

## **MEETING MINUTES: North Ridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) Monthly Meeting June 14, 2021 – Zoom Virtual Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. This meeting had 20+ individual virtual attendees, including the following:

- John Fehrenbach, President
- Amy Burwell, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
- Jennifer Dougherty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
- Chuck Kent, Past President
- Tack Richardson, Treasurer
- Kay Stimson, Scribe
- Jeanne and Bruce Snapp
- Diana Day
- Jackie Coleburn
- Sunny Yoder
- Bill E. Clayton
- Lee Guerry
- Moira Buzby
- Meghan Rainey
- Mimi Saunders
- Rachel Newhouse
- John Winstead

### Neighborhood Police Reports

ACP Liaison Tommy Ground was not in attendance. Alexandria Sherriff's Liaison Capt. Shawn Casey gave an update and covered the various stakeholder and outreach groups he is involved with through the agency. He gave an overview on [Project Lifesaver](#), a GPS-based bracelet tracking service for seniors and at risk individuals. The sheriff's office has also started a home checks program during business hours for residents, as people begin taking more trips out of town. Residents can get this service Monday through Friday by signing up at this link: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sheriff/default.aspx?id=118747>. The Alexandria Sheriff's Office Community Academy will also be offered in the fall.

Captain Casey provided his contact information: 703-746-5116 | [sean.casey@alexandriava.gov](mailto:sean.casey@alexandriava.gov)

### Treasurer's Report – Tack Richardson

Mr. Richardson reported the bank account balance was over \$18,000. He added that a decision was made by the officers to move the bank account to a local Alexandria bank, Burke & Herbert. He noted that the existing NRCA account will be closed out once the grant payment for Taylor Run water quality monitoring is received. Mr. Fehrenbach said that the NRCA PayPal account will need to be switch over to reflect the change and Ms. Rachel Colangelo had offered to help with that update.

### Planning & Zoning Report – Sunny Yoder

Ms. Yoder noted that the subdivision of 506 N. Overlook was approved by City Council in May. She did not know the timeframe for demolition. Mr. Chuck Kent added that the mayor and others were

interested in the house's history and a plaque will be put up near the property to document it. He noted his disappointment that NRCA did not formally support the challenge due to the fact that it shortened the amount of time for providing comment. Board Member Jeanne Snapp said that one positive outcome was the fact that the City may be revisiting its 100-year-old property list and the process around that initiative. Ms. Yoder added that NRCA might invite the historians who helped with the effort to come and speak at a future NRCA meeting to build on their research.

In her report on other P&Z items which followed, Ms. Yoder said that a City co-living initiative is still in the works, although it appears that residential areas may be exempted. Staffer Alexa Powell told her that the policy is "up for discussion" until September 5, 2021. There is also a survey online for the public.

Ms. Yoder added that on June 10, NRCA was informed by P&Z that there is a new use permit for a daycare center for 60 children at the First Assemblies of God Church at 700 W. Braddock Road. She noted that the application appears to be deficient on two elements:

- The facility shall provide adequate drop off and pick up facilities so as to create minimal impact on child safety and pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- The facility shall be located on a site so that adequate distance or buffering is provided to protect nearby residential uses from impacts from the use.

Ms. Yoder volunteered to draft and circulate a letter to P&Z about the two deficiencies. This feedback is due by July 1, 2021.

#### Transportation Report – Bruce Snapp

Mr. Snapp noted that NRCA has received notice of a major reconfiguration of Duke Street from Landmark Mall to the Metro. The City has obtained more than \$87 million in Virginia transit funding for this effort. The city announced a series of "pop up" outreach events in the coming months.

Mr. Fehrenbach noted that in a presentation to the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, T&ES Head Yon Lambert noted there was no interest in improving the ramp access from Telegraph Road, which is a major chokepoint for traffic. He also noted that the City appears to be focusing more on through traffic along Duke Street to Old Town. Mr. Fehrenbach said that a civic leader he knows was concerned about residential and neighborhood impacts.

Mr. Snapp added that the W. Glebe Road bridge design and rebuild effort was proceeding with the help of a federal earmark. He said the design phase is commencing. When the build phase begins, capacity may be reduced and traffic patterns disrupted.

#### Schools Report – Amy Burwell

Ms. Burwell said she had heard there was concern throughout ACPS about a mass exodus of teachers and students for the coming year. She said that NRCA would need to find out how this impacted local schools.

George Mason Feasibility Study – It was noted that ACPS held a community meeting held on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Ms. Jennifer Dougherty said that three options were presented. Option 2 has no swing space. She noted that Mayor Wilson and Council Aguirre did not seem likely to support funding for

swing space based on recent comments, and urged residents to reach out to them and other City/ACPS leaders with input. She added that there is some initial concern that only one of the design options for GME has a playing field without turf, noting there may be some environmental impacts/impacts to tree canopy.

Board Member Meghan Rainey asked, “Where you able to ask, on Option #2, are parents dropping off and picking up on Cameron Mills Road?”

Ms. Dougherty said this was a good question. It was noted that the City’s study posted a lot of “unofficial” drop off spaces.

Another attendee asked if NRCA will be part of the Advisory Task Force proposed by ACPS. The general consensus was that this would happen, if requested.

A comment was made that ACPS may be looking to add some add middle school capacity (K-8).

Another comment that it was difficult to see a clear justification for the plan to accommodate 250+ additional students at GME. Ms. Dougherty suggested that a letter be sent to both the School Board and City Council requesting swing space funding in the CIP, with a follow-up letter in January 2022. Mr. Richardson added that inclusion of swing space is required to keep all three options on the table.

There was a comment that preserving green space and trees benefits the community. Another comment stated that green space would be moved around on the site or eliminated under some of the proposals being offered in the feasibility study. Another comment that some families would be inconvenienced by swing space. Another comment was made indicating the need for open/green space for a helicopter landing area and that the space was used for such purposes in the past. Another comment was to the effect that preservation of the façade of the current school is of concern.

Mr. Fehrenbach said that NRCA would continue to engage on this issue and provide updates. Mr. Fehrenbach also asked that anyone who would like to volunteer for the George Mason Task Force should contact him via email.

Mr. Chuck Kent noted that NRCA got a request for scholarship help from Charles Barrett Elementary School. He asked for a plan to be put together for the next year, since NRCA was unable to do anything with school awards given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wheel Day Report – Co-Chair Campbell Vogel was not in attendance to give a post-Wheel Day report, but Mr. Fehrenbach said it was a great success. He commended Ms. Vogel and other organizers for their organization and the great turnout, especially given the challenges of the past year with COVID-19.

Candidates’ Forum – A brief discussion was held about holding a candidate’s forum for the city election. Ms. Yoder said that she would like to hear from the candidates on a shortlist of questions that are specific to North Ridge, and the kinds of concerns that we have as a community.

Mr. Clayton said that he would like to see a fair balance between the parties.

#### National Night Out

NRCA is looking for volunteers to help organize this year’s National Night Out on August 3, 2021. Various ideas were discussed. Mr. Fehrenbach said that if there was enough interest, he would appoint

an Ad Hoc Group to help with this effort. He noted that the pandemic has also impacted these types of events.

#### Future Meetings/Membership

Mr. Fehrenbach said that he would like to plan for resuming in-person monthly board meetings in September. He was going to reach out to the church to request the space again. He said that NRCA would also explore options for allowing residents who need to join virtually to participate that way. He noted that he was still working on a membership engagement plan and would have more at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.