

ARLINGTON FOREST CITIZEN ASSOCIATION MEETING 11-19-2019

Esther Bowring, President: Welcome.

Announcements:

Arlington Forest's 80th Anniversary parties were fantastic. Thanks to Diane Caputo, who organized the events. Great job. 275 people showed up for brunch and family activities at Barcroft Elementary and at a happy hour at Outback Steak House. Thanks also to our other volunteers:

Patti and Michael Gibson

Karen and Chris Scheer

Larry Bowring

Dick and Donna Simpson

There are still some 80th anniversary t-shirts available for \$7 each. Contact Donna Simpson at 703-627-5695.

The Executive Board had the opportunity to tour the Lubber Run Rec Center. It's looking great, and there is an article in The Forester about the tour. We're beginning to see what it's going to look like. It's interesting and looks big. The whole middle section is a gym. Closest to Park Drive will be the Department of Parks and Recreation offices. On the far side will be classrooms. There are plans for a community tour in the spring, possibly an activity, like tree-planting, with the community.

We need new volunteers. Newsletter editor John Naland is stepping down after ten years of service. And Laura Smailowicz is stepping down as newsletter layout volunteer. These jobs may be divided up so that it's not all on one person's shoulders. If you can help, please contact Esther Bowring at AFCAPrez@gmail.com.

We need a Home and Garden Tour coordinator. It's great to see what people have done with their homes and gardens. Jennifer, the former chair of this committee, is very organized and can hand over her files to the next volunteer.

We need volunteers for the Holiday Party on December 6 at 7 pm. Contact Chris and Karen Scheer if you can help.

The county will be making changes in boundaries for elementary schools. There is a schedule for community forums and other information online, if you are interested.

We've heard from the county about the traffic circles on 2nd St North. The county says that the trees in the center of the circle can't be more than three feet high. They'll be trimming them and would like our input. Jan Hull volunteered to trim the tree.

The Washington and Liberty High School's Holiday Bazaar is coming up on December 7, at the school.

Joel Yudken, Northside Vice President:

There is a hole and problem in the road at 1st and Columbus. We've contacted the county about it.

Resident commented:

I live on Northside. How do we coordinate efforts to try to litigate some of these issues? For example, Dominion Power comes, installs something, then leaves behind sinkholes, right outside the curb area. There are drop-offs, the boxes they leave in the ground are not flush with the ground and pose a tripping hazard. The work is never completely done properly. We're left with eyesores. Nothing is actually completed. I have contacted Dominion and County and got nowhere. Also, the planting on Park and 50 intersection was done poorly, and now there are weeds, and the seeds spread into our yards.

Esther: The County has a phone number for reporting maintenance issues: 311 or go to the county's online reporting site. We'll put something in the January Forester asking for pictures of problems and then possibly a monthly status report request from AFCA.

If there are a set of related issues, we can follow up. I am happy to follow up as President to ask about the status of our requests and what can be done.

Resident (Mark Riley) comment: Have you tried going to talk with someone face to face? That seems to get things moving. I'll go with you.... No, talking with someone on the phone isn't the same as a face to face conversation.

Resident suggestion, if the association wants to take on these issues, then through our newsletter, ask people to send a photo of the problem to the association. If we approach the county collectively with a group of issues, it will be easier to make our case.

Introduction of Lyndell Core, Department of Parks and Recreation, responsible for Lubber Run Park and parts of Four Mile Run. He is here to talk with us about county plans to address the flood damage in Lubber Run Park.

Lyndell Core:

I'm an area manager for parks, and my area includes Lubber Run and Four Mile run.

Early estimates of the damage in this area are about \$6.5 million. We know these is heavy use of the trails in these parks, and we need to do what we can.

The bridge furthest upstream in Lubber Run Park, near George Mason Drive, was already under review before the flood hit. The engineering design for that bridge is 90% complete. (Engineer drawing available.) We expect construction to begin next spring.

As far as I know, the engineering was to be complete in the fall and construction to begin next spring. The bridge near George Mason will cost \$600,000.

I don't build the infrastructure in our parks, but I'm interested in the plans and building, since I maintain the parks and infrastructure after it's built. I consider us to be on the same team, and I want us to continue that success.

There will be trees taken out to accommodate the construction. They'll be replaced according to County policy.

Four Mile Run: There was damage to bridges in Glencarlyn Park and Bluemont. Bridges are all capital projects. There is constant negotiating over priorities.

Q: Will these be built assuming the future may hold floods similar to this year's?

Lyndell: That's the conversation. We're still looking at what's there, what needs to be done, what are the priorities. I don't have those answers now. Glencarlyn Bridge has not been rebuilt.

