

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

General Membership Meeting Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 7:30 p.m. Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 pm.

In attendance were Judah dal Cais, Carl Drummond, Judy Collins, Sam Ferro, Mary Thorne, Suzanne Sundburg, eight Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members and three nonmembers.

Arlington Police Liaison

The new police liaison officer is James O'Daniel. He can be reached at 703-963-9034, jodaniel@arlingtonva.us. Before Officer O'Daniel appeared, Corporal David Green gave the update on the Bluemont neighborhood. The County has gone through redistricting but Bluemont is still in the first district. The crime rate is at its lowest level in 35 years. The police are using "react teams" to respond to problem areas. For example, they have increased their patrols of the bike path to try to catch the guy who is grabbing women's rear ends and riding away. Increased patrols were effective in stopping the man who was putting bags over women's heads last year. Property crimes are the most common type, with thefts from autos leading the list. GPS units are one of the most commonly taken items. The police also respond to requests from individuals and, as a result, monitored several St. Patrick's Day parties on March 15, including a large annual event on 7th Street. For issues that apply to the neighborhood as a whole, it is helpful if Bluemont residents funnel their concerns through the BCA President or Vice President.

Richard Young, Culpepper Garden

Richard Young is on the Board of Culpepper Garden, a retirement community near the neighborhood. This community was started in 1975 and was financed with a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant. It has expanded twice since then and rents are still HUD-subsidized. Culpepper Garden is located at 4435 North Pershing Drive, near Barrett School. It has both independent and assisted living units and is available to residents of Northern Virginia whose income is under a certain threshold. Neighbors can get involved by volunteering, donating to the annual fundraising drive and referring potential residents. They will be having an open house on May 18. More information is available at www.culpeppergarden.org.

Arlington's Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Arlington's Area Agency on Aging operates within the Department of Human Services and is one of 670 AAAs countrywide. This organization is funded by federal, state and local funds to keep elderly people independent.

Susan Lane, a staff person for AAA, outlined the many services offered by her organization. Among these services are in-home services, new options for housing, financial counseling,

opportunities to work and to volunteer, routine legal advice, meals (home delivered), activities at senior centers, transportation services, intergenerational activities, outreach to the isolated, and supporting the needs of the caregiver. There is now one adult foster care home in Arlington, and AAA hopes to attract more homeowners to this program. Adult foster care providers are paid in a similar way to those who provide foster care to children. In the short term, AAA will help senior citizens file a tax return this year to obtain the tax rebate being given this year. In the longer term, AAA will help with TV conversion prior to the February 2009 date to switch over to digital TV. AAA can be reached by phone at 703-228-1700 or e-mail at arlaaa@arlingtonva.us.

The Arlington Commission on Aging is a body of residents experienced in matters concerning older people. Its main function is public outreach and education. Brenda Cox, a volunteer on the Commission, explained that neighbors could help by referring elders in need to AAA's services. There are adult day care programs as well as in-home services available for those encountering trouble maintaining their level of independence.

Both the Fire and Police Departments have programs specific to the elderly. The Fire Department focuses on trying to guard against in-house falls. The Police Department is involved with programs to combat scams targeted at the elderly, including identity theft. All speakers stressed the importance of neighbor awareness in helping the elderly obtain necessary help with daily living.

Approval of Minutes for 2/27/08

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 2/27/08 General Membership meeting. A motion to approve the 2/27/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted unanimously to approve the 2/27/08 minutes. Thorne will forward the 2/27/08 minutes for posting to the BCA Website.

Newsletter Deadlines

All articles must be submitted to Sam Ferro by April 8 so that the completed newsletter can be at the printer by April 14. Judy will be away when the newsletter is printed so she will give Suzanne Sundburg the labels and stamps so that it can be mailed by April 18. Judy will also send the quantity to be printed to Sam prior to leaving town. BCA will be asking Holly Hawthorne, the principal of ATS, and Fran Looney (accessory dwelling issue) to speak at the April/May meetings.

Old Business

There will be a site plan amendment after AHC gets its funding for the new building to be constructed on the east block of the Peck-Staples site. Sometimes, developers will use a site plan amendment as an opportunity to renegotiate previous commitments. BCA will keep an eye on this. There was some discussion of the plight of current Jordan Manor residents who may have trouble finding a new place to live. Although AHC has said there will be 90 new units, there are currently 24 so the net gain will be 66 not 90. Those who move will have to apply and qualify, and the new units will likely be more expensive than the existing ones.

Neighborhood Conservation (NC)

Based on a vote taken in 2001, the first priority should be N. Frederick St. There was discussion as to whether this priority should stand or whether the level of involvement in the process should drive the priority. Judah would like to encourage those who voted in 2001 to re-engage in BCA to reinforce their interests. Others pointed out that many of these individuals could not make it to meetings based on age and/or physical disability.

BCA will vote at the April General Membership meeting to select a priority project to add to BCA's funding queue. The project on 5th Street was approved without the lights to keep it in a certain money range. Now that the money is available and the project going forward, residents on that street would like to see the lights added back in. The County now claims that the lights would be classified as a new project. In other news, the County is reviewing the use permit for the white antenna pole adjacent to fire station #2 (for the County's emergency radio transmitter). This pole offers a strong enough signal to reach all Arlington residents.

Upcoming Events

March 31—Community Forum on the Housing Commission's Accessory Dwelling Proposal
Central Library Auditorium, 1015 North Quincy St., 7:00–9:00 pm

April 5—Spring Fair at ATS, 11:00 am–3:00 pm

May 10—Neighborhood Day cookout, behind Fire Station #2, starting at 11:30 am. There will be a tree giveaway again. Trees must be ordered by April 18 and picked up on May 10. For questions or to volunteer, contact Judah dal Cais, judalcais@verizon.net

June 12—Register for primary by May 12

June 25—BCA elections

Adjournment

Judah dal Cais adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm