

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Annual Meeting
Wednesday, June 25, 2008, 7:30 pm
Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:34 pm. In attendance were Carl Drummond, Mary Thorne, Sam Ferro, Robert Atkins, Suzanne Sundburg, Judy Collins, and nine Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members.

Approval of Minutes for 5/28/08

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 5/28/08 General Membership meeting. A motion to approve the 5/28/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted to approve the 5/28/08 minutes as drafted. Thorne will forward the 5/28/08 minutes for posting to the BCA Website.

BCA Elections

The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of nominees for the 2008–2009 election: Judah dal Cais, President; Wendy Dean, First Vice President; Talmadge Williams, Second Vice President; Mary Thorne, Secretary; Judy Collins, Treasurer; and Carl Drummond, Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative. Kate Mesches, Talmadge Williams, Ed Fendley and Terry Serie were nominated to serve as BCA's Civic Federation Delegates. Ellen Armbruster, Judah dal Cais, Sam Ferro and Larry Smith were nominated to serve as BCA's Civic Federation Alternates. The membership voted to elect all of the nominees. Thorne will forward this information to the Civic Federation.

Update on AHC's Site Plan Amendment

Within the last month, two Site Plan Review Committee meetings were held to address the site plan amendment for the new AHC building at the corner of N. Wakefield Street and Wilson Boulevard (the east block of the Peck-Staples site). The site plan discussion has mostly addressed cosmetic issues. There has been concern expressed regarding the appearance of the roof, which will have 90 heating/air conditioning units (one for each apartment). Individually controlled units are more energy efficient. In anticipation of future tall buildings, which could be impacted, there will be additional work done on noise baffling and alternative materials. It is not clear whether there will be another site plan meeting. If the architects agree to all suggested changes, another meeting may not be required. The County Board will vote on the site plan amendment at its July 19, 2008, meeting.

Zoning Ordinance Change to Permit Accessory Dwelling Units

A motion was made and seconded for BCA to take a position against the ordinance change to permit accessory dwelling units. Three main concerns were

raised by the members present. The first was that there would be increased pressure on street parking, which is already in short supply. Second, given that many of these units exist illegally already, there seems little incentive for owners to go through the permit process. Finally, given the ineffectiveness of code enforcement to date, it seems unlikely that code enforcement personnel will be effective in monitoring the new accessory dwellings. The motion carried unanimously. A letter will be sent from BCA to the County Board. The County Board will vote on this issue at its July 19 meeting.

Traffic Calming for N. Tazewell Street

David Potts spoke on the need for traffic calming on N. Tazewell Street between Carlin Springs and N. Vermont Street. Many people use this as a cut-through and do not obey the speed limit. Some people drive the wrong direction on this one-way street. Potts spoke to the County staff member who did a traffic count and that person informed him that the 700 block would qualify for traffic-calming funds. This street is on a Bluemont list of Neighborhood Infrastructure Plan (NIP) needs but is not registered with the County. Carl Drummond suggested that the homeowners form a planning group and contact the police, sheriff, and County Board.

Bike Trail Safety

Nora Palmatier of the Arlington Urban Forestry Commission spoke to the membership about the issue of bike trail safety. There has been an increase in bike trail use and a heightened concern with bicyclist-pedestrian safety. The bike trail is now approximately 12 feet wide. The County is considering widening the trail to 20 feet. The commission is drafting a letter opposing widening the trail. The widening would require cutting down trees in an area that has lost up to half of the tree canopy in the last 30 years. The letter will also recommend decreasing the speed limit on the trail from 20 to 15 mph. There needs to be a new master plan addressing the bike trail issues.

Budget Rental Trucks

There was a discussion about the parking location of the Budget rental trucks. The trucks used to be parked at the Texaco station or next to the adjacent townhouses. The expansion of the repair business pushed the trucks to the Safeway lot and then onto neighborhood streets. There has been no response from Safeway regarding allowing the trucks to once again park in the Safeway lot. There was a suggestion that Robbie (the owner of the Texaco station) rent parking space elsewhere and/or contact Arlington Economic Development for help. Neighbors fear that rental trucks parked on the street will negatively impact property values. Robbie has a business license for the trucks. This license may be federally regulated.

Peck/Staples Progress

The Peck building has been demolished. The Staples building is still standing. A motion was made and seconded allowing Judah dal Cais to send letters to JBG,

the County Board and County staff regarding adherence to the site plan between now and the next General Membership Meeting on September 24, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

Neighborhood Conservation (NC)

Carl Drummond reported that 13 NC projects were approved in the June funding round. BCA has no projects in the queue after N. Frederick Street project, and this project was not funded in the June round.

Arlington Traditional School (ATS) Walk Zone Issue

Larry Smith reported on the School Board meeting, which he had recently attended. Smith said he would be glad to attend these meetings and report back to BCA on a regular basis. No ATS parents spoke at the recent School Board meeting, but Smith expects they will attend and present their views at future meetings. Smith encourages BCA members to attend future School Board meetings. The PTA President spoke on nonboundary options to address overcrowding and a desire to keep school admission policies unchanged. There is a temporary fix for this coming school year but it should be permanent for the 2009 school year. Chris Oatway refuted the diversity argument that had been made by the PTA President. Larry Smith read his petition advocating an attendance preference for children who live within a safe walking distance to ATS. He has 130 signatures, to date, and will continue to collect names of interested parties. Lisa Byington spoke about the negative environmental impact of idling cars and nearly empty school buses traveling to and from ATS.

Redevelopment of Safeway Site

Developer JBG has been talking with Safeway about the possible redevelopment of the Safeway site on Wilson Boulevard. To make this project financially feasible, JBG would build a 4- to 6-story apartment building with a Safeway store on the ground floor. This would require the County Board to up-zone and up-GLUP the area. Several years ago there was an attempt to do the same thing, which was abandoned after numerous BCA members objected to the project's height and density.

Upcoming Meetings

The Executive Committee meetings on July 8 and August 12, 2008, will be held at Judah dal Cais's house. A possible topic for a future meeting is the project to improve the beaver pond near the Holiday Inn.

Adjournment

Carl Drummond adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.