

MEETING MINUTES: North Ridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) Monthly Meeting November 8, 2021 – Zoom Virtual Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President John Fehrenbach. This meeting had approx. 48 individual virtual attendees.

Board Members in Attendance

- John Fehrenbach, President
- Jennifer Dougherty, 2nd Vice President
- Chuck Kent, Past President
- Tack Richardson, Treasurer
- Kay Stimson, Scribe
- Russ Bailey, Parliamentarian
- Jaqueline Coleburn
- Jeanne Snapp
- Bruce Snapp
- Lyn Gubser
- Sunny Yoder
- Bob Miller
- Ashley Berrang
- Lee Guerry
- Rachel Colangelo
- Chris Gay
- Moira Buzby
- John Winstead
- Jay Friedman
- Mimi Saunders
- Meghan Rainey
- Sean Gallagher
- Joe Costigan
- Diana Day
- Kylie Payne

ACP Neighborhood Crime Report & Presentation on Sheriff's Office Outreach

ACP Sgt. Tommy Ground reminded residents to lock their cars and take their keys, as vehicle theft continues to be an issue in North Ridge. In follow up to last month's questions about school resource officers ("SROs"), he said that City Council had voted to temporarily restore SROs through the end of the current school year.

Sheriff-elect Sean Casey gave a thorough overview of community outreach activities on behalf of the Alexandria Sherriff's Department, to include the hiring of six new deputies. The Sheriff's office is now soliciting donations from the community to assist families of incarcerated individuals this holiday season. Sheriff-elect Casey supplied NRCA with information on how residents can donate to the effort.

Presentation re 401 High Street SUP Application – Mike Dameron, Windmill Hill

Overview and discussion with the community about plans for renovation of a substandard lot, including preservation of canopy trees. If approved by the Planning Commission, the application will go before the City Council on Dec. 18th. SEE Planning & Zoning report for further discussion.

Approval of October 11th Meeting Minutes – Russ Bailey

Meeting minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report – Tack Richardson

NRCA Wells Fargo account closed at end of year and funds transferred over to Burke & Herbert. Proposed budget coming for 2022.

Planning & Zoning Update, Including Noise Ordinance – Sunny Yoder

A summary of land use issues impacting North Ridge was provided.

401 High Street SUP

Regarding the SUP application for 401 High Street, Mr. Fehrenbach and Ms. Yoder said they intend to hold a follow up conversation with P&Z staff member Ashley Labadie, and her supervisor, Ann Horowitz. It was stated that aspects of the proposed house at 401 High Street mirror the issues at 3202 Old Dominion Boulevard, particularly in how the basements are not being counted in the floor area ratio, and how the average existing grade is measured.

Co-Living Initiative

Proposed [zoning text language for co-living](#) was published November 4. It will come before the Planning Commission on December 7, followed by City Council on December 18. Affordability is the stated objective of the proposed policy. Under the proposal, two-unit co-living residences may be administratively approved with no public hearing. Larger residences with up to six living spaces would require a SUP. A maximum of eight people will be permitted to occupy a co-living unit, with one required parking space per four living spaces. Co-living residences would not be permitted in single family or two-family zones under the proposed policy. Individual living spaces would consist of bedrooms and possibly bathrooms, but no cooking facilities; these would be central and shared. Each space would be leased individually. The lease agreements must be for at least 30 days. A small wall sign on the front of the building would provide the name, phone number, and email address of the building manager. North Ridge residents who want to send comments to the Planning Commission should contact: PlanComm@alexandriava.gov.

Noise Ordinance Revision

City Council will discuss potential changes to the Noise Ordinance on November 9 (Docket Item 30). NRCA members are encouraged to review the [staff presentation](#) and communicate their concerns and suggestions to Council right away, as this will be presented for vote in December.

Based on reporting at a public meeting held on October 28, T&ES released survey results and suggestions from the public. There were 359 survey responses. The top two noise concerns were: 1) Construction, and; 2) Power lawn equipment.

Generally, the survey responses were consistent with NRCA views according to Ms. Yoder, with one IMPORTANT EXCEPTION: 66 percent of survey respondents approved of Option 1, which would remove the requirement to consider the predominant use of surrounding properties in setting noise limits. Along with that, 50 percent approved of Option 5, which would increase commercial limits from 60 to 65 decibels. Ms. Yoder stated that she found Option 1 very difficult to understand, and spent considerable time with staff trying to clarify it. She feared that people who replied to the survey didn't understand its wording, either.

She said the NRCA letter to Council supports the City's options that would reduce noise and opposes the options that would increase noise— Options 1 and 5, emphatically. NRCA also recommended two noise control 2 measures that were not on the list of options: a possible ban on the commercial use of noisy, polluting, gas-powered lawn and garden equipment, and; conversion to a fleet of quieter, less polluting electric trash/recycling trucks.

More information on the noise ordinance: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Noise>

Arlandria-Chirilagua Update

Two major developments are on the way on Mt Vernon Avenue, one private and the other by AHDC.

The strip from Bruce Street to Royal Nepal restaurant which includes MOM will be redeveloped. Mid Atlantic Realty Partners is providing a redevelopment plan that would replace existing development with a mix of residential and commercial that would incorporate a larger MOM. They are requesting 588 residential units and a height of seven floors, or eighty feet. That height would only be allowed as a trade-off for [an unknown number of] affordable units.