Q: What about the downstream outlet for Lubber Run, under Rte 50? Is there sufficient stormwater capacity?

Lyndell: Good question. That would require VDOT involvement because Route 50 is under their control. I'll raise that question with them and get back to you.

Q: With all the new impervious surface, density, this will impact downstream resources. That is going to happen. This goes beyond you, but are they requiring the developers to pay the price for packing all this density in?

Lyndell: I recommend finding a new County Board member and talking to them to get the answer.

Q: Wouldn't it make sense to move the trail up higher the hill?

Lyndell: This wouldn't be my call. Urban foresters will be involved in weighing the options.

Q: Is there a way to keep the concrete bridges clear of water?

A: No, those we call fords. They're built for water to flow over them.

Q: Do bridges have to be included in the CIP?

A: Good conversation to have with County Board. Not a pool of money out there.

Q: What should the association do?

Esther: AFCA will write a letter to the County Board. But it will take more than a letter. It will mean going to CIP hearings. Being more active.

Q: Is there a firm deadline? Has to be codified? Could go on if there is no deadline.

Q: Widening W&OD- does it come from same funds as parks?

A: No, that is Northern Virginia Regional Parks, separate entity.

Q: The west bank trail next to Lubber Run Stream– what's the plan? Would like to rebuild like we did on the eastern bank.

A: No plan. Focusing on bridges.

Lyndell will try to get together with a group to look at the Park together.

Peter Rousselot

Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future. ArlforOurSustainableFuture@gmail.com

Talk focused on connections between higher density, storm water, and county's plan to increase population by 60,000. Tremendous pressure on storm water systems, schools, infrastructure.

Focus on watershed in which Lubber Run (LR) sits.

Development anywhere within LR watershed has the potential for exacerbating flooding like we just experienced. County has been asked what it is going to do. County has powers under a particular statute to do more to address flooding but has failed to take actions. Community Center resulted in removal of over 100 trees, contributes to exacerbation of storm water. Work on Carlin Springs bridge had an impact on storm water. Ballston pond restoration also involves removal of trees and floodwater exacerbation.

The drive towards increasing density impacts budget, housing affordability, and flooding/environment. We believe County needs to do more. The Civic Federation passed a resolution concerning flood prevention.

What is driving Arlington's push for increasingly greater growth?

It is trendy, nationally. There is concern about housing prices (with increase of 17% in 2019 because of Amazon's arrival).

Our group advocates for transparency and these tools:

Cost/benefit analysis: Add the 10-yr operating budget changes in addition to capital improvement budget to identify related costs.

Redo of 2014 Stormwater Master Plan to focus on Development and Climate change.

Invest in affordable housing – put vouchers into hands of people who need them, rather than tie affordable housing to mega projects with a few units of housing that don't really help people in need.

Do a cost/benefit analysis of affordable housing.

Create a comprehensive watershed plan to ensure development does not exacerbate flooding.

Board Member Katie Cristol wants to pursue goal of accelerated population growth. Other board members joined in. If we move from 260k-280k population, it will cost \$850 per person to pay for new storm water management, schools, and other expenses.

The county's shifting priorities, that is, moving housing to the top of the list, moves schools, infrastructure, transportation, etc. down the list.

We need to measure the impact from building duplexes in single family neighborhoods.

RE affordable housing. No evidence that more housing will lead to more affordable housing.

Schools

APS estimates that at end of capital plan improvements, we will have a deficit of 2,500 seats. Don't know where those seats will be located or how they'll fund them, where new schools will be built...

Waverly Hills damage was extensive. They can't sell their homes, don't know what to do.

Impact on schools

Impervious surfaces

Mature tree canopy

County budget

Q: What is the rationale? People putting money into the tax base? Strategy for introducing these planning tools into the process?

A: Generate new jobs, new tax revenue? But on net, average cost to our budget is \$850/person added to population. Show us the additional revenue you expect and then the cost of new schools and flood damage, etc.

As far as we know the County does not yet have these tools. Citizens have the opportunity to influence the county. We saw a major water main failure on Chain Bridge Rd, no warning. It closed all Arlington schools for a day. We need to be more proactive in replacing our water mains. Some are over 100 years old. Crystal City sewer main backup damaged an apartment, with \$20K loss. Ayers lost \$100K inventory.

Q: Adjoining jurisdictions are working to address affordable housing problem. Our County boards now have regional responsibilities. They lose some of the autonomy and we lose some of the weight we can provide in dealing with these issues.

A: True, affordable housing is a regional problem. Some cooperation helpful. Per unit cost of a multi-unit apartment building in Manassas \$240K/unit vs \$430K/unit in Arlington. Give vouchers to people who need it.

Redirect affordable housing effort to giving cash rather than tying to development.

