

North Ridge Citizens Association
Minutes for April 8, 2019 Meeting
Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church
3512 Old Dominion Boulevard

Call to Order: 7:30 by Kay Stimson, President. The signup sheet for those in attendance is attached.

Police Report: Sgt. Ground reported on the months of February and March. In February there were 26 reported cases in North Ridge. Sgt. Ground characterized this as “great for a neighborhood this size.” He reported that a vehicle that had been stolen from the 500 block of North Overlook had been recovered in Fairfax. A vehicle had also been stolen from Scroggins Lane and another on that street had been vandalized. There were also a few instances of change being stolen from vehicles; in all cases the cars were unlocked.

In March there were 14 cases reported, which Sgt. Ground characterized as “unheard of, very good.”

Wheel Day: Campbell Vogel and Elizabeth Goslin are this year’s Wheel Day coordinators. They reported that Wheel Day will be held on Sunday, May 26. Volunteer signup will be done electronically and they encouraged everyone to sign up.

Seminary Road: Kay Stimson noted that the City has developed three proposals for slowing traffic on Seminary Road and adding bicycle lanes and improving pedestrian movements along and across the street. These proposals have been placed on the City’s website and the City is seeking comments.

Ms. Stimson noted that she had received expressions of concern from many North Ridge residents about the City’s proposals. She noted that there were also approximately 25 e-mails about the proposals on the neighborhood list serve. Most of the commentators were concerned about the possible backups and lengthened driving times being caused by the proposals.

Ms. Stimson opened the topic for discussion. Two neighbors – one who lives adjacent to Seminary Road and one who lives on King Street where the City recently narrowed the car lanes and put in bike lanes – spoke in favor of modifications like those the City is proposing. A large number of neighbors expressed concerns about the proposals. These concerns were primarily that implementation of the proposals would result in longer driving times and in increased cut-through traffic on side streets. One speaker noted that while the City’s proposals are based on its Vision Zero policy (i.e., the elimination of traffic-related deaths), Alexandria already has some of the safest streets in the state and Seminary Road itself has a strong safety record. This speaker noted that all the City’s traffic deaths involved excessive

alcohol use and/or occurred late at night, and none of them would have been prevented by the type of lane modifications that are being proposed. This speaker also noted that the City's Traffic and Parking Board (PEB) has two members who are members of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, which is not an official City advisory committee but a private lobbying group. He further noted that the PEB can make the decision about which proposal to adopt. The City Council can decide to make the decision itself, but absent doing so, the PEB has final say. The next PEB meeting is scheduled for May 20 he noted.

Andrew Anderson made a motion that was duly seconded. He proposed that NRCA send a letter to Council expressing the concerns of North Ridge residents and asking the Council to have a representative of the Transportation and Environmental Services (which fashioned the proposals) attend our next meeting to discuss the proposals. The letter would also ask that any PEB members who are members of any advocacy group lobbying the City on traffic matters be recused from the decision-making process for the proposals. He also proposed that NRCA create a committee to meet with Council Members to discuss the proposals.

Mr. Anderson's proposal was passed without dissent by voice vote. Ms. Stimson stated she would send the letter to Council and passed around a signup sheet for volunteers for the committee. (Mr. Anderson, Jay Farrar and Jennifer Dougherty signed up.)

Alexandria Renew: Bruce Johnson gave a brief overview of the sewage runoff problem that Alexandria Renew Enterprises is to address by 2025. Mr. Johnson then introduced Caitlin Feehan of Alexandria Renew who explained the steps of the sewage infrastructure redesign and the proposed rate increases that will be necessary to fund the redesign. The powerpoint presented by Ms. Feeahn is attached to these minutes.

Possible Bus System Changes: Chuck Kent reported that the City is considering changes to its bus network. Mr. Kent noted that all the options being considered could scale back service to North Ridge. He said he would look more into the City's plans and report back to Ms. Stimson.

Beverly Park Traffic Issues: Mr. Kent noted that there are differing views among North Ridge neighbors about how traffic and pedestrian safety might be enhanced at Beverly Park. In response to a several year effort by a group of neighbors to have a crosswalk placed across North Overlook at the corner of North Overlook and South Overlook, the City has come up with a set of design changes. In addition to the crosswalk the City is proposing a no drive zone along the corner and the placement of a painted stop bar on South Overlook to accompany the existing stop sign. In response to concerns by some neighbors the City has agreed to not include vertical elements such as raised curbs and plastic bollards along the perimeter of what would be a "paint only" no-drive zone. The City has also offered to make the park area part of a pilot program for a low speed limit "safety zone," a concept currently

being developed by the City. Mr. Kent submitted a report on the status of the proposed crosswalk and other changes. The report is attached to these minutes.

Tack Richardson noted that he had a petition signed by 22 neighbors who were opposed to the crosswalk and who were seeking a pause in the City's project until a comprehensive study of what, if any changes to the streets around the park are required. He submitted the petition, Alexandria's Complete Street Design Guidelines, and two news articles suggesting that crosswalks can pose safety concerns in some circumstances. The petition and news article are attached. The guidelines may be found on the City's website.

Angie Mistretta, a member of the group that has worked with the City on the Park traffic issues noted that the group-City discussions have extended over nearly five years. She stated the group's view that traffic around the park is "too busy, too fast," that "crosswalks slow people down," and the group does not want more delay.

Mr. Kent noted that NRCA is on record supporting the cross walk and recommended that the Association go forward on the basis of that recommendation.

Jonathan Mills stated that he lives directly across the street from the park, does not believe the crosswalk will get much use, and believes a study should be done before the City proceeds further.

Ms. Stimson stated that the Association should continue talking about this issue.

Mr. Kent noted again that the Association has previously taken a position on the crosswalk and that the City planned to start work on the project soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Russ Bailey, Scribe.