**isted twice.**

**In the County,**

* **Six**properties are listed as "rejected," including the 5630 8th Street N property in Bluemont.
* **Two** are denied.
* **One** was withdrawn.
* **Three**have been approved this year.

The number of rejections is newer data, and it might be interesting track this figure.

We continue to be concerned that throughout the County many EHO buildings are “filling out” the allowed lot coverage and building size limits; note: 5- and 6-plexes can be 8,000 sq. ft of floor area.

We also have read that analysts are concerned about some EHO builders who have no experience with multi-plex housing types; many incurred delays as they learned too late that the commercial building code governs 4-unit and larger buildings (i.e. Americans with Disabilities Act, fire suppression, etc.).

* **Tax Resolution (William Barratt)**
	+ William brought forward the resolution (below) that was read at the February meeting. William proposed a friendly amendment (in red font below). A motion was made to approve the amendment and it passed 9 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.
	+ Following the friendly amendment, a motion was made to approve the resolution in its entirety. That motion passed 9 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.

WHEREAS Arlington County’s assessments of residential properties, including those in Bluemont, have risen continuously over many years, with some properties in Bluemont seeing a faster rate of increase than the county average;

WHEREAS the Arlington County Board raised or left unchanged the property tax rate over each of the last seven years, thereby substantially increasing the tax burden on homeowners;

WHEREAS the Arlington County Board has placed an additional burden on homeowners by creating or increasing other fees and taxes, including stormwater utility fees and utility taxes, over the last seven years;

WHEREAS Arlington homeowners, including those in Bluemont, have suffered increased household expenses due to inflation;

WHEREAS changes to the United States Internal Revenue Code have limited the deductibility of state and local taxes on federal tax returns, making the burden of Arlington County's taxes heavier;

WHEREAS increased real estate taxes are a factor that drives homeowners of limited means, including retired seniors, to sell their homes, especially if they are unable to qualify for Arlington County's tax deferral or relief programs;

WHEREAS Arlington County's high real estate taxes accelerate the loss of affordable single-family homes, which are often torn down and replaced by more expensive homes;

RESOLVED, that the Arlington County Board should reduce the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2024 so that once rising assessments are considered, the total amount of real estate taxes paid by homeowners is the same or less than the amount paid in calendar year 2023;

RESOLVED, that the Arlington County Board should seek savings in its fiscal year 2025 budget beyond modest cuts and efficiencies;

RESOLVED, that in future years, the Arlington County Board should seek to reduce the property tax rate as necessary to offset rising real estate assessments.

5. New Business:

* Reminder that the County is discussing increases in tax rates on April 4th.

Larry Smith reporting on the Ballston BID

* Ballston Quarter Fest (Larry Smith)– Saturday May 18th
* Farmers Market (Wellburn Square) Starts in April 4th
* Mega Markets (Wellburn Square – near Metro) Thursday May 2nd
* Water Line Inventory Concern:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by David Smith

**ADDENDUM**

Graphic presented by Larry Smith at the BCA March 2024 General Membership meeting

