

North Ridge Citizens' Association  
Minutes for October 11, 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 September to this date, there had been 22 "cases" reported to the Police Department. This number is below average and "excellent."

There was a burglary reported at 701 Tennessee Ave.; a hard drive was stolen while a tenant was moving out of the property. There was no sign of forced entry. There was also a felonious assault on October 10 in the Llyod's Apartments in the 3800 block of Cameron Drive. An arrest had been made this morning of a non-City resident, and it appears the incident involved a domestic dispute.

Sgt. Ground reported that one high school student had shot another at the Bradlee shopping center on September 21 and the incident is being reviewed by the major crimes unit. According to Sgt. Ground, this was one of several violent incidents where the Department has been called in since the City Council voted to remove Student Resource Officers (SROs) from Alexandria High. "In 18 years of service, I don't think I've seen an escalation of violence like this." There "seems to be random violence constantly."

Sgt. Ground noted that Alexandria High School likes to "handle things internally," so some incidents are not reported. He has not heard anything about SROs being reinstated at the school, but he personally believes it is preferable to have officers "on the inside."

Sabrina Reilly said that she had heard reports of misbehavior at the high school and understands that the school administration wants to keep as much as possible under wraps for perception reasons. Sgt. Ground replied that he believed that officer in the school can make a positive difference.

Mr. Fehrenbach told Sgt. Ground that if he is asked whether he has heard from our community to please report what he has heard here. Sgt. Ground replied that he believed that North Ridge and other citizens' associations should go to the Council and express their concerns. It is the Council members, elected by and responsible to the citizens, who have the final say on these matters.

Ms. Reilly asked if there was a way that the police could partner with the schools to help suggest ways to students to respond to incidents; "empower students to do something." Sgt. Ground concluded by saying that he believed the SRO program was the best way to do something like that, as that would put police officers in a position to provide instructions and advice.

Mr. Fehrenbach asked that comments on the draft minutes be submitted by the end of the week. He noted that treasurer Tack Richardson was not present at the meeting but that Mr. Richardson had informed him that the Association has about \$20,000 in the bank and has an invoice from the firm that maintains our website that is "consistent with the contract and our expectations."

Sunny Yoder of the Association's land use committee had submitted her detailed report in writing prior to the meeting. Ms. Yoder did note that the City's Planning Commission had approved "practical updates" to the text of its zoning rules for alternative dwelling units (ADUs) during its September 9 meeting. NRCA objected both in writing and via Mr. Fehrenbach's comments at that meeting. In her view, the amendments were not minor but substantive. Mr. Fehrenbach added that he believed the City badly misrepresented what was in the updates.

Ms. Yoder noted that the City has postponed issuing its proposal on co-housing. The proposal was not on the docket for either this month or for November, and she is not sure when we will see it. She said she had been told that co-housing would not likely be allowed in single-home or two-home zones.

Ms. Yoder also reported that the City is starting a discussion on possible revisions to its noise ordinance. There are ten general ideas are being proposed for possible revision, some that would permit increases in noise and others that would tighten the noise rules. There is no ordinance language proposed yet and

the City's presentation is on the City's website. Council will take up the issue at its Nov. 9 meeting. Ms. Yoder recommended that the Association start crafting a letter based on the options being aired and urge the City to generally hold to noise limits but have more stringent limits where possible. She volunteered to draft the letter.

Lyn Gubser said he was disturbed to hear that, as an "Eco-City," Alexandria is not regulating two stroke motors such as in leaf blowers. Ms. Yoder said that under Commonwealth law, individual localities cannot get rid of two-stroke motors on their own. She said she believes that there is a bill that has been introduced in the Virginia legislature that will allow local regulation of such motors.

Bill Corin said that it appears that the School Board is planning to purchase a commercial space in the West End that can be used as a "swing space" school.

Lyn Gubser said that the City "still remains mute" on whether they would like to place residential housing on school property and will not say whether they are lobbying for a state law change that will allow them to do that.

Mr. Corin noted that the City needs to know whether it is going to get the building on Beauregard before it can decide on the design for a new George Mason Elementary.

