

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2018

Attendees: 5 members and 11 others signed in.

Proceedings:

--President Natasha Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Aurora Hills Senior Center.

--The Minutes for the January meeting could not be approved because there was not a quorum. They will be considered at the March meeting.

Fence Issue

Gerald Woodruff, who lives on the NE corner of 20th and S. Ives Streets discussed his problems with the County in regard to his new fence. The fence plan was approved by the County. The installed fence then was inspected and approved by the County. Later the County said that a mistake had been made and the fence should not have been approved. The owner was told that the fence is too close to the sidewalk and would have to be moved back. Moving the fence would not only be very costly, but it would require removing a row of mature trees. The fence does not impact visibility for traffic at the intersection. Mr. Woodruff came to ask for the Civic Association's support. However, since there was no quorum, there could not be a vote on sending a letter of support from the Association to the County. Mr. Woodruff brought letters with him and asked people at the meeting to sign them so that he could submit them to the County along with his request to leave the fence as is.

Oakridge School Boundary Changes

Colleen Pickford, who is with Arlington County and a member of the Arlington Ridge Civic Association, discussed possible changes to the Oakridge elementary school boundaries. Enrollment has grown at an unprecedented rate. Oakridge has the largest number of students ever. In 2019, the Drew Montessori program will be moving, so there will be a major school re-shuffling in 2019. Six criteria will be used in that process. Proximity is the #1 parent concern. The effective walk zone is up to one mile from a school. Every community has a task group looking at walk zones. The County is looking at every school including the five special option elementary schools. Oakridge now has 800 kids; 430 of them would be in the walk zone. Students from Oakridge will need to go to other schools because Oakridge is over-capacity now by more than 100 students. In the future, children in our neighborhood could go to Oakridge, Hoffman Boston or Drew. APS must submit its recommendations to the School Board in April. The School Board will vote on options by June and things will start moving quickly at the beginning of September. Community feedback is needed and a task group is being formed to look at this issue. They will soon take a walking tour to determine how to make it safer for kids to walk to school.

PenPlace Development

Michael Novotny with JBJ Smith, outlined their proposed development on the north side of 12th St. across from Whole Foods toward Army-Navy Drive. The site is between Fern and Eads Streets. Only the southern half of the site will be developed in the next phase. The buildings facing 12th St. will have restaurants, retail and 300 residential units. They want to break down the massive scale with a variety of architecture. They already have approval for two 18-floor buildings on 12th St., but are proposing buildings with a maximum of 7 floors and lots of retail. The hotel that is already approved will be moved to a later phase. There will be a temporary dog park and temporary surface parking for retail that eventually will be underground. Retail will be focused on 12th St. and lobbies will be pushed back. Loading docks will be on 11th St. The area for outdoor dining will be 9-feet wide with large tree pits. Sidewalks will be 10 feet wide and there will be 23 feet from the curb to the buildings. The project architect said that they have tried to break up the scale of the buildings vertically and horizontally and provide a more interesting street scape and café zones.

They are not seeking any re-zoning from the density was approved in 2013. The plan includes ½ parking spot per unit, which is within County requirements. With the time required for County Site Plan Review and building, it may be three years before completion.

Announcements:

--On Feb. 21, the Crystal City Civic Association will meet to discuss changes to National Airport. Everyone is invited to attend.

--Heitham Ghariani announced that he is running as an Independent for the County Board elections in November. He lives nearby and is a Federal employee. Check www.HeithamForArlington.org for information on his platform or email HeithamForArlington@gmail.com

--Bob Hyde, Arlington Ridge Civic Association member, discussed interest in a dog park either at Ft. Scott Park or by the ART parking lot on 31st St.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Maureen Quinn

Recording Secretary