

LPCA Meeting Highlights – June 11, 2014

Our LPCA President, John, called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Overview of Recent Activity

- Transition to new platform, BigTent, is successfully moving forward. More than half of the 850 members of the listserv are already registered on BigTent. There are several categories: - classified listings, general information, announcements, public calendar, and development – for which residents may sign up. John, Louise Maus (listserv moderator) and Aaron Schuetz (VP of Development) provided an overview of the new functionality. Lyon Park is in a beta test program to put out ads – could be a potential revenue generator. We are able to accept monetary payments and donations through the web site. Over the next few months, we will be testing out some of the newer functions of this service.
- Development – John attended a meeting concerning the Clarendon Bar Crawls which was well attended by bar owners, neighbors and police. There is currently an online survey for residents to complete, and LPCA will send out a link to the survey. The County is looking for neighbors' responses. Paisano's opened recently, and Westover Market will be opening in March 2015. Westover owners are planning a restaurant, a butcher, beer garden and a brewery. John and Aaron will be speaking with the owners and doing research on their product offerings, and reporting back on their findings.
- Civic Federation Update – significant changes to development process is in the work, and the new noise ordinance is coming on line July 1st. The upcoming County Board meeting will take up several issues related to neighborhood development, including porches and setbacks.
- Clay Park Rehab Petition – Paul (I didn't catch his last name) spoke to the group about his petition to rehab Clay Park, specifically the field, to maintain it and make it a bit safer. He circulated the petition.

Reports from Bill Anhut

- Treasurer's Report – The LPCA has \$74K as ending balance for May 2014. \$50K is committed to the LPCA Renovation, and the rest is in the kitty from membership.
- Canopy Fund - We have 8 canopy trees requested from the neighborhood.
- Arlington Blvd – shrubs and flowers have been planted, along with small trees. Bill has made another request to see the mounds planted with baby trees. There is a discussion going on about planting native vs. other trees. Bill believes there will be non-native trees along the road, but the mounds will have native trees.
- Community Center – There is a note in this month's newsletter from Bill. We have come to the finish line – we have a plan that involves our neighbors. We will start construction in the Fall. Bill thanked Ken Bell, who has led the charge and given so much of his time over the past 8 years to see us to this point. We will all be asked to step up to contribute to the rebuilding of our community center. Construction costs are higher than they were eight years ago, and the plan will now cost \$900: to 1 million to complete. The community has a construction loan already in place – we have raised over \$450K to date – or about half of the cost of the construction.
- Golf Tournament – the tournament will be held on June 29th, led by Bill Anhut. Proceeds will fund the renovation of our community center.

APS Capacity Discussion – School Board Members Dr. Emma Violand-Sanchez and James Lander attended our LPCA meeting to speak about the CIP Process.

- Dr. Violand-Sanchez presented the criteria for selection of County sites for schools, as a backdrop for the conversation. (All documents are available on the APS website: www.apsva.us/moreseats) A joint memo

from the County Manager and School Superintendent was released on May 13th regarding sites for potential schools.

- APS has undergone a CIP engagement process over the past several months, but the information about the available land came late in the process. After the vote on Monday, the process will be a County-run process, with a decision point in January 2015 to determine whether an elementary school can be built on the Jefferson site.
- The School Board vote on Monday, June 16th, to move ahead with the Jefferson site for a 725 student elementary school does not mean that a school will definitely be built there, but that the site may now be studied. The preliminary designs were provided to the School Board on June 10th.
- Mr. Lander stated that our needs are primarily at the elementary and middle school levels. In the design at Jefferson, the picture shows a middle school addition and an elementary school on the Jefferson site.
- Because of the community feedback, the Board does not now support a 1300 seat middle school at the Wilson School site. If they back off the Wilson school site, fallback would be additions at all the middle schools, including Jefferson.
- There was a question about what the term “centrally-located” means in terms of school building and placement, and Mr. Lander explained that choice programs were often placed centrally (from Arlington Blvd to Washington Blvd), in the middle of the County since most students are bused to those programs.
- Can’t we just change boundaries? No, the schools are at capacity in many places. We have over 110 relocatables at schools across the County.
- What does it mean that the Jefferson site is the preferred site? It means the school board would like it to be studied as a site for an elementary school. The school board will vote on Monday, July 16th. Following the vote there will be a County led process, because the site at Jefferson is on County land.
- The vote on Monday may include: an additional at Abingdon, the elementary school on the Jefferson site, 300 seats at Washington-Lee, money for continued construction at Ashlawn, money for the McKinley addition, possible additions at the middle school and the money and language for the November school bond.
- Mr. Lander has an alternate plan that he is proposing to his fellow school board members. He shared it with the community following the meeting, and it will be sent out on the Ashton Heights and Lyon Park listservs. His plan includes additions at several schools, but no new elementary school at Jefferson, and no construction at the Wilson School (confirm this against email).
- Mr. Lander and Dr. Violand-Sanchez encouraged everyone to let the Board Members know about our concerns about the bond. Ask what all the options are, not just the ones put forward by APS staff.
- Polly Hall announced the community association has formed a committee to follow the process and provide input from our community.

