

**Meeting Minutes: Northridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) Monthly Meeting
October 10, 2022 — Zoom Virtual Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President John Fehrenbach.

ACP Sgt. Tommy Ground was running late and moved to later in the meeting.

Guest Speaker Presentation – Mayor Justin Wilson

- Mayor Wilson gave an overview of the 2022 City Budget deliberations and Council priorities, including:
 - Increase in residential property tax revenues (majority of city budget)
 - Increase in investment in City employees and City infrastructure
 - Installation of fiber optic cable network/high-speed Internet for the City
 - Restoration of WMATA service and future (delayed) opening of Potomac Yard Metro

- At the request of NRCA's Board, Mayor Wilson also briefly addressed the Council's commitment to increased density and reform of land use issues, such as the proposed bonus height density proposal and changing the number of family members who can live in a single-family dwelling.

A question and answer (Q&A) period followed. Below is a brief summary of the exchange.

- Q: Small area plan changes through bonus height allowances for density. A: Small area plans are important, "but they are also not forever."
A: There are "lots of things in SMPs that no longer make sense," citing the revision of Landmark SMP to allow for the new hospital build. He added that SMPs "need to evolve and change as the city evolves and changes," noting that "Alexandria trying to have an inclusive process for how that happens."

- Q: Does the City have any firm position yet on colocation of housing – or any service that is not educational – on school sites?
A: The City has "lots of examples of collocated services that are not related to classroom instruction," including a new pool facility and health clinics at various campuses. "As it relates specifically to housing – I think what I said at the NRCA meeting in 2020 (pre-COVID lockdown) still stands." Housing makes sense [to Wilson] for the Potomac Yard site. There, the school can share a land bay with a public housing parcel. Some details have not been figured out yet. "If we're going to do colocation of housing on school sites, it will be on new development sites." There is a woeful lack of space at all schools in Alexandria. Wilson added, "One thing George Mason [Elementary School] will require is making the school much larger to accommodate enrollment needs, adding we are "going to need every square inch for construction needs."

- Q: Does the City have a legal opinion on this issue [colocation of housing on school sites]? North Ridge specifically made this written request to the City.

A: [The Mayor declined to say whether or not such a legal opinion has been provided or what it might state.] The City Attorney advises staff, and admittedly, “titling of our school sites is very messy. It’s something that needs to be cleaned up. We have not looked at it seriously yet.”

- Q: What is the latest on Arlandria and the development there [at W. Glebe]?
A: The City expected the development to be done privately. The new owner was willing to trade profit margin for building one of the largest affordable housing projects the City has ever undertaken. We needed affordable housing even before Amazon located here. We also need to preserve affordability in that neighborhood. There is nothing to prevent a lot of the existing affordable housing from being redeveloped as market rate housing. There was also some tension with St. Rita’s Catholic Church and a land swap. There are still some concerns about level of density on the site, but talks continue.
- Comment: The most recent action items on this development project cited by City staff include a traffic study for Mount Vernon Avenue and W. Glebe Road, where the development will sit. The study concluded there would be virtually no impact on traffic as a result of the high-density development, which seems unrealistic.
A: We are “sitting in the most transit-rich part of the City.” There is bus service on Route 1 and Glebe Road (including future bus service planned for W. Glebe). The Calvert and other development has not substantially impacted traffic in this “corner area” of the City. The Mayor add that no one is more familiar with traffic impacts than he is, since he lives nearby.
- Q: Please explain the relationship between utilities work and road paving - why is there such a lack of coordination? We have a beautifully paved street one month, then [some utility] comes in a month later and rips up the street. We end up with potholes and dangerous driving conditions. A: Our dream is that before we pour any pavement, we can assess any work that needs to be done on that street and then we will come in and pave. “Unfortunately, it’s a lot easier to say that than to do that,” said Wilson.
- Q: What is the status of the MOM’s site development? A: Originally approved by the City in 2012. Developer reapplied for renewals in 2015 and 2018, then shelved the plan. A year ago, a new developer picked up the application to develop the site. Heard that the developer shelved it because it’s not worth it right now (due to high costs and labor). It’s getting harder to finance large projects, and we have heard of others that are being rolled back. This site will likely remain as-is for the foreseeable future.
- Q: What about must-needed City amenities and services, where are those happening/going?
A: The biggest school renovation push in modern City history is happening now. We are also making a large investment in transit. What will also be important for [the City] is replacing the big buildings in the West End that are old and approaching end of life (50-60 years old).
- Q: What about net zero construction requirements for new buildings?

