

Aurora Highlands Civic Association Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2010 at 7:00 pm (Rescheduled from 2-10-10 due to snow)

1. **Call to order by President Mike Dowell.**
2. **Attendance: 17 total**
3. **A motion was made and approved to accept the January meeting minutes posted on the web site.**
4. **Officer's reports.**
 - a. **Treasurer's Report.** Gail Fleming was ill, postponed until next meeting.
 - b. **Business Secretary.** No report.
 - c. **1st VP Nick Giacobbe** asked the membership to continue sending articles for the newsletter.
 - d. **2nd VP Cara Tenuta** asked for help with newsletter distribution and to ensure that everyone in the neighborhood is receiving a copy. Cara also mentioned the orange water in her block, largely due to supply pipes that were installed pre-1930 and have outlived their 50-year life.
 - e. **Corresponding Secretary Jenny Lawhorn** was out of town.
 - i. A letter was sent to the County supporting Mark Hutto, who had to remove the stone wall he had built to block HVAC units.
 - ii. A joint letter was sent with ARCA supporting the library.
 - f. **Web Master John Kriese.** No report.
5. **Committee reports.**
 - a. **Sidewalks - Bruce Cameron** is working on preliminary designs for Ives Street.
 - b. **LRPC** - No report.
 - c. **NC - Chris Mann** - No report.
 - d. **CCBID** - Rob spoke about the upcoming G-40 Art Summit that will be open for the month of March at 23rd and Crystal Drive. Beginning in April there will be a foot race every Friday and the popular farmers' market resumes in May.
 - e. **Library - Bill Gillen** updated the group on the County Manager's proposal to close each branch library one day per week. Bill has requested updated statistics and will get them out to the neighborhood. The goal is to ensure that cuts are equitable and that Aurora Hills is not singled out for cuts.
 - g. **Community Center - Miriam Gennari** has been talking to parents and neighbors about what they would like to see in the Center. The Aurora Hills Women's Club may look at Library or Recreation Center as a cause to fund. Miriam has spoken with the woman who spends the money that Friends of the Library and the concern is that there will be further cuts to periodicals. Miriam is going to talk to seniors and folks that would like to teach and take classes and has also been talking to Susan Easom. Due to budget situation, the Library and Parks and Rec are going to have to share more resources. Perhaps in the longer term---use the old firehouse for programming. For now, the next steps are to: talk to seniors, talk to AH Library Manager, write a proposal, get feedback and take the plan to the county board.
 - h. **Civic Federation** - Mike Dowell attended the meeting with the County Board members. Chris Zimmerman said he would help with trying to make the Community Center easier to use. It's worth noting that to use the facility for anything other than Senior Center or Civic Assoc Meetings—you have to pay.
6. **Special orders -- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.**

a. **None**

7. **Unfinished business.**

a. **MT Daycare resolution.** AHCA letter sent prior to hearing. Approval to go to 50 kids was received, as long as they meet all other state daycare requirements.

b. **Hutto stone wall resolution.** AHCA letter sent. County would not let him keep up stacked stone wall. Mark is small business owner and many small businesses report running in to problems in dealing with Arlington County because the rules and regulations are inconsistent..

c. **100 year Anniversary Planning (Patrick Wegeng, History, Party)**

i. **Mike Dowell reported** that there are hundreds of articles on Aurora Hills in Washington Post archives. Many will serve as good articles for the newsletter. Planning is also underway for a party during the summer.

ii. **Another part of the celebration will be service projects**, which led to a presentation by **Patrick Wegeng—Landscape Supervisor for Arlington County**. Patrick has planted 25 trees near ball fields and in other places, but as a part of the budget process, tree planting going to be cut. Not the trees, just the planting. The nursery has 150 trees and Patrick will survey park one more time and try to see if we can get 100 trees into Virginia Highlands Park. May be able to present it as a “**Centennial Woodlands**”. Patrick thinks he can support the effort because the County is focusing on environmental sustainability. First step is the removal of invasives in the open field along the soccer field on Ives St. by volunteers and then another weekend of planting. AHCA will need to take ownership of trees long term---keep them alive. Will do a tour on the weekend and map out locations and species of trees. Don't like to plant too late in Spring. Will bring water truck out to water frequently. Since doing less planting can do more watering and Patrick often gets 95% survivability for trees. Survey to be scheduled when snow melts. Tree Steward Cory Giacobbe will lead volunteer effort in coordination with Patrick

iii. **Van Newsom asked if the County can get the power company** to clean up the **substation at 18th and Ives Street**. AHCA could send a request to code enforcement. Wait until spring or summer to see what happens—per Bruce. Patrick often advises on landscaping projects even if they are on private property—ex 4 mile run. Try County Manager—letter to county board and ask for Patrick to speak with Dominion Power.

iv. **Waste Water Plant has a \$1 million budget for landscaping** and Phil Lohr is Waste Water contact. A consulting firm also being used for the plant and there is an upcoming community meeting on March 11. Gravel parking lot near waste water plant will need to be restored per the construction agreement.

d. **Care Packages to Les Garrison in Afghanistan:** Gail Fleming has an old file of mail receipts with a document summarizing stats for 2005-June 2007: 45 mailings, total of 124 boxes. Average box weight 41 pounds for about \$21.00 (postage rates are higher now) Postage totaled \$1895; cash donations were \$1063. AHCA agreed to fund the mailing once again and Van Newsom said the packages were sent twice a month, totaling over 200 soccer balls, books, Beanie Babies, holiday gifts, Girl Scout cookies, school supplies, etc. Last time AHCA paid half of postage and a generous donor paid ½ of postage.

8. **New business.**

a. **Post Office Relocation Update.** USPS may be looking at the Millennium Bldg across from Costco.

b. **Hayes Multi-Modal.** Brief discussion of redesign to be reviewed at next meeting.

c. **General discussion on how the snow went.** Power failures, snow clearing, sidewalks, fire hydrants, remaining problems. County has spent \$3 million on snow removal.

d. Proposed County Budget discussion. Van Newsom reported that is a \$63 million shortfall. Public hearings will be held on the spending side of the budget March 23 and 24 and on the tax/fee proposals on March 25. Interested citizens can speak for a maximum of three minutes. The state budget is still pending and cuts are expected:

Education k-12

Social Services: ex: child mental health ward will close in Richmond.

Counties are dependent on state funding.

There is a proposal to sell off ABC stores. 75% of revenue goes to Social Services and 25% for prison health care.

Reductions in mental health and public health services.

Mike Dowell also noted that there will be reductions in community policing and one of two Fire Heavy Rescue Units - Arlington would call on neighboring communities for help if a 2nd needed.

9. Calendar

- a. Saturday, February 13, 8:00am, Calvary Pancake Breakfast
- b. Saturday, February 20, 8:30am, County Board Meeting: Manager's Budget Presentation
- c. Wednesday, March 10, 7:00pm, AHCA Monthly Meeting
- c. Thursday, March 11, 7:00pm, Water Pollution Control Plant Update
- d. Tuesday and Wednesday, March 23 and 24, County Budget Hearings on spending
- e. Thursday, March 25, County Budget Hearing on taxes/fees

10. Announcements

- a. Membership renewals are now overdue.
- b. Next Month:

Roberto Ruiz (Arlington County Demographer), to discuss 2010 Census and why it is important to Arlington County.

Kate Youngbluth (Arlington County Transportation Dept) to discuss Hayes Multi-Modal Presentation rescheduled. Kate will be here early (6:30pm)with large printout of plans.

11. Motion to Adjourn at 8:30 p.m.