

**Bluemont Civic Association
Executive Board Meeting
September 12, 2006, 7:00 p.m.
Arlington Traditional School**

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

In attendance were Judah dal Cais, Carl Drummond, Wendy Dean, Suzanne Sundburg, Terry Serie, Lloyd Douglas, Kate Mesches, Judy Collins, Larry Smith, Ed Fendley and Lisa Byington. The Executive Board meeting was conducted in conjunction with a meeting of the Wilson Boulevard Working Group to hear JBG's presentation.

Old Business

President dal Cais called for a review of old business first. There were no motions from the August Executive Board meeting that needed to be recorded or discussed. Secretary Lisa Byington provided minutes from the August Executive Board meeting. One member noted that the August Executive Board meeting was conducted in conjunction with a meeting of the Wilson Boulevard Working Group, and the Secretary agreed to amend the minutes accordingly. A motion to approve the minutes, as amended, was made and seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended. The final amended minutes are to be distributed to the Executive Board.

Revision of By-Laws

BCA member Suzanne Sundburg and Treasurer Judy Collins noted that the BCA by-laws were last amended June 2003. The membership voted to increase annual dues to \$15 in September 2005; however, the bylaws document has not been physically updated to reflect this change. President dal Cais asked Collins and Sundburg to come up with the revised language, including language to describe the method to prorate dues for members who join mid-year, so that the by-laws document can be amended accordingly. NCAC Representative Wendy Dean asked about the requirements necessary for BCA to incorporate. Dean agreed to investigate whether any BCA members who are lawyers would be available to represent BCA on a pro bono basis. Sundburg suggested that a call for legal assistance could be placed in the newsletter.

September Newsletter

Newsletter Editor Suzanne Sundburg reported that final changes were being made to the September newsletter (a copy of which was distributed at the meeting for review). Newsletter coordinator Judy Collins reported that a few people were not available to distribute the newsletter, but she said should have enough back-ups to carry out the neighborhood-wide distribution beginning September 17, 2006. The newsletter must be distributed by September 24 in order to assure adequate advance notice of the general membership meeting on September 27, 2006.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission (NCAC) Update

NCAC Representative Wendy Dean reported that she had met with outgoing NCAC Representative Kate Mesches to review current BCA Neighborhood Conservation (NC) projects. Because of the current backlog of NC projects that have been funded but not yet constructed, and the NCAC program's current state of insolvency, the Board agreed that it would not actively solicit new NC projects.

Civic Federation Update

Civic Federation Representative Kate Mesches reported on the issues discussed – affordable housing in Arlington, widening of I-66, and redevelopment efforts – at the Candidates' Night debate on September 5, 2006.

Glebe 25/Mark Silverwood Development Project

BCA member Terry Serie reported that Silverwood Associates had withdrawn the site plan application in order to reconsider its options. County staff has reported that Silverwood will remove the Exxon station revisions and density transfer from the site plan. This action should reduce the potential building by approximately two floors. The project is now off the County's agendas. Serie also reported that, in light of the current housing market, it is highly likely the plan will be resubmitted for an apartment building rather than a condominium.

JBG's Presentation on the Peck/Staples Site

JBG made its third presentation to the BCA Executive Board and Wilson Boulevard Working Group. JBG also distributed a copy of its minutes summarizing its presentation and discussion at the August 8th Executive Board meeting. Any corrections to the JBG minutes are to be submitted to JBG's counsel.

JBG reported that its application is scheduled to go to the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) in mid-October. JBG requested that BCA provide JBG with a list of the community benefits that BCA members would like to realize from the proposed redevelopment of the Peck/Staples site before the SPRC meeting. President dal Cais reported that the Board would be updating BCA members on the JBG summertime presentations at the BCA general membership meeting on September 27, 2006.