Crystall Merlino said that she is a member of the George Mason PTA and they have heard that the School Board is voting on the building purchase in November and understands that there is "no plan B" if the building is not purchased.

Mr. Fehrenbach said that the Planning Commission held a hearing on the City's mobility plan. The plan seems designed to reduce automobile use, and Commission Chair Nathan Macek said the City is done building roads. There appears to be no intent by the City to cut back on road diets.

Mr. Fehrenbach described the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations. It is an umbrella group for civic and citizen associations and includes condo associations.

Its main purpose is to consider City-wide issues. He will ask Kay Stimson to report on the AFCA in more detail at the next meeting.

Ms. Yoder suggested that perhaps the AFCA would be a good vehicle for advocating on procedural issues of general interest, such as the speed with which issues come before the Council or City commissions and are acted upon before there is an adequate time for citizen review.

Mr. Gubser noted that North Ridge has only been meaningfully involved with AFCA for about five years. He said that AFCA has avoided addressing controversial issue in the last year. Mr. Fehrenbach noted that AFCA's by-laws constrain its ability to act quickly.

Mr. Fehrenbach noted that he had sent a list around showing the individuals who had volunteered to work on the Association's membership drive. He said he appreciated those Board members stepping forward and encourage more to do so.

Russ Bailey gave a report on the status of the Taylor Run monitoring program that has been conducted under a \$5,000 grant to the Association from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The monitoring has run for eight months and the grant monies have now been exhausted. The levels of phosphorus, nitrogen, suspended sediment and dissolved oxygen in the stream have been monitored, as well as water temperature, depth, turbidity, acidity and conductivity. The phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment samples have all been analyzed by a DEQ-approved lab near Richmond. The team has also conducted two macroinvertebrate surveys to inventory the biological health of the stream. The team's interim results show better water quality and a healthier stream than what the City has portrayed.

The team will be discussing with DEQ whether the project can be concluded now that the funds are exhausted and will report back to the Board next month.

The City staff has taken soil samples of Taylor Run and two other streams it proposes to reconstruct and are expected to report the results of those samples at the Environmental Policy Commission hearing scheduled for October 18.

The team includes North Ridge residents John Fehrenbach, Chuck Kent, Amy Krafft, John Winstead, Don Bobby, and Russ Bailey. Several Arlington residents have also played significant roles on the team. The team just passed 400 volunteer hours and will be preparing a formal report on its work shortly.

Jeanne Snapp reported on the North Ridge tree-planting project that was run by Jane Seward and Lyn Gas, neither of whom were able to attend the meeting. Fifty-six trees have been purchased for planting in the neighborhood. Eight oaks will be planted at the Pit, including the two white oaks that Board members gave to Chuck Kent to commemorate his service as Board president. Three willow oaks will be planted at Charles Barrett, and four trees will be planted at Agudas Achim.

Mr. Fehrenbach noted that it is time to think about the holiday tree sale and said that he would get in touch with Jay Freidman, last year's event manager.

Ms. Snapp wondered if there might be interest in running a holiday decoration contest like the one North Ridge ran two years ago. Mr. Fehrenbach said he would check with Ms. Stimson.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Russell Bailey  
Guest Scribe

Attendance:

John Fehrenbach	Ruth Kane
Chuck Kent	Alfredo Zarate
Russ Bailey	Helga Kelter
Sgt. Thomas Ground	Paula Smith

Meghan Rainey  
Moiria Buzby  
Bill Clayton  
Bruce Snapp  
Jeanne Snapp  
Sunny Yoder  
Glenn Thomas  
Diana Day  
Chris Guy  
Julie Porter  
Brad Kinder  
Rachel Newhouse  
Jackie Colburn  
Diana Day  
Rachel Newhouse

Peter Kuhmerker  
James Mueller  
Bruce Johnson  
Michael Kelly  
John Frazer  
Sabrina Reilly  
Tracey Moorhead  
Amy Reed  
Laura Perritt  
Mimi Saunders  
Robin Ahrold  
Bill Corin  
Mo Seifeldein