A: The City cannot require anything under state law. MacArthur Elementary and Minnie Howard High School will be first net zero built public facilities, per the city's Green Building commitment. No jurisdiction in the nation right now requires net zero for new construction, though. The City is looking to get commercial developers interested in this topic through some existing programs, and looking at existing buildings. Example: Ithaca, New York.

- Q: Is there any evaluation of the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) effort underway, as the City promised there would be? What is timeline for this study, and will there be data on whether it added to the housing supply, as cited by City staff?

A: Will check on this one. The City publishes all ADUs which have been built since the policy was adopted two years ago. About 20 ADUs have been created since then.

- Comment: Concerned about crime in the City, reading about gang activity and recent arrests in Arlandria. Also, violence in our public schools.

A: Going to let Sgt. Ground take on the crime reports. The City did see a spike in violent crime in 2020-2021, with a slowing of this trend in the latter part of 2021.

“Things are still higher than we would like. More firearm incidents than we would like around the dense areas of the City.”

- Q: What about the future of George Mason Elementary? What is the timeline?

A: Expect design phase to start in Fall 2023, and development SUP to come in FY 2024. As we move through the timeline, we will have swing space at 1703 North Beauregard.

Q: Has the school feasibility study been finished? A: No, they will move into design decision phase in Fall 2023. The community will be involved. “We are going to need a much larger school building.” We “can only build elementary schools so high under state law,” so going to need [to take up more surrounding green space for the building.]

Then there was discussion on the tree canopy, the impact of ADUs on the canopy, the Taylor Run project, etc.

ACP Neighborhood Crime Report – Sgt. Tommy Ground gave a report on crime.

Approval of Minutes for September 2022 Meeting – Approval deferred to consider comments by Chuck Kent.

Regular Business / Updates

Financial – See the Treasurer's written report.

Land Use and Zoning - Sunny Yoder directed NRCA members to her written report for other information, but recommended the meeting focus on approving two action items:

1. Neighbors of 3113 Circle Hill ask that NRCA write a letter in support of their concerns about the redevelopment of that property. A developer has bought the property and is seeking to tear down the existing house and replace it with a much larger structure. Neighbors have concerns

about tree preservation—including trees on their properties close to the boundaries with 3113 as well as stormwater runoff on this steeply sloped lot. The scale of the project and the disruption it will bring also are of concern, as are the impacts on Monticello Park, which the property adjoins. Tim Born and David Meyer have collected signatures on a letter that raises these concerns to City officials. The Board approved NRCA sending a letter of support that is consistent with comments received during this meeting.

2. Lyn Gubser reported that John and Joyce Bradley at 3 Washington Circle ask NRCA to support their petition for a variance—a reasonable deviation-- from the zoned setbacks to allow them to add a screened porch to their house. The addition appears to be compatible with the house and the character of the neighborhood, the neighbors do not object, and the encroachment into the setback area is small. The variance will come before the Board of Zoning Appeals on November 14. Lyn proposed a resolution of support, and it was approved.

Taylor Run – Those on the call were referred to a written report at [Taylor Run Report 2022 \(3.32 MB\)](#) (PDF file) for an update.

New Business

- Wheel Day 2023
- Facebook Page
- Proposal to (a) field survey and (b) create a position/summary document
- November 2022 monthly meeting

There was a motion to adjourn, and seconded. The meeting adjourned by Mr. Fehrenbach at approximately 9:47 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: President John Fehrenbach, First Vice President Ashley Berrang, Treasurer Tack Richardson, Scribe Kay Stimson, Past President Chuck Kent, Ms. Moira Buzby, Ms. Jackie Coleburn, Mr. Bill Corin, Ms. Kate Crawley, Ms. Diana Day, Mr. Sean Gallagher, Mr. Chris Gay, Mr. Lyn Gubser, Mr. John Hand, Mr. Bradley Kinder, Ms. Katherine Markowski, Mr. Bob Miller, Ms. Rachel Newhouse, Ms. Julia Porter, Ms. Meghan Rainey, Ms. Jane Seward, Mr. Bruce and Ms. Jeanne Snapp, Ms. Sunny Yoder, and Mr. John Winstead.

Respectfully submitted by KS
October 30, 2022