

MEETING MINUTES: North Ridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) Monthly Meeting January 10, 2022 – Zoom Virtual Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President John Fehrenbach.

Board Members in Attendance

- John Fehrenbach, President
- Tack Richardson, Treasurer
- Kay Stimson, Scribe
- Russ Bailey, Parliamentarian
- Chuck Kent, Past President
- Moira Buzby
- Jaqueline Coleburn
- Jeanne Snapp
- Bruce Snapp
- Lyn Gubser
- Sunny Yoder
- Lee Guerry
- Chris Gay
- Brad Kinder
- Diana Day
- Meghan Rainey
- Rachel Colangelo
- Rachel Newhouse
- Joe Costigan
- Jane Seward
- John Winstead
- Ashley Berrang
- Mimi Saunders
- Julia Porter

ACP Neighborhood Crime Report

ACP Sgt. Tommy Ground gave a rundown on neighborhood crime, including a recent daylight theft on Beverley Drive, and a shooting incident on W. Glebe Road. Otherwise, he said that crime reports for the neighborhood were extremely low for this time period. As usual, residents were advised to lock parked cars.

Presentation – Girl Scout Gold Award Presentation for Free Pantry by Kelly Koury

Neighbor Kelly Koury, a senior at Alexandria City High School, presented her Gold Award project initiative for free pantry food to community members. This project is a spin on the “little free library” concept. NRCA Board members mentioned posting info on the NRCA website at www.northridgecitizens.org.

Presentation – Taylor Run Update by Russ Bailey and Bill Gillespie

Thanks to NRCA for obtaining a \$5,000 grant from Virginia DEQ for monitoring water quality at Taylor Run. Ran from March 2021 to December 2021. North Ridge formed a team of water quality monitoring volunteers who performed the testing over 9 months. Mr. Bailey explained what was at stake in the City’s proposed Taylor Run stream restoration effort and why North Ridge was questioning it. Based on the data collected, the monitoring volunteers believe the stream is not the problem. They have concluded

that, “Huge, episodic volumes of water from the stormwater system are the problem.” Claims by the City related to phosphorous per ton of sediment in the stream banks were also determined to be inaccurate. Four soil samples taken along Taylor Run by an independent expert indicated the phosphorus in the soils were about one-fifth of the City’s estimate. “Water samples were taken to a certified lab for total nitrogen, total phosphorous and total suspended sediment measurements.”

The City’s latest samples have confirmed “that phosphorous is one-third to one-tenth what the City had estimated,” according to Mr. Bailey, raising costs for each pound of nutrient reduction. The City has hired a University of Virginia mediation group to help facilitate discussions between City staff and interested citizens about alternatives to stream reconstructions. He noted that tree planting is also a way to reduce nitrogen to meet City’s goals.

Board Member Chuck Kent announced that he would give Bill’s part of the presentation due to technical issues. He spoke to the process used by the volunteer monitoring team. Mr. Kent also explained the normal low-water flow and the heavy rains that result in “high-water events” from the stormwater sewer system that feed into Taylor Run. Mr. Kent said that the volunteer team spent more than 500 hours on this work. The main conclusion is that what is coming into the stream “varies a lot depending on flow,” but, in general, phosphorus and nitrogen levels appear to be low and almost all the phosphorus is delivered to the stream from its upstream watershed, rather than from its banks.

Both Mr. Bailey and Mr. Kent pointed out that the findings are “changing the conversation” on how localities in the DC Metro area should be thinking about stream restoration efforts.

Q: What could it look like to have improvements at Taylor Run (in terms of maintenance/upkeep)?

A: The need for infrastructure improvements and what they might look like will be discussed in the UVA mediation process.

Q: To what degree can you go to the State for their support?

A: NRCA has been in contact with DEQ for 18 months. NRCA will need to see what DEQ does. DEQ has given the City an extension on when the City will need to start the proposed stream restoration project to give the City time to look at the evidence. The founder of the City’s outside consultant group has just been named to be head of DEQ by the new governor. Evidence shows the stream is “taking out nutrients,” rather than the opposite.

Q: What can be done about adding “rip-rap” in this area, with mediation, and what else can NRCA do?

A: There are plenty of ways to address “rip-rap” without tearing up the stream. UVA looking over recommended list of participants. Nothing more for NRCA to do at this time.

Mr. Fehrenbach said that he hopes that the decision goes NRCA’s way and that science guides the process.

Mr. Kent suggested that NRCA should reimburse Mr. Bailey for “personal costs.” Mr. Bailey declined.

Approval of December 13th Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes, then seconded. Meeting minutes approved by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer’s Report – Tack Richardson

Written report circulated (see addendum). Wells Fargo checking account was closed at the end of 2021, with all funds transferred to Burke & Herbert Bank. Account now has about \$18,000 for this period in good standing.

Q: Results from tree sale?

A: Still waiting for results from Tree Sale 2021. Thanks to Jay Friedman and all NRCA volunteers. Did better this year than the year before. Report is forthcoming.