County Board – John Vihstadt attended our LPCA meeting, and addressed us.

- Mr. Vihstadt reaffirmed his belief that the School and County Boards need to work collegially, and believes that this communication continues to improve.
- He provided a brief bio, and has been a County resident and has lived in a few communities during his years living in Arlington. He has served on the Housing Commission, Aging Commission, several other commissions and served as president of the Yorktown PTA and on the CCPTA.
- Mr. Vihstadt serves as a liaison to the HALRB, Human Rights Commission, Civil Service Commission, WCG Clean Air Committee, Sister Cities Committee, Clarendon Alliance and a few more. He is interested from hearing from LPCA residents on any of these topics, especially if you have some expertise in these areas. If anyone has an

interest in serving on a commission, you can apply to any commission online on the County's website, or by sending him your resume and a note of interest.

- Mr. Vihstadt mentioned the Arlington County CIP, which includes parks, sewers, infrastructure, public safety, technology, transportation, etc. It will be taken up by the County Board and voted on July 19th. (check date).
- Mentioned that the County is undergoing the beginnings of the Lee Highway process – County planners are turning their attention to the development along Lee Highway. There has been recent development, and most residents want to maintain the small businesses but increase walkability and green space.
- Courthouse is also undergoing a planning process. All are welcomed to participate.
- Public Land for Public Good is also underway to look for opportunities for affordable housing. The parks, green space and schools communities are also vying for space. There are many powerful and diverse voices advocating for each of these land uses, and Arlington is challenged to balance these choices.
- Four sites are being looked to for affordable housing: Wilson School site, Courthouse Square area, Lee Gardens and Woodbury Park and at N. Rolfe Street (1307). These are the tier 1 sites. There are also Tier 2 sites: Firestation #8 (near Heidelberg Bakery), Edison Complex (near hospital), Lubber Run and Jennie Dean Park (Shirlington Crescent Area).
- There have been sewer concerns on N. Daniel and Danville. The County has been aware of the neighbors concern, and will be in touch with the community to work out a solution.
- 705 and 707 N Barton is in preliminary review to create two large homes on that site.
- VDOT to reconstruct the interchanges is progressing. Completion will be late summer. Tree planting is expected to take place this fall, and the plantings for the earth mounds are ongoing.
- N. Daniel and 10th Street – concrete gutter and curb installation, ADA upgrades, streetlights, storm water drainage, etc.
- Community members asked to keep the 4-way stop sign at Pershing and Barton.
- LPCA proposed NC project for Highland Street. Accumulating NC points and making it our first priority. Staff will coordinate engineering survey.
- CPHD – 10th Street N Flats, use permit project for 135 apartments and 3700 square feet of office, mainly for AACH. Outstanding issue: traffic circulation (left on alley from garage – staff said that there isn't enough traffic to warrant concern), the height and amenity roof, with the elevator overrun to 15' to facilitate access to the roof is an issue. The LPCA does not have a formal stance about the height issue, but there are some concerns about the potential noise from the rooftop.
- Question about how planning occurs from a newer neighbor. Mr. Vihstadt explained that we have the General Land Use Plan, above which sits zoning, neighborhood master plans, transportation master plans, open space plans, etc.
- How are priorities (choices among schools, open space and affordable housing) decided? Mr. Vihstadt explained that ideally, priorities are set by the elected leaders after a robust conversation with the community.
- Why the 10% cap on the debt ratio? It is self-imposed in order to lower the interest rates on bonds. The rating agencies don't necessarily hold the 10% inviolate, but the County has held to it. It is a 10% cap across both schools and the County.
- What about the County's reserves – does it make sense to borrow money with a school bond when the County is sitting on \$350 million in reserves? It is correct that there are \$350 million in reserves. Our AAA/aaa bond rating has withstood the test of time – even through recession. There is definitely room to maneuver if we free up those funds. Mr. Vihstadt suggested that this is a question that may continue to be asked.

Contact jvihstadt@arlingtonva.us. He would like to hear from citizens.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen McSweeney, LPCA Secretary