

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, October 22, 2008, 7:30 pm
Arlington Traditional School

Call to Order

President Judah dal Cais called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 pm. In attendance were Carl Drummond, Mary Thorne, Sam Ferro, Suzanne Sundburg, Judy Collins, Wendy Dean and 25 Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) members and four nonmembers.

Approval of Minutes for 9/24/08

Secretary Mary Thorne distributed draft minutes for the 9/24/08 General Membership meeting. A motion to approve the 9/24/08 minutes was made and seconded. The membership voted to approve the 9/24/08 minutes as drafted. Thorne will forward the 9/24/08 minutes for posting to the BCA Website.

Potential for Redevelopment of the Safeway Site

Speaker: JBG-Rosenfeld Retail

John Mitchell and Billy Orlove spoke on behalf of JBG-Rosenfeld Retail. Their division focuses on the retail aspect of development for parent company, JBG. Safeway has been looking to redevelop and/or sell their site at Wilson and Edison according to Mitchell and Orlove. However, JBG does not own the site nor does JBG foresee any new development projects being started in the near term given the recent economic downturn. Many stores have been hit hard and retailers are closing locations rather than expanding at this juncture. There is speculation that if the Safeway site were sold to a developer, it would be redeveloped as a mixed-use project including townhouses, condos or apartments in combination with ground-floor retail space. Safeway could also sell to another retailer and include in its sales contract a prohibition preventing another grocery store from being built on the site. The JBG representatives noted that the Safeway in Vienna had been sold to the Walgreens drugstore chain. The old NTW building on Clarendon Blvd also was sold to Walgreens.

JBG Rosenfeld has been marketing space in 950 N. Glebe Road (at the corner of N. Fairfax Drive) on the west side of Glebe for several years without success. JBG's studies show that retailers do not want to gamble on expanding west across Glebe from Metro and the Ballston Commons Mall. The hope is that the opening of the new Metro entrance on the western side of Glebe combined with the development of the Peck/Staples site will attract retailers to this location.

Judah dal Cais reminded the membership that BCA has had a Wilson Boulevard working group that has been meeting on and off for the last five years in an attempt to determine a consensus "vision" for the future of the Bluemont's "Main

Street” commercial area. Dal Cais also noted that BCA should consider updating its Neighborhood Conservation (NC) plan.

Removal of the Split-Rail Fence in Bluemont Park

Kate Mattos collected comments from nearby neighbors regarding the County’s unannounced removal of the split-rail fence from Bluemont Park on 8/2/08. Most neighbors favor erecting a new barrier. The removal of the fence has compromised the safety of children playing along the bike trail. Neighbors also reported seeing unauthorized vehicles driving off-road across the park and along the bike trail since the removal of the fence. This situation would be expected to deteriorate in the aftermath of a snow event, which would obscure the perimeters of the park and presence of curbs that indicate roads near the park are not through streets. Neighbors favor a replacement barrier that can be seen through rather than bushes, which could pose a safety risk. Judah noted that the existing split-rail fence was at the end of its useful life (split-rail fences must be repaired or replaced every 10 to 20 years). BCA will ask county staff to present fence replacement options to the membership so that members can reach a consensus recommendation

Other Old Business

BCA members voted unanimously to approve a letter in support of Arlington Forest Club’s renovation plans to add a second story and deck to its bathhouse. The new building will stay within the current building’s footprint. BCA members also supported the club’s effort to keep the same number of existing off-street parking spaces in order to preserve nearby matures trees and avoid creating a greater paved surface area that could prompt additional runoff during rainstorms.

The deadline for the November newsletter text is October 30.

Other New Business

Jim Thorne asked for feedback on the issue of outdoor drinking games in Bluemont. Approximately 25% of the 40+ BCA members in attendance reported serious problems due to noise disturbances, parking violations, trash and trespassing. Members are encouraged to send stories of how outdoor parties with drinking games have affected them to james.thorne7@verizon.net. Thorne will put together a list of related County policies and procedures for posting on the BCA Website.

Judah dal Cais reported that leaf collection has started in the neighborhood.

Larry Smith reported that the solution to the overcrowding issue in the Arlington County schools is coming in November.

Carl Drummond reported that two citizens have suggested Neighborhood Conservation (NC) projects. Those interested in specific projects or redoing the NC plan should contact Drummond.

Sam Ferro reported that Chris Healey told him the park enhancement grant (PEG) for the Revolutionary War connector was approved by the County. BCA members Ed Fendley and Chris Healey have been working over the past few months to connect the pavement between the dead-end Harrison Street trail spur and the Custis Trail. This site has significance dating back to the Revolutionary War.

Judy Collins reported that 12 members have renewed in the past month.

Judah announced his plan to hold a neighborhood fundraising event to benefit an Arlington nonprofit in spring or fall 2009. Interested members should contact dal Cais.

Upcoming Meetings for November and December

Joint Executive and General Membership meetings will be held on Wednesday, November 12, and Tuesday, December 9. Meetings will not be held on November 26 or December 24.

Adjournment

Judah dal Cais adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.