

North Ridge Citizens' Association
Minutes for February 8, 2021
Virtual "Zoom" Meeting

NRCA President Chuck Kent called the meeting to order at 7:30. An attendance list is attached to these minutes.

Sgt. Thomas Ground gave his monthly police report. He said that it had been "another great month." No vehicles had been broken into, perhaps for the first time in his memory. There had been two fraud cases, both involving elderly victims. On February 5, a thirteen-year-old boy on a bike ran a stop sign at the corner of Valley and Crestwood. The car did not have a stop sign and had the right of way. Sgt. Ground noted that the accident was videotaped. John Fehrenbach noted that he lives one house off the intersection and has seen many near misses there.

Treasurer Amy Krafft noted that she had circulated a treasurers' report prior to the meeting. She reported that the current bank balance was \$20,049. There had been some small expenses incurred in connection with the tree lighting ceremony and Mr. Kent's Zoom expenses.

Bruce Snapp reported that a pedestrian bridge will be added parallel to the bike path crossing Four Mile Run near Shirlington.

Amy Burwell noted that on January 25 the School Board voted 9-0 against the placement of housing on the Minnie Howard campus. The question of whether non-school facilities might be placed on the George Mason school grounds has not been resolved yet. Ms. Burwell also reported that schools would be reopening in March with special needs students returning to in-class sessions on March 1 and the rest of the students on March 1. In-class sessions will be two days a week and attendance will be on a voluntary basis.

Kay Stimson gave the George Mason task force report. She thanked the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations for sending a letter to the School Board saying that non-school facilities should not be placed on school property.

Mr. Kent reported that he had just signed a contract with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in connection with the \$5,000 grant the Association has received from the department to support water quality monitoring of Taylor Run. A team of volunteers from North Ridge will collect water samples twice a month during the coming year to measure for phosphorus, nitrogen, suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, and other parameters. This will provide the only comprehensive water quality data set available for this important stream.

Russell Bailey gave an update on the City's proposed Taylor Run stream reconstruction project. The City held a public meeting on January 28 and explained why they intended to go ahead with the project. The City argued that planting trees to obtain meaningful Chesapeake Bay pollution credits would be too expensive. Mr. Bailey pointed out that the City's estimates of how much pollution reduction would be realized by the reconstruction project appeared to be 400 percent too high. He was not sure what the next steps would be and when Council might review the project.

John Fehrenbach said that he would be handing off planning and zoning matters to Sunny Yoder. He noted that North Ridge had sent another letter to Council on the City's proposed alternative dwelling unit (ADU) policy. On January 23 the City Council acted on the staff recommendations.

[The meeting was interrupted briefly by a "Zoom bomb."]

Mr. Fehrenbach noted that there were some modest modifications made to the staff-proposed policy. There will be a fee, a requirement for notice to neighbors, and limits on short term rentals, but ADUs will be permitted.

Mr. Gubser noted that the policy seems to be driven by developers' financial interests rather than by affordable housing objectives. He noted that elsewhere approximately 80 percent of applications are by developers.

Mr. Gubser said that a recent opening on the Planning and Zoning Commission was filled by a woman who is an interior designer. He also noted said that two

members of the commission have worked for a developer of Potomac Yard. There are no current openings on the commission. He believes the commission does not actually engage in planning even though that is one of its purposes stated in its charter. He noted that allowing large homes ("McMansions") to replace smaller ones reduces affordable housing stock.

Sunny Yoder reported that the Planning Commission is recommending approval of the replacement of the garden apartments at the corner of Braddock and Beauregard with a 380-unit apartment building. The new building would be 45 to 92 feet higher than the existing apartments. She also reported the Planning Commission has approved an expansion of the St. Stephens/St. Agnes Upper School and had approved a proposal to replace the 244 unit Heritage of Old Town apartment building with a 750 unit facility.

Mr. Kent reported that North Ridge had received a notice from Planning and Zoning staff that an application has been filed by the recent purchaser of 506 North Overlook Drive to subdivide the property into two lots and replace the current house with two larger houses. Mr. Kent noted that the home is a historical building that is viewed as a key part of the neighborhood, featured both in North Ridge Lore and on the Association's website. City real estate records say the house was built in 1850. The subdivision application is scheduled to come before the Planning Commission on March 2.

Mr. Fehrenbach said that North Ridge should find out the views of the neighbors about the proposal. He noted that review of the application by the Planning Commission would take place before the Association's next monthly meeting.

Jeanne Snapp noted that the owner of the property has been renting it out for several years and that the grounds are in bad shape. She said she is very concerned about the development proposal.

Bob Miller asked if notice of the application has to be given to neighbors of the property. He said that he believes the lower driveway into the property is owned in part by the Beverley Hills United Methodist Church. He noted that the house served as the headquarters of the developer of the Beverley Hills neighborhood.

Mr. Kent said he would check with City staff about the notice question. He further said that Mr. Fehrenbach would coordinate putting together the Association's presentation for the March 2 Planning Commission hearing.

Mr. Fehrenbach reported that 64 households have paid dues – a substantial drop from the number in the last couple of years. He said that the restrictions of the Covid era have greatly limited the Association's outreach efforts.

Mr. Fehrenbach reported on the development of the list of nominations for the Board. He says that first timers on the list represent a variety of backgrounds as well as a number of new streets.

Elizabeth Melman asked if Brad Kinder of Woodbine could be added to the list of nominations as Mr. Kinder is the editor of the Woodbine Facebook page and has been very active in working with Lindsay Automotive on Lindsay's proposed redevelopment of their facilities. Mr. Fehrenbach said he would be fine with adding Mr. Kinder to the list if other nomination committee members agreed. Ms. Snapp and Rachel Colangelo both stated their support and Mr. Kent said that Mr. Kinder would be added to the list.

Mr. Kent said that he would be notifying the Board in the coming days about the plans for the annual meeting on March 15 as well as providing the Board with updates on the 506 North Overlook development issue.

The meeting was adjourned.

Russell Bailey
Scribe

Attendance:

Chuck Kent
John Fehrenbach

Jennifer Dougherty
Sgt. Thomas Ground

Amy Burwell
Amy Krafft
Russ Bailey
Kay Stimson
Bill Clayton
Bruce Snapp
Jeanne Snapp
Lyn Gubser
John Winstead
Bob Miller
Lee Guerry
Sunny Yoder
Rachel Colangelo
Glenn Thomas
Tack Richardson
Julie Porter
Mimi Saunders
Diana Day
Elizabeth Melman

Meghan Rainey
Glenn Thomas
Jane Seward
Moirra Buzby
Libby Johnson
Chris Gay
Kate Crawley
Tracy Moorhead
Julia Dols
Ashley Berrang
Michael Kelly
Amy Jackson
Mo Seifeldein
LaShaun Timm
Rachel Newhouse
Sean Gallagher
Abby Harrell
Don Melman