

North Ridge Citizens' Association  
Minutes for September 13, 2021  
Virtual "Zoom" Meeting

NRCA President John Fehrenbach 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 from our June meeting until today, there were 87 reported "cases" in North Ridge. This is less than 30 per month and is "below average" and "very good." A vehicle was stolen from the 2500 block of Valley Drive. The key had been left in the ignition. There was a grand larceny from a residence. A jewelry box was stolen. There was also an \$800 bicycle stolen. The bike was outdoors and the lock was cut.

Seven candidates for District B of the School Board made presentations. [Each candidate had just three minutes to make their initial presentation and blazed through those minutes. The summaries that follow are not comprehensive.]

Ashley Simpson Baird. Ms. Baird is a former teacher who is now an educational researcher. She is a George Mason Elementary School parent and a PTA member. She expects to have students in the Alexandria system until 2037. The core of her platform is "the three R's": robust transparency, restoration of accountability, and recommitment to equity.

Bridgette Shea Westfall. The two questions that guide Ms. Westfall's policies are: What is in the best interest of the student and what is in the best interest of the school division? She has served as a social worker and is running as "an advocate for children." She has worked at the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services and is a "program evaluation expert." She plans to support social workers and health providers in the schools. Her platform motto is "safe and successful schools."

Tammy Ignacio. Ms. Ignacio has worked in the Alexandria school system for thirty years, starting as a teacher at Francis Hammond, becoming an assistant principal at Minnie Howard, and working in administration at Alexandria City High School

the last three years. She believes in “equity first” for all children, transparency, accountability, and that if there are policies in place they should be followed. She wants children to thrive in the school system as her five did. Ms. Ignacio had walked the George Mason School grounds the morning before the meeting and is opposed to co-location of non-school facilities on school grounds.

Deborah Ash. Ms. Ash says she has “a passion for students.” She moved to Alexandria in 2017, retired from the State Department three years ago, and gained custody of her sixteen-year-old granddaughter during Covid. Her mottos are “academic excellence” and “back to basics” and she believes that students should be in class five days a week. She wants parents to be able to make the decision on whether their children wear masks in school: “children are resilient and there should be a choice for masks and vaccines.” Ms. Ash also believes in school vouchers, free choice of schools and tax credits for home schooling. She is against politics driving curricula and believes there should be an emphasis on character, not race. All children deserve an equal chance to thrive at their own pace and should not be held back to allow others to catch up.

PreeAnn Johnson. Ms. Johnson retired last year after working as a teacher and administrator in the Alexandria City schools for 37 years, most recently as the principal at Polk Elementary. She believes in following a rule if the rule makes sense but “I lead from the heart.” She believes that it is important for Board members to listen to all sides and to take direction from the community. Her daughter, who is now at the University of Texas in Austin, was the first student representative on the Alexandria School Board. She joked that she wants “to follow in my daughter’s steps.” Ms. Johnson said that the Alexandria’s teachers did a good job last year and that the City’s students “did a lot better than people think.”

Kelly Carmichael Booz. Ms. Booz also walked the grounds of George Mason before the meeting. She served on the Alexandria School Board from 2013 to 2015 and has worked with a variety of educational organizations for more than twenty years. She is married to a high school teacher who has worked for twenty-three years in the Fairfax County system. She is the parent of a first and

third grader at Douglas MacArthur. Ms. Booz believes that it is important to keep children in school “in person and safely.”

Ricardo Roberts. Mr. Roberts grew up in Washington, D.C., moved to Alexandria twenty years ago, and taught in the D.C. and Prince Georges schools for “many years.” He has a daughter at Hammond and a son who is at Minnie Howard. He is concerned that the School Board sometimes “doesn’t support the kids” and that the Board, the superintendent and the career staff need to work together. He also believes the school systems spends too much money on out-of-town resources when experts are available here in the City. Mr. Roberts believes that students should be required to say whether they are vaccinated. He also said that he is concerned about the number of children who arrive at school in cars with D.C. and Maryland tags: “why are we funding them?”

Moira Buzby asked the candidates what they felt was done well or poorly by the schools last year.

Ms. Booz replied that she felt that the schools did well on the IT front, with all students having the devices they needed and that the teacher and support staff did well. She would liked to have seen younger children return to in-person learning earlier. Ms. Johnson said that she thought the “partner groups” worked well. Ms. Ash said she liked the way virtual learning was applied to the upper grades. She noted, though that a lot of private schools were able to open up to in-person learning while ACPS students remained at home. Ms. Ignacio agreed that there could have been more creative ways of getting students back in the classroom. She also said that school-parent communications could have been better. Ms. Westfall said that the internet access and the nutritional access were excellent. She also said that students with disabilities and younger children could have been brought back sooner. Ms. Simpson agreed with both of those points and said that decisions were too centralized and principals could have been given more decision-making authority.

Sunny Yoder, from the Association’s Zoning Committee noted that she had submitted a report on the City’s Planning & Zoning Commission meeting that had taken place in the last week. She noted that several large buildings up to ten

stories high, could be built on Mt. Vernon Avenue near Glebe Road. She also noted that there were last minute changes made to the new rules on Auxilliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) that were not made available for public comment. She further reported that the City is in negotiations to purchase the building at 1703 Beauregard and plans to use it initially for swing space for students of schools that are being rebuilt or rehabbed. Finally, Ms. Yoder reported that co-living is still not on the table in single-family zones, but this is an issue that needs to be watched.

Treasurer Tack Richardson reported that NRCA has approximately \$20,000 in its Burke & Herbert account, which is now the Association's main account. This total includes the \$5,000 North Ridge received from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to monitor the water quality in Taylor Run, the revenue received from twenty new members, and the payment from the City for maintenance of Beverley Park, a/k/a "The Pit." Mr. Richardson said that a full financial statement has been submitted to the record.

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Transportation Committee Chair Bruce Snapp reported that the Glebe Road Bridge rebuild is on track. Construction is planned to start around April 2022. The proposed Duke Street project is "in motion." There will be an approximately 18-month design period. The Dash system is getting a new schedule and new route numbers. Service to the Pentagon should remain unaffected. Currently Dash is not charging fares.

John Fehrenbach said that he plans to revive the membership drive that was knocked off track by Covid. He will be sending out “target streets” and asking for volunteers to drop of copies North Ridge Lore and let residents know what the Association does.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Russell Bailey  
Guest Scribe

Attendance:

John Fehrenbach	Cindy Anderson
Chuck Kent	Yvonne Folkerts
Tack Richardson	Melynda Wilcox
Russ Bailey	Kelly Carmichael Booz
Moira Buzby	Robert Ricardo
Bill Clayton	Thomas Ground
Bruce Snapp	Ashley Simpson Baird
Jeanne Snapp	Tammy Ignacio
Sunny Yoder	Pree Ann Johnson
Meghan Rainey	Bridgett Shea
Moira Buzby	Dan Vogel
Bob Miller	Jessie McLeod
Lee Guerry	Anne Marie Hay
Jackie Colburn	Daniel Sims
Diana Day	Barbara Glomb
Kate Crawley	Nathan Carter
Rachel Newhouse	Mimi Sanders Baird
John Winstead	Brad Kinder
Chris Gay	Bill Corin
Glenn Thomas	Robert Coontz
Ashley Berrang	James Roberts
Helga Kelter	Marc Williams
Kathleen Brian	Emily Turner

Eugenia Ballering  
Mary Kent  
Peter Kuhmerker

Jenny Ware  
Susie Helm