**General Membership Meeting Minutes**

At 5117 8TH Road, North and on Zoom

December 18, 2024; 7:30 PM

**Order of Business**

1. The President established that a quorum was present. (3 voting EB members and 7 other members)
	1. Read politeness statement
2. Introductions
3. Approve minutes of the last General Membership meeting.
4. Summary Reports of Executive Board Officers, Civic Federation Delegates, BCA Committees, and Follow-up Discussion
	1. President
		1. No response on question to the County Board on left turn arrows at Wilson and George Mason
		2. Spoke at meeting regarding second metro entrance in favor of the entrance.
		3. Concern regarding white flags by the rocks. County plans on straightening the feeder trial onto the bike paths. DES is supposed to contact us beforehand. Work won’t start until spring.
5. Discussion of the survey
	1. We did the survey to learn how to better serve our neighborhood.
	2. Notices were in our newsletter, which goes to over 2000 homes and our list serve of over 400 email addresses. 111 people responded. Half were BCA members.
	3. Zoning
		1. We have three main activities in this area
			1. Comment on zoning issues, such as lot coverage and middle density rules.
			2. Review large projects in or near our area, like the Holiday Inn or Macy’s sites
			3. We are notified about small projects in our area, those involving a single house or small building, but generally we leave these to the County, which notifies the people in the area, and only get involved if nearby neighbors ask us to.
		2. Review results of survey zoning question

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| **Zoning issues** | **Priority** |
|  | High | Medium | Low |
| Preserving trees and promoting greenspace | 76% | 24% | 0% |
| Limiting increases in traffic | 50% | 43% | 7% |
| Increasing the local housing supply | 32% | 39% | 29% |
| Controlling population density in Arlington | 31% | 37% | 32% |

* + 1. What changes in our neighborhood should zoning either promote or protect against?
			1. One comment expressed concern about pressing too much on zoning regulations (one family per house), because this might disrupt the lives of people who are finding a way to get by.
				1. But even under this arrangement, concern with on-site parking
				2. If you get multifamily units in this area, consider that each family will have at least one vehicle, then problems accumulate.
				3. Harder to predict school arrangement.
			2. Comment lamenting that affordable housing (like garden appts) getting redeveloped. This redevelopment also negatively affects tree canopy.
			3. Comment about people moving into newly constructed apartments, yet no improvement for cars and pedestrians. For example, cars coming off I-66 onto Fairfax drive and no turn on red at the Glebe Road light. At the end of the day, people need to drive cars.
			4. Comment about the benefit of having a pedestrian bridge over Fairfax drive near the new Holiday Inn development to avoid people jaywalking in front of cars that are exiting the highway.
			5. Comment on the Macys construction in Ballston shutting down one lane.
			6. Comment by tree steward. She likes the overall county policy on greenspace. The main problem with overall canopy comes from trees being removed on private property, either because they die or because of development. County is good at replacing trees at parks and wherever else. Private people don’t want to put trees on their property. Tree stewards will have a program where they will come to your house and take care of your trees and planting for stormwater. When they get it together, use BCA as a test group.
	1. Stormwater and other environmental issues (Includes questions on parks, tree canopy, invasives, noise)
		1. Describe what we have been doing
			1. Although trees are good for helping stormwater, many stormwater infrastructure programs are held up because tree people do not want to cut down a tree.
			2. We’ve sent multiple letters to the county and have several initiatives regarding storm water
		2. County has spent money on the issue
		3. How should we proceed? What are the likely major future issues and how do we deal with them?
			1. Comment that in some neighborhoods, the water goes to a drain on private property. Neighbors can’t look to see what’s happening in the drain. County should assist with what’s happening deeper underground. County does not clean it out drains on private property.
			2. Maybe the county could provide some services to support people like that. Or confirm that county has someone who is in charge of this.
			3. Comment that 85% of streams are underground. Laws that prevent county from coming into private property and doing anything.
	2. Other priorities—Governance, taxes, school districts.
		1. Describe what we have been doing
			1. Last March, BCV sent a letter to county requesting that they not increase taxes. Received a response in April. Then raised taxes in May.
			2. Expect a shortfall of $30-40 million, which means a likely tax increase.
			3. More people working from home has led to weakening in the commercial real estate market. Office vacancies are up.
		2. Describe survey responses
		3. How should we proceed? What are the likely major future issues and how do we deal with them?
			1. Ecoaction for the county got $240k for tree canopy fund.
			2. The Board needs to hear a lot from constituents about the problem with higher taxes.
			3. Maybe BCA should attend the first budget hearing in April
			4. Also, the bonds always pass and they are not specific.

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| Issue priorities  |  |  |  |
|  | High | Medium | Low |
| Parks | 62% | 37% | 1% |
| Tree Canopy | 62% | 31% | 7% |
| Limiting taxes | 53% | 26% | 21% |
| Stormwater | 42% | 46% | 12% |
| Invasive removal | 44% | 48% | 8% |
| Governance | 23% | 57% | 20% |

1. Events
	1. Describe what we have been doing
		1. Pushing for safety improvements on Carlin Springs. Asked for a traffic study.
		2. Concern about George Mason and Wilson
		3. Some concern of George Mason south of Wilson, but no concrete proposal.
		4. Comment on concern for electric bikes driving fast on pedestrian paths. Unlikely that the Bluemont junction trail will be widened much. Custis trail is partially under the control of VDOT.
	2. Describe survey responses
	3. What events should we plan in the future?
		1. Should Family Fun Day continue?
		2. How important is it to have a guest speaker at our meetings?

Notes prepared by Fahd Patel