

## **BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

### **General Membership Meeting Wednesday, February 27, 2008, 7:30 p.m. Lubber Run Community Center**

#### **Call to Order**

Vice President Carl Drummond called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 p.m.

In attendance were Wendy Dean, Carl Drummond, Terry Serie, Sam Ferro, Mary Thorne, Suzanne Sundburg, twelve Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members and two nonmembers.

#### **Approval of Minutes for 1/08/08 and 1/23/08**

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 1/08/08 Executive Board meeting and the 1/23/08 general membership meeting. A motion to approve the 1/08/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted unanimously to approve the 1/08/08 minutes. A motion to approve the 1/23/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted unanimously to approve the 1/23/08 minutes. Thorne will forward the 1/8/08 and 1/23/08 minutes for posting to the BCA Website.

#### **Guest Speaker—School Board Chair Ed Fendley**

The School Board will be focusing in the following three areas:

- 1) Teaching foreign languages—The Superintendent has proposed providing opportunities for children in elementary school to learn a language.
- 2) Environmental issues—This is an important issue for children so it should be included in their education, and the school system should practice what it preaches. For example it is looking at decreasing emissions from schools and school transportation. A BCA member pointed out that in the fall leaves (at Arlington Traditional School) had been bagged in plastic rather than the paper bags, which can be mulched.
- 3) Children should want to go to school every morning—There is an effort to add more fun to the school day with recess and exploratory learning.

There are two main priority items for the School Board.

- 1) There are more families with kids in Arlington than in past years. In Loudon and Fairfax, school enrollment has been leveling off while there has been a resurgence of families with children in the inner suburbs. The goal is to balance enrollment in schools throughout the County. There are now under enrolled schools in the south of the County (and overenrolled schools in the north). From the point of view of the School Board, it is a better problem to have too many students than to be deciding which schools to close. One solution to this problem is to modify boundaries. A committee met for a year to discuss boundaries, and in the end the superintendent made a recommendation inconsistent with the recommendation of the committee. The board is also looking at the possibility of using existing school facilities in different ways. The former Walter Reed Elementary School, located at McKinley and Washington Boulevard near the Westover library, has been used as a day care for the children of school employees. It is planned to house a teen parenting program and a new library. Two buildings will be combined into one with construction scheduled to begin within the next weeks or months. Other buildings that are being considered for changes are the Madison Community Center, and the Wilson building in Rosslyn.
- 2) Yorktown and Wakefield High Schools both have large capital needs. There are not adequate funds for both. One hundred million dollars was just spent on Washington and Lee High School's rebuilding effort.

The community can be involved in these issues by contacting the Superintendent and School Board members now with their opinions. In response to the question of whether Arlington Traditional School (ATS) could include a walk zone priority for nearby neighborhood children, Fendley responded that the Superintendent had been asked to look at the ATS admission policy as one option in the range of possible options to help ease enrollment problems. In response to the question of whether any thought had been given to expanding public Montessori programs, Fendley responded that there is a Montessori action committee, and pre-kindergarten and middle school facilities are being expanded.

**Linda Winston—Arlington Forest Citizens Association (AFCA)  
(Pedestrian Crossing/Safety on N. Carlin Springs Road)**

A year and a half ago, a group of neighbors asked the County to beef up the crosswalk on N. Carlin Springs Road near the Arlington Forest Club. The County told the group to contact the local civic association. These folks were hoping for a stoplight that would be activated by pedestrians only. They are trying to determine where best to put this crosswalk and what other modifications should be made. They distributed a survey, both on line and in their neighborhood newsletter. So far, 54 households have participated, but there is no consensus on where the crosswalk should go. Moreover, County staff asked AFCA to query residents in neighboring civic associations to help determine where most people cross Carlin Springs frequently. Linda Winston asked if this issue could be included in the BCA newsletter, and she was told to forward a brief article and the link to the online survey. Someone also suggested that she talk to the PTA because schools can often push for increased safety measures. She wants to find someone on the County Board who can push this crosswalk project through.

**Peck-Staples-Jordan Manor Site Plan Approval**

The Peck-Staples-Jordan Manor site plan was approved at the County Board meeting on February 23. Terry Serie will do a comprehensive wrap-up for posting on the BCA Website. Serie will also assemble a set of documents as a historical reference or archive. Jordan Manor will come back for a major site plan amendment, presumably through Site Plan Review Committee. According to an AHC representative, AHC notified the residents of Jordan Manor of the redevelopment plans on January 15, 2008. If the project proceeds as expected, AHC will give residents 120 days' notice to vacate, and everyone will need to be out by July. At that point, the Jordan Manor building will be demolished so the land can be swapped and the townhouse land sold to a developer. Wendy Dean volunteered to keep BCA apprised on the construction-related aspects of the site plan since she will be monitoring the project on her own behalf.

**Neighborhood Conservation (NC)**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Street N. project is almost done. There has been a preconstruction meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street N. project. In December, NC recommended approval of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street N. project between Frederick and Edison. This was approved by the County Board at the February meeting. The next project in the queue is for N. Frederick Street between Route 66 and Wilson Boulevard. Wendy Dean suggested that BCA consider which NC project should be next (after Phase II of 9<sup>th</sup> and Frederick). There is not enough money for the Neighborhood Infrastructure Plan (NIP) items so those requests will not be funded separately and will have to be worked in through the NC Plan. Carl Drummond suggested including an article in the March newsletter to solicit ideas (with a caveat that nothing will happen for ten years or so). Blocks who want improvements have to select block captains. The block captains must obtain signed petitions from their block and relay their needs to the civic association, which then votes on which project will have priority in the queue. Once approved by BCA, suggestions go to NC for its consideration. Questions on this process should be addressed to Wendy Dean.

**Accessory Dwelling Report**

Matt Johnson asked Suzanne Sundburg to deliver his report. The Civic Federation has proposed some changes. These will be discussed in February and March. In April, the staff will make its recommendation. The vote from the County Board is expected in June. Among the questions being raised are 1) How many people can live in an accessory dwelling? 2) How will the increased parking needs be handled? 3) What percentage of the lot can be covered by these additions? 4) How will code enforcement handle the increased demand for its services as a result of these new dwellings?

**New Business**

Neighborhood Day will be held on May 10. Traditionally this is a neighborhood cookout. A motion was made to allocate no more than \$200 from the BCA budget for Neighborhood Day. The motion passed. It was noted that three businesses in the Bluemont neighborhood have closed recently; Video 95, the curtain store (former pottery store) and the TV repair shop near the BP gas station.

**Adjournment**

Carl Drummond adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.