

**Bluemont Civic Association, General Membership Meeting  
December 21, 2005, 7:00pm  
Arlington Traditional School**

Vice President Carl Drummond called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

**Officer Koch (Arlington County Police Liaison) was unable to attend.**

**Fairmont Building in Ballston – Opposing Density Shift into Bluemont**

Carl Drummond reported that the Executive Board had accepted the request of Ari Meltzer to address the General Membership meeting, but Mr. Meltzer was apparently unable to attend the December meeting. It was explained by other Executive Board members that Mr. Meltzer is a resident of the Continental in Ballston who has formed a group of some residents of the Continental Building in Ballston. He wants to address Bluemont members about the “Fairmont” building to be built at the site of the INS building on Fairfax. Board members reviewed what they knew of why Mr. Meltzer’s group opposes the Fairmont building, including that their homes have views on the side of the Continental Building that would be blocked by the proposed Fairmont building. Some of them also opposed the proposed use of so-called “private alleys,” which are public small streets in the area.

During discussion of the Fairmont Building, the following points were made:

The Fairmont Building is on the site of the highest density area of Arlington, where a long-existing County plan has been to build a new metro entrance with a high density building above it. The Fairmont developer, JBG, is seeking two additional stories of “bonus density” for the Fairmont building to compensate for the estimated \$4 million cost of building a metro tunnel. The official position of Mr. Meltzer’s organization is to move that that bonus density into Bluemont, to the Bob Peck Site that JBG also plans to redevelop.

Months ago, the Bluemont Civic Association passed a motion opposing the shift of density from projects outside Bluemont into Bluemont.

Bluemont is in negotiations with JBG over the Bob Peck site, and would want any additional density there to be given in exchange for something that benefits Bluemont.

Bluemont has already accepted bonus density as part of the Gateway Site Plan number 331 (which includes the Westin hotel at 950 Glebe and the Fairmont Site) in order to help compensate a developer for putting in a metro tunnel at the Fairmont site -- so Bluemont has done more than its share.

Member Kate Mesches spoke before the Country Transportation Commission saying that Bluemont accepts the current plans for the Fairmont, including the density requested

being used for additional stories at the Fairmont site, and the concerns over the small streets being worked out during the site plan process.

A member asked if JBG would refuse to make the new metro entrance if denied bonus density. Members concluded that the tunnel would be built, but it would take longer and cost the County more money.

Members agreed that Bluemont should be represented at upcoming County Board and Planning Commission meetings where the Fairmont Building will be discussed in order to make clear Bluemont's opposition to moving bonus density into Bluemont. Currently, the Planning Commission will meet January 9, and the County Board will discuss Fairmont on either January 21 or the following Tuesday. Members were urged to check the County web site since these dates may change.

### **Gateway Site Plan -- Opposing Bus Parking Shift into Bluemont**

Members discussed the proposal in the Gateway Site Plan, which includes the Fairmont Building and 950 Glebe, to shift bus parking from the Fairmont site and 950 Glebe into Bluemont.

The following motion was proposed and unanimously approved:

“The Bluemont Civic Association opposes having the site plan relevant to the Fairmont site or 950 Glebe site (Gateway Site plan number 331) move bus parking into Bluemont.”

### **Bob Peck Site**

It was reported that current zoning would allow a building of 45 feet in height at the Bob Peck site on the corner of Glebe and Wilson. JBG has requested 170 feet, twelve stories. Members expressed concern about the proposed size. It was noted that current County plans call for such tall buildings to end on the other side (west) of Glebe, and then step down in size as one moves toward the single family homes in Bluemont. A taller building at the Bob Peck site could push higher density development down Wilson further into Bluemont. The County, including Chris Zimmerman, said they were making a one-time exception that was not intended to set any precedent when they allowed a tall building on the corner of Glebe and Fairfax on the Bluemont side of Glebe.

While 12 stories seemed much too high, it was noted that if Bluemont were to accept something of less height and density, it would expect concessions from the developer. It was noted that to allow townhouses, Bluemont obtained wider sidewalks and buried utilities.

## **No Further Expansion of the Gateway Site Plan**

It was noted that proposals for moving bus parking and increasing height and density in Ballston and Bluemont, including the corner of Fairfax and Glebe, had been made by expanding coverage of the Gateway Site Plan. Members discussed how allowing continued expansion of this Site Plan could lead to higher buildings, greater density and other changes without sufficient participation by the Bluemont Civic Association.

The following motion was proposed and unanimously approved:

“The Bluemont Civic Association opposes any further expansion of the Gateway Site Plan (Number 331) that would cover areas west of Glebe Road.”

## **Neighborhood Conservation Update**

NC Representative, Kate Mesches, invited members to come pick up some of the 100 copies of the Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan currently on her front porch. She said plan is 10 years old, and Bluemont should re-do it. The last project in the plan was Harrison Street, which is being done in three phases. The final phase should be done in the spring of 2006. The Harrison project was approved by neighbors over seven years ago.

Bluemont’s request for 9<sup>th</sup> and Frederick was again denied at the last meeting. It will be the top Bluemont priority for the next round in June 2006. The Washington Blvd project remains tied up in disputes over right of way with nearby residents.

Members discussed other possible projects either through the NC process, another County process, or through concessions with a developer . In response to a question about widening the sidewalks along Wilson between George Mason and Glebe, it was noted that the County had a problem acquiring easements for right of way from landowners. It was noted that Bluemont could request utilities be put underground along that stretch. It was noted that Bluemont should think about the 14 electrical poles along Wilson when the site plan for Bob Peck is discussed.

## **Dues are Due**

Suzanne Sunburg stood in for the Civic Association Treasurer, and collected dues from members who membership was expiring.

## **Topics of Future Meetings**

Possible topics discussed included an update on the ATM project in January or February, the lack of a left turn signal at Glebe and Wilson. It was noted that this intersection is planned to be rebuilt when a new building is completed in the next six to nine months. It would be useful for the Civic Association to know County plans for intersections, wider sidewalks, pedestrian overpasses and other projects, and what developers are committed

to do, before Bluemont enters into negotiations over the Peck Site. Officials should be invited to make presentations at future meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm