

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Agenda General Membership Meeting Wednesday, May 28, 2008, 7:30 p.m. Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order

Vice President Carl Drummond called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 pm. In attendance were Carl Drummond, Mary Thorne, Judy Collins, and 13 Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members.

Approval of Minutes for 4/23/08

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 4/23/08 General Membership meeting. A motion to approve the 4/23/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted to approve the 4/23/08 minutes. Thorne will forward the 4/23/08 minutes for posting to the BCA Website.

Arlington Traditional School (ATS) Principal, Holly Hawthorne

Holly Hawthorne gave a brief description of her background, including the fact that she grew up in Bluemont. She had held positions as a teacher, principal and vice principal prior to coming to ATS as principal 15 years ago. ATS focuses on the ABCs of Success, which are composed of academics, behavior and character. The six pillars of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The school has received many awards including, most recently, the Governor's Award for Academic Excellence in 2008.

The Arlington Academy of Hope opened its doors in 2005 in Uganda. The effort to create this primary school was spearheaded by an Arlington couple who were originally from Uganda. ATS parents and students have helped fundraise for the school. ATS teachers and Hawthorne herself have traveled to Uganda to provide pedagogical support. As a result of these efforts, the majority of Ugandan children in seventh grade have passed standardized tests allowing them to continue their education in secondary school. The children in this village had not managed this accomplishment before the creation of the Arlington Academy of Hope. In the three years since the school opened, the donor base has spread beyond Arlington and has gone nationwide.

Q and A

1) How are children chosen to attend ATS?

Originally, parents had to wait in line to secure a place for their child at ATS. A new system was established when parents were waiting up to five nights in line. The current system is a double-blind lottery. Preference is given to; siblings of children who already have been admitted to ATS, and at risk students. The School Board created this admission system for ATS. It has been a countywide school for 30 years.

2) How do most kids get to school?

Holly did not know the answer to this question but thinks that most students are bussed to ATS. They have the second largest extended day program in the county so there are fewer buses at the end of the day.

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. Members who oppose this ordinance were encouraged to contact County Board members. The County Board will vote on this issue in its July meeting.

Budget Rental Trucks

There was a discussion about the parking location of the Budget rental trucks. Since being banned from the Safeway lot, they are being parked on Fairfax Drive. While appreciating Robbie Guenther's desire to make a living, the neighbors report that the parked trucks result in more trash, noise and illegal activities. This is true whether the trucks are in the Safeway lot or on Frederick Street. It was recommended that neighbors approach Guenther directly with their concerns.

Reports from Officers, Committee Chairs and Representatives

Carl Drummond reported that Neighborhood Conservation would have a \$3 million funding round in June. These funding rounds occur every six months. BCA's next project won't be funded for a while. Treasurer Judy Collins reported that we have 250 members, \$6,000 in the bank, and she has renewed the post office box for another year.

Other Old Business

AHC's Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting on the major amendment to the Peck-Staples site plan will be held on June 9 at 7:00 pm [in the Navy League Building on Wilson Boulevard]. This should be the last SPRC meeting regarding the Peck-Staples site. There was some discussion of Larry Smith's petition, referenced in the April 23 minutes, to change the admission policy to ATS to favor neighborhood children. Smith was not present to answer questions about his petition, but it was suggested that interested neighbors e-mail him directly.

Adjournment

Carl Drummond adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.