

AHCA Meeting Minutes January 13, 2010

41 people attended. Mike Dowell reminded the group that only AHCA members could vote. Several people joined during the meeting.

Minutes from the December 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Reports

Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission - Bill Gillen reported that the County is projecting a significant shortfall in the estimated \$900 million budget for 2010. The shortfall will be shared half and half between the School Board and the County Board. The County and the School Board will each have to make up a shortfall of about \$46 million in 2010. The money has to be made up from the general fund. The direction of the County Board is to take half the money from expenditure cuts and make up the other half by raising taxes. That will amount to about a 9 percent increase in the tax rate (while assessments are going down). This year will be harder than last year to find places to cut because last year the low hanging fruit was already removed from the budget. Each department will take about a 10% reduction. The departments will be looking for synergy, efficiency and reduction of redundancy.

Neighbors asked questions and made suggestions:

- Are the county staff and board looking for grants from other entities?
- Our Aurora Hills library is in jeopardy – use it or lose it.
- It seems clear that the library management wants to close 3 branches, including ours, and at some point in the future move it closer to Pentagon City Metro.
- We should make a cogent argument to the County board about why our library should remain in County-owned space.
- A library subcommittee was formed and will be chaired by Cheryl Mendonza. The subcommittee will mobilize the library team from last year and start reaching out to schools, neighbors, churches and businesses.

A motion was approved to draft a letter by AHCA and ARCA asking for an update of last year's library usage statistics.

AHCA Budget – Gail Fleming: We spent \$530 on flyers last year. Asked for new members to join the Association and for old member to renew.

Newsletter – Cory Giacobbe: Asked for community input for the newsletter. We are looking for articles on local news, activities, events, restaurant reviews, articles on health, finance, home

maintenance and other topics of interest to neighbors. Please send ideas for articles or send actual content to Cory at ahca.news@yahoo.com

If you do not want to receive a paper copy of the AHCA newsletter at your door the weekend before the monthly AHCA meeting, please notify Cara Tenuta.

Missing Link Update – Mike Dowell read a report from Bruce Cameron about the sidewalks scheduled for 2010:

600 block of 19th St. S and 700 block of 22nd St. S

Joyce St. from 15th to 23rd Streets (paid for with special funds for traffic calming)

Long Range Planning Committee for Crystal City– Chick Walter: The Committee has finished its work and the report now goes to the Planning Commission. It proposes buildings that are 330 feet tall. The County talks about the desire for density at Metro stops, yet the height at other areas such as Clarendon is only 125 feet. In order to move the plan forward, the County will have to front about \$250 million for projects such as realignment of Clark Street and the trolley. Chick said the neighborhoods have to stay in the fight otherwise the fabric of the area will be destroyed.

Crystal City Business Improvement District – Crystal Couture is coming up again the first week of February.

Issue - Maria Teresa's Babies Daycare

County staff issued the following recommendation to the County Board on the daycare permit to be decided at the County Board meeting on January 23:

- 1) Renew the existing use permit for the Center [for 34 children].
- 2) Approve the reduction in required employee parking [since most employees walk or use public transportation].
- 3) Defer the request for the increase in children for a few months to allow observation of the capacity of 34. The County staff has gone out to observe pick-up and drop-off when the Center had between 17 – 20 children last month and there were no issues. The Center is now nearing their capacity of 34 and, while staff doesn't anticipate any issues, a few more months of observation at the approved capacity is appropriate before recommending approval of the increase to 50.

There was a motion to send a letter supporting the county position as stated. The motion failed.

Maria Teresa Deseaba told the civic association that the County issued her a permit for 50 children and then it was reduced to 34 children. In the meantime she put a lot of money into

construction. Giovanni Saba, Maria Teresa's son, said the County determined that the measurements of the facility qualified it for 84 children. Points were made by attendees:

-The County is behaving irrationally with Maria Teresa's case, each of their decisions is inconsistent.

-The civic association is not in a position to evaluate the number of children who fit in a childcare center or the quality of the construction. Those are the responsibilities of the county.

-There is a tremendous need for daycare in Arlington and we should support the application for 50 slots.

- There are lots of daycare centers in the neighborhood and the only facility that seems to have problems with the County is this one.

-We don't have the expertise to evaluate the facility.

-A term of the use permit should require the facility to revert to single family use after the property ceases to be a daycare center.

There was a new motion: "AHCA should write a letter saying the County should expedite and support Maria Teresa's application for 50 kids." The motion passed 19 in favor to 6 opposed.

Discussion: We shouldn't get involved in evaluating quality of care in daycare facilities.

A new motion was passed to appoint a committee to study daycare issues in the neighborhood. Giovanni will chair the committee.

Brainstorming for 2010:

Boo Ha Ha – costs several thousand dollars, money comes from fundraising and local business sponsors. Planning starts in June. A spreadsheet for timing of actions has been done. We need a volunteer to coordinate this year's Boo Ha Ha.

Ideas for 100 Year anniversary of Aurora Highlands:

-Go back to the original conservation plan and honor the writers

-Plant 100 trees (the Centennial Tree Project) and promote it on the web site.

- Conduct a membership drive

- Hold a summer potluck

-Take a welcome wagon approach to new neighbors: bring them a newsletter and encourage them to join the civic association

New Business

Miriam Gennari presented a proposal for youth activity center in Aurora Hills. It would be a public-private partnership to provide fun, enriching activities in our neighborhood such as pottery, dance, karate, tutoring and music. It was decided to establish a subcommittee chaired by Miriam to explore and develop the proposal, recruit partners and explore locations.

Calendar Items

Jan. 14 from 2 – 3 pm– County budget online chat. See county website our AHCA calendar for link

Jan. 23 – Hearing for Maria Teresa’s Daycare permit review

Jan. 28 – Civic Federation – 12 neighborhoods invited to speak about neighborhood services

Feb. 4 at 7 pm– Arlington’s Natural Backyard Resources: Greg Zell, Natural Resource Specialist with Arlington County, Virginia, will discuss the County's efforts in documenting Arlington's natural resources at **Arlington’s Central Library Auditorium, 1015 North Quincy St., by Virginia Square metro.**

Cheryl Mendonza announced the annual Crystal Couture fashion event will be taking place Feb. 1 – 6 in the space at 23rd St. South and Crystal Drive. Go to the Crystal City BID website for details

<http://www.crystalcity.org/do/2010couture>

Announcements

There is a drop-off bucket in the library for used CFL lightbulbs. The bucket is in the back in the supply room to keep it out of the way and safe from being knocked over.

Les Garrison is in Afghanistan. While he is there we can send recreational and school supplies for the troops and Afghan children.

[The AHCA might consider covering the cost of shipping. Gail Fleming offered to look into the cost of shipping from the prior shipments to Iraq.](#)

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.