Traffic Issues – In response to a question posed during the August meeting regarding the zoning status of the Goodyear site, JBG reported that the Goodyear is zoned together with the Harris Teeter grocery store at a combination of RC and CO-2.5. The existing site plan is for a 4-store office building totaling 53,000 square feet. The car dealership on the west side of Glebe is zoned as part of the American Service Center on the east side of Glebe. A BCA Member noted that Harris Teeter was expected to submit plans for further improvements to its site, but nothing has been filed with the County. Although the potential for additional density on the site exists, major site plan amendments would be required.

To follow up on a question posed during the August meeting regarding the redevelopment of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

building, JBG reported that no traffic signal or pedestrian crossing improvements are included in NRECA's site plans. NRECA committed only to remove the dedicated right-turn lane from west-bound Wilson Boulevard onto north-bound Glebe Road.

JBG's traffic consultant, Wells & Associates, provided additional information on its review of the impact on traffic of a mid-block pedestrian signal on Glebe Road between Wilson Boulevard and Fairfax Drive. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), which has control of Glebe Road and Fairfax Drive because of the access to I-66, has been reluctant to approve any proposals (e.g., add lights or median breaks to Glebe Road) that would slow traffic. At the August meeting, JBG had stated its support for a crosswalk signal for pedestrians, and Wells had agreed to analyze whether timing of the lights could be such that the impact to the flow of traffic on Glebe Road would be minimal.

After further review, Wells concluded that a mid-block signal on Glebe Road would add delay to the traffic traveling along Glebe Road; however, the delay was not as significant as originally anticipated. The delay is projected to be about the same regardless of whether the mid-block signal is a pedestrian-only cross-walk or a median break for both pedestrians and cars making a left exit from the Peck/Staples site onto north-bound Glebe Road. Wells reported that it was difficult to quantify the extent of the delay caused by a mid-block crossing or median break – possibly about 30% to 40% increased delay for traffic traveling on Glebe, with an additional slight increase if the mid-block crossing is to include a median break for left-turning cars. Wells also reported that, in certain of the scenarios it reviewed, it was possible that a median break for left-turn traffic may improve traffic along Glebe Road because of improvements that the median break might cause at the other five intersections impacted by the proposed redevelopment of the Peck/Staples site. Based on its preliminary analysis, Wells concluded that, although there is sufficient delay that VDOT might reject any proposed mid-block signal or median break, the delay was not significant enough that a proposed mid-block crossing or median break was not worth pursuing with VDOT.

BCA Member Terry Serie asked when a formal copy of Wells' traffic study would be made available to the public. JBG's counsel reported that Arlington County permits traffic study results to be publicized after the County formally accepts JBG's application. JBG anticipates that its application will be accepted by the County at least a few weeks before the Site Plan Review Committee. Serie reiterated the need for BCA members to have sufficient time to review the site plan application and the traffic study results before the SPRC. Serie further requested that JBG send a hard or, preferably, an electronic copy of the traffic study to BCA as soon as it was publicly released rather than forcing BCA members to track it down in the County's records. JBG stated that it is in the process of developing a public website where members of the community can review all publicly available documents regarding the Peck/Staples proposed redevelopment.

Serie asked whether the traffic study included the Wilson/Woodrow or Wilson/Tazewell intersections. BCA member Larry Smith noted that cars exiting Woodrow Street are faced with a blind spot when trying to turn onto Wilson Boulevard, which necessitates

adding the Wilson/Woodrow intersection to the traffic study. Wells and JBG reported that neither the Wilson/Woodrow intersection nor the Wilson/Tazewell intersection was included in the traffic study because the intersections were not included in Arlington County's request for the traffic study. JBG stated that, if the County requests additional details on those intersections at the SPRC meeting, the traffic study would be expanded accordingly.

