

Minutes: Aurora Highlands Civic Association Meeting, March 12, 2008

Bruce Cameron opened the meeting with a series of announcements:

- There is an opportunity for the County Board to do a walking tour of our neighborhood. Potential dates are May 27, June 19, and September 9. Those present thought this was a good idea and Bruce said he would follow up with the Board to set a date.
- Repaving will start in April. Bruce will send an e-mail to the list serve with more information as it becomes available.
- The plan is for the old firehouse to serve as a storage building.
- The Wakefield High School construction issue is not a done deal.
- Walter Tejada was quoted as saying Crystal City is the most important issue for the County.
- Walter Tejada was also quoted as saying he would like to find a way to help the families impacted by the Water Treatment Plant construction. However, County lawyers said this would open the County to liability.

Meeting Presentations:

Aurora Highland Historic District

Laura Trieschmann, Architectural Historian with EHT Tracerics, Inc. talked about the proposed historical designation for a portion of Aurora Highlands. Ms. Trieschmann reviewed some of the material in the document to be presented on March 20 to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond nominating Aurora Highlands to the National Register of Historic Districts. She noted the designation is honorific and is different from a historic designation by the local government. The latter is something that has to be requested by the neighborhood and can have zoning consequences. The document tells the story of the neighbor from the perspectives of architecture and community development. She noted the oldest house in the neighborhood dates from about 1870. The draft report is available online at http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Arlington/000-9706_Aurora_Highlands_HD_2008_NRdraft.pdf.

New multi-family dwellings

Elizabeth Wilcox, Director Land Planning Services, with JM Zell Partners, LTD, said the company will develop multi-family dwellings over the next four to five years on the parking lot at the corner of S. Eads and 22nd St S and on the Crystal House land. She said JM Zell plans to engage the AHCA as the plans develop. A member asked about parking and Ms. Wilcox said they will consider it as they develop the plans. A question was also raised about the non-functioning lights in the parking lot. She said she would ensure the Crystal House management is aware of the problem.

Proposed signage for Bank of America

Katherine Youngbluth, Urban Planner, with Cooley, Godward, Kronish, LLP, sought the Association's endorsement of three signs for the new Bank of America facility above the Harris Teeter at S. Glebe and Jeff Davis. The Bank is requesting three signs and plans to go to the County Board in May. It was moved and seconded that the AHCA endorse the signs. Bruce Cameron said a formal vote will be taken at the AHCA's April meeting.

Proposed Signage for the Gramercy at Metropolitan Park

P. David Tarter, Attorney at Law, with Lawson, Tarter, and Charvet, P.C., said the Gramercy at Metropolitan Park (across from Costco) is requesting that the County allow additional signage for the building. The Gramercy management has determined that potential tenants, delivery people, etc. are having trouble finding the entrance to the building, and they believe additional signage will help. The proposed signs are smaller in size and fewer in number than allowed under County guidelines. A member asked what signage is planned for the additional buildings in the development. Mr. Tarter said the plans for these buildings are still under development. This topic will likely be discussed at the April AHCA meeting and a formal vote taken.

New AHCA Web site

John Kriese, AHCA Business Secretary, briefly described the AHCA's new Web site at <http://www.aurorahighlands.org>. The site has information about the neighborhood and its history, community places, issues that will impact us, and the AHCA. He invited all to provide feedback and welcomed suggestions for how to make the site more valuable. The AHCA is grateful to Michael Cangialosi for providing server space and paying the annual domain name fee as a gift to the AHCA.

Approximately 35 people attended the meeting.