

AFCA January 2021 Minutes
January 20, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

Joel Yudken (Northside VP) called the meeting to order in President Esther Bowring's absence.

Northside Report (Joel Yudken):

Report on January 6 break-ins at Arlington Forest Shopping Center. It appears it has nothing to do with violence in D.C. that day. The suspects have also broken into other shopping centers in Arlington. Arlington Forester Annelise Dickinson created a GoFundMe that raised more than \$30,000, showing that we view the merchants as members of our AF community.

VPs for Greenbrier and Southside were not in attendance.

Treasurer's Report (Jeff Horwitz):

There are more than 280 members of AFCA out of 800+ households, which means \$3,800 in dues and donations (budgeted \$4,000, so we are close). Newsletter invoices will be going out shortly, which should result in income of approximately \$1,700 and will cover a large part of what we have spent in newsletter expenses (\$2100).

Asked IRS to reinstate tax-exempt status; this requires \$600 fee. IRS is backlogged, but we should be in good standing.

We have \$16,500 in the bank plus another \$900 in the PayPal account. This is a healthy operating reserve. AFCA's tax notifications are now up to date.

Pedestrian Safety Committee Report (Beverly Johnston, Lora Strine, Liz Kauffman):

County Board member Takis Karantonis is joining us tonight to discuss. Liz Kauffman is also working with Bluemont Citizens Association and will have input on that. Have been working on Carlin Springs Road safety for at least 7 years, made a lot of progress to date -- e.g., rapid flashing beacon and technology updates at N. Harrison Street. County has removed some parking spaces and added bollards to improve sight lines. Increased number of crosswalk signs. Car speed indicator signs and additional \$200 speeding violation.

Collaboration with Bluemont Citizens Association - joint survey to assess neighbor concerns and collect ideas. Survey shows over 76% of respondents want a red traffic light where there is now a flashing beacon on Carlin Springs Road. Sharing conservation plans. Have met with County Board candidates/nominees over a number of years, including John Vihstadt, Matt de Ferranti, Libby Garvey, Christian Dorsey, and Takis Karantonis. Concerns include ineffectiveness of rapid flashing beacons (approximately 30% of cars do not stop), continued speeding along Carlin Springs Road (coordination between County staff and ACPD is unclear), and return of traffic volume (perhaps greater now that Ballston is re-opened).

Next steps include monitoring safety at N. Harrison and N. Edison upgrades -- we need a County champion. Committee requests that AF residents sign up to advocate on this issue at County Board Open Door Mondays. Also plan to contact new ACPD Community Outreach Officer, Sergeant Tom Rakowski, Tel: 703-228-4184, Email: acpdnorthoutreach@arlingtonva.us.

County Board Member Takis Karantonis Presentation:

Consider me a partner; we have a common goal to restore safety. Pedestrian counts are very low for this type of neighborhood/intersections. I visited today and saw the crews working. I hear the skepticism about the flashing beacons. For starters, one thing that concerns me is that from the beginning, beacons can't work better without more elements along the street: signal to drivers that they have to slow down earlier; beacon needs to be related and visible, close to intersection (this is true for southbound lanes, but less so for northbound because zebra passage is past the intersection and we ask motorists to slow down before that, and people aren't used to that in Arlington). Could we put two beacons? Also, we need to build in a way that's retrofittable (i.e., that a traffic signal could be added later). It's absurdly expensive to add a traffic signal, but we have to at least have the possibility. Another important topic of discussion for me is how well lit this intersection will be at dusk/nighttime. Staff committed to add lighting to zebra crossing. Other observations: there is a lot of hardscape in the improvements, more than I expected (of course, it needs to be ADA-compliant). This should be less conducive to speeding, but I don't know how dramatic the effect will be. I am in a dialogue with staff about other ideas. This is a major thoroughfare with a decent traffic count (up to 30,000 movements/day), and we want to be anticipatory.

About Vision Zero: reducing speed limit from 30 to 25 is plausible. Also a case to be made that we adopt some technologies that we have not previously adopted in Arlington despite prior commitments to do so (e.g., speed sensitive signaling). Carlin Springs Road both south and north would be good places to consider implementing this. Third element is enforcement. We discussed the \$200 fine with the County Manager, and he will be coming up with a more comprehensive concept soon, to be shared in the frame of the discussion about Vision Zero. I will make this information available to you as soon as possible after I receive it.

AF resident comments: Carlin Springs Road is designed for cars and not pedestrians and bike riders, but we are a pedestrian and bike riding community. A comprehensive approach needs to be considered by the County.

Question from Takis: There is a refuge strip/median, but it is very narrow (e.g., cannot fit a bicycle) and may not offer sufficient pedestrian and bike rider protection from vehicle traffic. Lora agrees; Beverly and Lora will follow up with Takis.

The County has asked the Virginia General Assembly for the right to use automatic ticketing in areas that are not limited to school zones and construction zones as the state currently limits.

Neighborhood Conservation Plan Report (Hutch Brown, Liz Kauffman):

NCP has required elements we need to follow in order for County to accept the Plan. Current process is running recommendations in the newsletter and then planning to have a vote in mid-late Spring. There is only one element still outstanding (shopping center). When it is completed, Hutch will write an executive summary and then it will be finished, probably in the spring. Have received some comments, most recently on trails, and added recommendations as a result.

Missing Middle Housing Study Committee Report (Claire Bedat):

Committee has attended the County's meetings, reviewed the County's documents, identified questions and will bring them to County staff/Board for clarification and to see if it is possible to mitigate concerns about duplex and triplex housing. The MHS Study Committee is seeking a greater understanding and more realistic projection of what the impacts might be on Arlington Forest and will share what it learns with our neighborhood.

New: Honoring Unsung Arlington Forest Neighborhood Heroes (Joel Yudken):

This is a new idea from Esther. Honor people at meetings and maybe in the newsletter. The first Unsung Arlington Forest Neighborhood Heroes are:

Annelise Dickinson and anyone who has provided support to AF shopping center tenants.

John Naland, former newsletter editor who provides assistance in caring for trails/parks.

Hutch Brown, contacted County when AF oaks were mistakenly cut down.

Alli Korman, returned large rocks to Lubber Run rock garden when kids have thrown them down to the lower level.

Metro Proposal to Cut Metro 4B Bus (Joel Yudken):

This cut will not happen now that Metro received Covid funds; they will be able to maintain current levels for a while.