Planning & Zoning Update, Including Noise Ordinance – Sunny Yoder

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

SUP Application for 3361 Circle Hill Road

Coming up at the February 1 Planning Commission will be a SUP application to tear down and replace the house—long in disrepair—at 3316 Circle Hill. Several board members are studying the application and talking to City staff. Anyone with concerns about the redevelopment of this property should communicate them to me or John Fehrenbach.

The full application is attached to the item, which does not yet have a number, in the February 1 docket.

SUP Application for 401 High Street

The redevelopment proposal for 401 High Street was approved by Council.

Arlandria Small Area Plan

The Small Area Plan that will allow massive redevelopment was approved by the Planning Commission and Council despite strong opposition from NRCA, the Tenants and Workers Council, and neighborhood small businesses. Immediately afterward, two very large new buildings at the old Safeway site at Mt Vernon and Glebe—a joint project of AHDC and the City—were approved. Because the City is a partner in the project (and may house some staff there), the staff appeared to be in the position of promoting it. Ms. Yoder asked, “Who is being neutral and critical? I guess we are.”

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The Small Area Plan suggests that the City is considering housing or other uses for the Cora Kelly school site, which NRCA will watch carefully and oppose at every available opportunity.

The ordinance language is on Council docket for January 11.

Noise Ordinance

The new noise ordinance passed on December 18 and went into effect immediately. It was the same as first proposed. The citizen survey and extensive public feedback about which staff patted themselves on the back had no impact on the outcome.

The ordinance:

- Prohibits noise that is plainly audible from one residence to another (with windows closed) between 11pm and 7am.
- Prohibits outdoor truck loading or unloading within 500 feet of a residence between 11 PM and 7 AM.
- Prohibits noise from opening or breaking down boxes, crates, etc. that is audible within 50 feet.

- Prohibits noise from construction machinery between 6 PM and 7 AM weekdays, 6 PM and 9 AM Saturdays, and all hours Sundays.
- Prohibits noise from power lawn and garden equipment between 9 PM and 7AM weekdays, 9 PM and 9 AM Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays NRCA argued for 7 PM instead of 9 PM for some peace and quiet of an evening, but did not prevail. The City is requesting authority from the state to regulate gas powered equipment.
- Sets noise limits according to a property’s use—residential, commercial, etc.—irrespective of its surroundings. NRCA asked to retain ‘predominant use’ but did not prevail.
- Increases commercial limits from 60 to 65 dB during the day. Residential limits remain 55 dB.
- Prohibits ‘sound generation,’ i.e., amplified sound, in public areas throughout the City except with a special permit or City festivals.
- Sets penalties at \$100 for a first offense, \$250 for a second offense, and \$500 for a third offense. Very few tickets are issued, however.
- Makes T&ES director responsible for administering the ordinance, with annual report to Council.

The noise ordinance is Chapter 5, “Noise Control”, of Title 11 in the zoning code.

CO-LIVING ORDINANCE

The zoning text amendment was approved by the Planning Commission and passed. Co-living is not allowed in single family zones. However, the staff report makes clear that this issue is not closed.

Q: Talking to City staff is one way to connect, but what we need to do is connect with staff. Arlandria stuff is example. They were pushing this stuff and it was a done deal.

A: Some really wonderful professionals on staff. But turnover has been great, and staff is young and inexperienced. People in experienced positions don’t want to speak to where the pressure is coming from. NRCA should make a concerted effort to get to know the new city manager.

Comment: Importance of meeting and connecting with new City Manager, who begins on January 28th.

Comment: NRCA supported an effort by the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations (“AFCA”) to participate in selection of new city manager and this request was rejected by City Council.

Schools Update

No word on swing space status.

Transportation Update – Bruce Snapp & Kay Stimson

W. Glebe Road Bridge Reconstruction Project

Nothing new to report. W. Glebe Road Bridge project is still a problem, and residents should report issues to the City using Alexandria 311.

Membership Update – John Fehrenbach

Membership efforts proceeding, thanks to all who are helping.

Annual Meeting – John Fehrenbach

Annual meeting to be scheduled for March 14, 2022. Any strong input on whether to hold in-person or virtual meeting? General consensus was to keep an eye on COVID rate and revisit in February.

New Business

No new business was introduced. Meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted by KS
January 17, 2021

ADDENDUM: Treasurer's Report

January 10, 2022

By Tack Richardson

North Ridge Citizens' Association (NRCA) Financial Report *January 10, 2022*

NRCA Board:

The North Ridge Citizens' Association Financial Report for January 2022 is as follows:

Balance:

- Wells Fargo = \$0 (as of 12/30/2021)
- Burke and Herbert = \$17,352.32 (as of 01/07/22)
- PayPal = \$716.24 (as of 01/07/22)

Transactions:

- Revenues
 - o \$320.00 – Membership Checks
 - o \$180.00 – Extra Donations from Membership Checks
 - o \$340.04 – PayPal (Electronic Membership Dues and Donations, Minus Fees)

- Expenses
 - o \$176.00 – USPS Mailbox Rental (2022)
 - o \$19.20 – B&H Checkbook Purchase (4 books, minimum required order)

Other:

- Wells Fargo Checking Account was closed in late December. All funds transferred to B&H Checking Account.

Submitted for the record, 7 January 2022,
V.B. "Tack" Richardson III
NRCA Treasurer – 2021

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