The parcel at West Glebe and Mt. Vernon Avenue that includes the old Safeway store and a large, asphalt parking lot – plus the parking lot across from the Birchmere entrance – is also being proposed for redevelopment. Alexandria Housing Development Corporation has purchased these properties and is looking to build two large, residential buildings. One is a ten-story building and the other is a seven-story building, with ground floor commercial. The proposed goal is currently 450 affordable residential units, with 80% affordable at 80% AMI and 20% at 40% AMI. There is potential that some City offices and a health clinic also would be housed there.

Notably, these projects would greatly change the streetscape and dramatically increase density—and the effects of increased density — along Mt. Vernon Avenue and surrounding areas like North Ridge. The amount of green space would be insubstantial. School capacity, flooding and traffic are also issues.

The Small Area Plan will be revised to accommodate density levels under discussion, including building heights. The current zoning plan has maximum heights of fifty feet along Mt. Vernon Avenue, with up to 65 feet by-right. The Small Area Plan docketed for December, allows for nearly twice as much height/density. The Birchmere property has been labeled as 'underdeveloped' and is likely to be on the table for redevelopment in the future.

Schools Update – John Fehrenbach

Fehrenbach thanked all of the School Board candidates for District C for taking time to meet with NRCA members and do a tour of George Mason Elementary to discuss the school renovation effort. The newly-elected School Board representatives for the District are as follows:

- *Ashley Simpson Baird*
- *Kelly Carmichael Booz*
- *Tammy S. Ignacio*

All voiced opposition to collocation of housing at George Mason Elementary during the NRCA tours of the site, and understood our position in favor of preserving George Mason Park.

Transportation Update – Kay Stimson

A local news article on the recent passage of the federal infrastructure bill and what it means for Alexandria stated, “An estimated \$226 billion in new funding will go to transportation projects... such as light rail line extensions, redesigned intersections and protected bike lanes.”

W Glebe Road Bridge Reconstruction Project

According to Arlington County, the project contractor has reached the 60% design milestone. Construction is coming in the spring, at earliest. Projected to take about a year. Bridge to stay open to traffic, though exact configuration(s) for construction not yet available.

FY22 Paving Schedule (as of Nov. 5, 2021) – 11 roads on the list

- Wellington Road from Beverley Drive to Chalfonte Drive
- Farm Road from Beverley Drive to Circle Terrace
- Monticello Blvd from Cameron Mills to Russell Road
- Cameron Mills Road from Virginia Avenue to Allison Street
- Kentucky Avenue from Old Dominion Boulevard to Russell Road
- Alabama Avenue from Kentucky Avenue to Carolina Place
- Beverley Drive from Russell Rd to Washington Circle
- Allison Street from Valley Drive to Old Dominion Boulevard
- George Mason Place from Monticello Boulevard to End
- Westminster Place from Monticello Boulevard to End
- West Braddock Road from King Street to Russell Road

Full list is available online [HERE](#).

Parking Complaints Along Streets Surrounding Lloyds Apts (Tennessee Ave & Cam Mills Rd)

City suggested residents review guidance on residential parking districts. Neighbors have been working to speak with the owner of the apartments.

AFCA Update – Kay Stimson

Hiring of new City Manager – Request to have an AFCA rep part of the hiring process. Resident group going to be assembled by City Council. Each councilor will get to nominate two citizens. Announcement should be coming soon.

Test pilots for Duke Street area (not to do with the transitway effort). First pilot begins in January – March 2022. Goal is to make afternoon rush traffic flow better on Duke from Quaker to the Telegraph ramp. Phase 1 of the pilot will be that from 4-7 PM, the signals for side streets (e.g. Giant Shopping Center, Whitter) will be on a longer red cycle, while the light at Quaker Lane will get a longer green signal. This phase ends March 31st. Phase 2 begins March-June 2022. This phase will block left turns from W Taylor Run onto the Telegraph ramp. Drivers will be able to turn left onto Duke Street, but not access the ramp. Long-term, the city is working on grants to address the gridlock from Duke to Telegraph. Goal is to make that ramp to Telegraph move traffic out of our city and keep drivers from cutting through neighborhood side streets.

Membership Update – John Fehrenbach

NRCA has delivered more than 200 packets to Board members who have volunteered to distribute them to neighbors in an effort to increase awareness of NRCA, North Ridge issues, and membership.

Taylor Run Update – Russ Bailey

No publication of key data on Taylor Run to date. The City is proposing to discuss options for each of the three stream water runoff sites, including Taylor Run. They are holding off on Taylor Run and Strawberry Run, and moving forward with Lucky Run. A new citizen engagement group will include NRCA Board Member Russ Bailey, Seminary Hill President Carter Flemming, and Bill Gillespie, among others.

Canopy Tree Plantings Recap – Jeanne Snapp

Sixty-four canopy trees were planted in the neighborhood, including 31 trees planted free, or at reduced charge thanks to generous neighbors. Three new trees were planted in front of Charles Barrett Elementary School, thanks to NRCA volunteer Campbell Vogel.

Christmas Tree Sales – Jay Friedman

Jay Friedman (from chat): Sale will be at Trinity United Church on Dec. 3-5, 2021. Details will be forthcoming. NRCA Board members will get a sign-up sheet to volunteer.

Santa at the Pit – Rachel Colangelo

No confirmed plans yet for tree lighting and caroling event, but will send out an email to solicit thoughts on whether it should remain drive-by/walk-by, or return to in person. Save the date: Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021.

New Business

No new business was introduced.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by KS
November 10, 2021