**Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA)**

**Minutes of the Membership Meeting, January 21, 2016**

*Recorded by Don Schlichtmann*

President Arthur Fox called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. He announced immediately that Trans-Suburban, along with VDOT, had notified him late that afternoon of the cancellation of their intended presentation of the I-395 ‘Hot Lanes’ proposal.

Arthur then reviewed the balance of the agenda. The first order was election of a new Secretary. Arthur introduced Don Schlichtmann and moved his nomination, which was seconded by Kathleen Bis. All present voted to approved the nomination.

Arthur then reviewed the proposed amendment to the ARCA Bylaws, which would define ARCA’s fiscal year as the calendar year. After brief discussion, motion to approve was made by Don Clarke and seconded by Cynthia Lewin. Motion passed unanimously.

Next, Arthur updated the status of the Vornado River House proposal, which has been pulled. He credited ARCA’s September resolution, submitted to the Arl. Co. Board, as changing the attitude of the County Board and Planning Commission members toward the need for more ‘holistic’ assessment of transit/traffic congestion and other neighborhood impacts of large-scale developments in the 22202 Zip area. He noted the number of new residential units that had been approved recently on MetPark:

* Vornado is currently completing construction of a building with 699 units on MetPark
* Vornado recently filed a new plan for nearly 600 units in a new building south of the Whole Foods building along Eads St.
* Kettler had been authorized to build roughly 1,000 units on its western half of MetPark.
* Vornado, by transferring its residential density from PenPlace, is now authorized to build roughly 2,000 units on its eastern half pf MetPark

He indicated that the Co. Board had requested an updated study of traffic/transit in 22202, and that staff are to soon pull together and post on a website data as a first step. Public input on the compiled data is to follow; the Co. Planning Commission and Board are seeking to re-activate the “Arlington Way”. Thereafter, the staff intend to consider demographic data, infrastructure, and school needs created by authorized development in 22202 “in-house”, rather than with the aid of an external, independent consultant. There was discussion about the County’s commitment to located sophisticated traffic counters in 22202 that were finally deployed over the past two years.

Peter Amato noted that an *Arlington Now* article suggested that potential school siting on the River House property is still an active issue. Joan Quinn noted the re-purposing of old Crystal City buildings slated for demolition in the Crystal City Sector Plan. Arthur pointed out that the building at Jeff-Davis & S. 23rd St. was being modified into a dormitory-like ‘group home’ for Millenials. Tony Watson complemented Arthur for his initial response to the Vornado proposal, which sentiment was applauded. Kathleen noted the efforts to meet individually with Co. Board members and candidates. Arthur noted that a Co. Board member (rotating) will be available at the Aurora Hills Library to talk with citizens on the 4th Monday of each month. Kathleen questioned the availability of data on “pass-thru” vs. “w/in neighborhood” traffic in 22202.

Arthur then introduced Natasha Pinol, ARCA’s representative on the Arl. Co. NCAC (Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee). Former ARCA President Chic Walters and Don Clarke are backup to Natasha at NCAC monthly meetings monthly meetings. Natasha reported that two (2) ARCA NC projects have been approved by the NCAC and Co. Board and that both are funded but are two years from implementation due to staff manpower backlog. There will be a meeting on the S. Lang St. project at Gunston School on Jan. 28; the 23rd St. project has also been approved, and the S. Kent St. project is awaiting approval.

Natasha noted that ARCA has won increased “points” in the NC funding queue process and would like to see additional projects proposed within ARCA. She favored use of a ‘Monkey Survey’ to identify citizen priorities. She was asked by the members to suggest her “top ten”, and she replied as follows with nine:

* Pg. 55 - Arlington Ridge Road and South Lang Street, by Gunston Middle School
* Pg. 60 - Provide grading, curbs, and sidewalks for 31st Street, from S. Grant to Hill Street
* Pg. 61 - Install lighting on the stretch of Army-Navy Drive under the I-395 off-ramp
* Pg. 62 - Improve street lighting for pedestrians using Arlington Ridge Road to Army-Navy Drive
* Pg. 71 - Increase tree canopy in parks and other large public properties
* Pg. 77 - Need street trees on Army-Navy Drive as buffer for noise
* Pg. 79 - Need tree canopy in Forest Hills area along several streets
* Pg. 79 - Fill hole in line of trees on South 28th Street near Gunston Middle School
* Pg.73 - Support protection of Frosted Hawthorns near Oakridge Elementary School

ARCA’s extensive NC Plan can be viewed on the ARCA website.

Libby Garvey, Co. Board chair, arrived at 8:30 from another meeting and was introduced by Arthur. She noted that the Board is at a “time of transition” with two new members and a new County Manager. Mark Schwarz, former Assistant Co. Manager, has recently been elevated to the top post. She also mentioned a meeting earlier in the day with Gov. McAuliffe to announce the decision of a Calif. technology company to expand in Arlington. She expressed concern regarding the high commercial vacancy rate in 22202 due to the Federal pull-back and noted that she will be serving as the Board’s liaison to the Planning Commisstion. She made three points that she intends to pursue to invigorate Arlington’s “great potential”:

* She is seeking to broadcast both work sessions and meetings of the Board to acquaint citizens with the Board’s activities, and she is seeking to ‘stream’ meetings of not just the Board, but also key County Committees on the County cable channel.
* She is adamant to streamline the permitting process and improve customer service in this regard.
* She is seeking to improve transit efficiency by means of improved technology in fare collection, among other factors and to embrace strategic planning for future development.

Ms. Garvey then opened the floor to questions.

* One attendee complained about the route of salt trucks from near Glebe Rd. heading north;
* Another questioned the competence of Zoning Dept. staff;
* Another suggested that the ‘holistic’ set of issues to be studied for the Vornado project be applied to all such proposals;
* Another complained about bus congestion near the sewer plant and diesel/sewage odor;
* Another suggested study of demographic changes & interests of Millennials; also of economic viability/employer needs;
* Another cited concern for air pollution in the ‘bowl’ of 22202 and questioned fuel “dumping” at Reagan National;
* Another questioned planned improvement in re-cycling technology [Ms. Garvey referenced the Blue Plains plant];
* Another questioned the density “end-game” and mentioned a study by John Milliken [Ms. Garvey responded that the issue would be studied as part of strategic planning, along with re-consideration of the education model for learning];
* Another questioned the Board’s response to the 22202 transportation study [ARCA VP Meredith Dodge responded that the study would be presented in March and that the Planning Commission had chided staff to get community input prior to presentation to the Board].

As it was time for the building to close, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.