Community Benefits – JBG's counsel summarized the community benefits that are commonly included in redevelopment applications, including placing utility lines underground on the site, contributions to the utility undergrounding fund, streetscape improvements, bike parking, a green building contribution, contributions to the transportation and parking management fund, a public arts contribution, an affordable housing reserve contribution, a retail marketing plan, and a signage plan. A JBG representative clarified that a contribution to the utility undergrounding fund could be used by the developer for the required on-site utility undergrounding if the expense for undergrounding was very high (in other words, there would be no additional benefit to the community in that case). In response to a question from BCA member Larry Smith, JBG stated that it had not been asked by the County to include a contribution to the Ballston Metro west entrance as part of its application to redevelop the Peck/Staples site. [Readers' note: JBG was granted bonus density at the Fairmont redevelopment site in exchange for digging the elevator shaft and taking some other preliminary steps necessary for the western entrance; however, as of 9/12/06, JBG had not fulfilled its part of the agreement with the County.] This may come up during the SPRC process, although one BCA member noted that Metro and the County are still far short of the money (approximately \$30 million) needed to fund construction of the bulk of the western entrance.

JBG and JBG's counsel discussed the process to obtain bonus density for the Peck/Staples site for its silver certification for green building design. However, JBG stated that most of the additional density for the site would result from the zoning change, not from the bonus density. JBG further noted that a penalty would be imposed should its building ultimately fail to meet the green certification standards; however, as a BCA member pointed out, any penalty that might be assessed would not require JBG to remove any of the bonus density it had been granted.

In response to question from a BCA member, JBG reported that its application for the Peck/Staples site does not include any attempt to "borrow" density from the site plan for the Fairmont project to be located on Fairfax Drive. However, JBG does propose to "shift" density from the townhouses on the Peck/Staples site to the significantly taller commercial building on the Peck/Staples site.

JBG's counsel stated that the County would rule on JBG's application for a zoning change for the Peck/Staples site at the same time it reviews the site plan. Thus, if JBG's application for a zoning change were to be denied, the County would also need to deny the site plan. JBG stated its belief that the proposed density for the Peck/Staples site is the same as the density for the other buildings on the west side of

Glebe Road (specifically, the Regent at 950 Glebe Road). However, BCA members countered that the County Board made a specific, one-time exception to height and density when it allowed bonus density from the Gateway site plan to be shifted to the Regent and never intended for this additional exception to be used to set a precedent for increased height/density at other sites on the west side of Glebe Road.

BCA members and Executive Board members informally discussed with JBG some of the community benefits that would be worthwhile to the BCA neighborhood. President dal Cais reiterated that it is too early in the application process for BCA to provide support for the project in return for specific benefits, and the Executive Board must report back to BCA members at an upcoming general membership meeting. A BCA member added that the attendees at this meeting were not authorized to “make a deal” with JBG and that the full BCA membership would have to be briefed on the project as a whole and would have to vote and approve any potential community benefits before BCA could give JBG an approved list of acceptable community benefits. The following general ideas were discussed:

- Undergrounding utility and telecom lines beyond the Peck/Staples site
- Assistance in making Wilson Blvd. sidewalks safer for pedestrians
- Making Wakefield St. a “complete street” (according to the definition in the County’s Master Transportation Plan) that is accessible and useable for all modes of car, bike and foot traffic
- Improving the flow of traffic on east-bound Fairfax Drive to make a right turn onto south-bound Glebe Road (before the Regent opens in mid-October 2006)
- Granting dedicated community space in the new building on the Peck/Staples site for community meetings and social events
- Addressing the traffic congestion likely to result from the redevelopment
- Ensuring adequate bike access to all of the streets surrounding the site
- Assistance with revitalizing the Wilson Blvd. corridor between George Mason Drive and Jefferson St. (On this point, BCA stated that it needed to work with Arlington County and residents to determine the level of zoning that would be acceptable to the neighborhood and that Bluemont residents would be unlikely to support the conversion of the residentially zoned/owned properties behind Safeway to commercial zoning. BCA was simply asking JBG to provide advice on the minimum level of density need to make any redevelopment efforts marketable to developers to obtain the level of revitalization BCA would like to obtain.)

Adjournment

The President adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:50 p.m. The Executive Board and BCA members continued their informal discussion of the JBG presentation and the impact for BCA members, to be reported at the BCA general membership meeting on September 27, 2006.