

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2017

**DRAFT**

**Attendees:** 17 people signed in.

**Proceedings:**

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

--She recognized and presented certificates of appreciation to four AHCA members whose work has been extremely important to our organization. Those individuals are: Geva Lester for her support through newsletter advertising and sponsorship of activities such as the Boo Ha Ha; Cheryl Mendonsa for devoting a decade of expertise to AHCA; David Litman for his leadership in the effort to renovate Nelly Custis Park; and Stacy Meyer for her efforts to re-institute advertising in the newsletter.

--Meeting minutes for July and September were approved. (There was no meeting in August.)

**Boo Ha Ha update**

The Boo Ha Ha fall festival will be held outside the community center on Saturday, October 14 from 3-6 p.m. There will be music, moon bounces, face painting, a horse-drawn hayride and more. Geva Lester reported that \$4,800 has been contributed by sponsors. That represents more than half of the cost of the event. Volunteers are needed to help on Saturday.

**AHCA election**

The election of officers will be held at the November meeting and nominations must be made at this meeting. A motion to amend the Association bylaws to permit the president to serve three one-year terms carried unanimously. A motion to amend the bylaws to change the membership year to the calendar year (January 1-December 30) passed unanimously. After inviting nominations from members and volunteers for positions, the slate of officers for the November election is:

President—Natasha Atkins

Vice President—Scott Miles

Vice President—David Husband

Treasurer—Gail Fleming

Corresponding Secretary—Heather Spence

Recording Secretary—Maureen Quinn

### **Long Bridge Park**

Four design and construction teams have presented concepts for the Long Bridge Aquatics and Fitness Center and park expansion. Community input is invited through October 29. The County Board is expected to consider this project at their November meeting.

### **Nelly Custis Park**

David Litman reported on the work of the Nelly Custis Design Working Group. He said that it was a great process that required lots of work by everyone involved. The site had lots of constraints and limitations that had to be worked around. At its third design meeting the group reached consensus on a design to propose at our November meeting, when the Association will be voting on it. Approval will be needed to proceed to the construction preparation phase. The design will be posted on the Arlington County website for review and comment before the November AHCA meeting. It would be helpful for people to identify themselves as neighborhood residents in the comment box.

### **Virginia State Senator Adam Ebbin**

Senator Ebbin provided copies of his 2017 General Assembly newsletter and legislative update. (Available at [www.AdamEbbin.com](http://www.AdamEbbin.com) where you can also sign up to get his email updates.)

He highlighted many key issues including the State budget; his interest in expanding Medicaid in Virginia so that the State gets its share of Federal money; bi-partisan progress on energy and energy storage; community service for marijuana offenses; Metrorail safety; addressing the opioid crisis; cutting red tape for restaurants and convenience stores; and assuring that Airbnbs register and comply with regulations. He pointed out some legislation that did not pass is of concern, such as gun restrictions, child access to guns, and allowing the Governor to serve more than one consecutive term to provide more continuity. He continues to work on mental health issues, child readiness for school, economic opportunities in aspiring and diverse communities, and prisoner re-entry issues.

In the Q&A session, he stressed how important the Nov. 7 election is and how critical the roles of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are now in Virginia, which has 21 Republican and 19 Democrats in the State Senate. He also pointed out that Mr. Herring has made common sense decisions regarding guns and the dreamers.

On the question of a name change for Jefferson Davis Highway, he noted that Alexandria has authority to change its section of the road, but Arlington does not. The State or General Assembly can change the name and he has advocated for that, but said that it will be tough going. On using the former Dominion substation land at 18<sup>th</sup> and Ives for a County park, he cited a number of problems: they have remediated only to a minimum standard not adequate for park use, it is not contiguous with an existing park and the County is under budget pressure.

He discussed a number of Metro issues including decreased ridership, lower revenue, capital needs being ignored for 20 years, Safetrack, funding, and the pressure on Arlington for more money for Metro because the State passes the buck to localities. He says more work is needed in Richmond and he

recommends changes in the make-up of the Metro Board and better accountability. He commented on monitoring and reporting issues for Airbnb; over-incarceration in Virginia; mandatory minimum sentences; and other incarceration issues. He tries to come up with a balance of bills to sponsor and co-sponsor.

### **Tree Canopy Fund**

Funded by developers, this effort will provide our neighborhood with 30 trees in 2018. They are 7-8 feet tall and will be planted in your yard. Our neighborhood is high on the list to get trees because we have had such a significant loss of trees. Kathy Landis is the volunteer coordinator and her contact information is: landis59@gmail or 703-864-4415. The deadline for applications is December 15.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Maureen Quinn

Recording Secretary