

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2018

Attendees: 31 people signed in including 22 members and 2 who did not indicate whether they were members.

Proceedings:

--President Natasha Atkins called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. in the Aurora Hills Senior Center. She asked people to sign in and indicate on the sign-in sheet whether they are AHCA members. She urged everyone who lives in the neighborhood to join AHCA.

--The minutes from the June meeting were approved.

Federico Ristorante Italiano

Freddie Lutz said that he has reopened the restaurant on 23rd Street that was Café Italia. He was the maître d' there for 25 years and has owned Freddie's Beach Bar on 23rd Street for 17 years. He grew up in the neighborhood and went to Oakridge, Gunston, and Wakefield. He is the president of the 23rd Street Business Group, which has recruited Los Tios for the empty spaces that had been a Mexican restaurant and a Philippine restaurant. The Papas group has a vision for 23rd Street that includes an Art Space on 24th Street that would have studios and housing for artists. There are already a few other Art Spaces in DC, Maryland, Arizona and New York. (ArtSpace.org) There would be an entry through the area that is now 4 parking spaces next to Bob and Edith's to a plaza in the back. It would take 5-10 years to complete. The 23rd Street Group has been working with the County on this since 2015. Underground parking will be included in the plan. They are trying to create a village to make 23rd Street a "go to destination." The Papas land on 24th Street will not be sold. This is a preservation project. Suggestions included luring more neighbors to the area, more green space, a coffee place, a green street, a farmer's market on 24th Street, a small event similar to Del Ray's Arts on the Avenue, being dog-friendly, artist shops, widening the sidewalks by using some of the parking spots. A complaint was raised about the conditions at the 7/11 corner. The area more trash bins; the alley behind the businesses is "disgusting;" and there are mice in the 7/11 store.

New Officers Needed

There are lots of issues now that impact our neighborhood and AHCA needs to be at the table. So please consider running for a position or nominating someone to be an officer at our October meeting. The election is in November.

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Eads Street Lots for Ride Sharing Companies

The county was not notified of this lot when the airport rented the space between Route 1 and Eads Street to be a holding area for Uber and Lyft drivers waiting for airport pick-ups. This space is needed because of the airport construction. It has resulted in lots of additional congestion and potentially dangerous situations on Eads Street near Eads Street Park. VDOT controls Rt. 1 and controls access from Rt. 1. The County says it would cost \$250,000 to open access to Rt. 1 from the lot. Interim changes could include an exit on Eads to the South only or moving all exits to the south end of the 2 lots. There is a pedestrian walkway through the middle of the lots from Eads to Rt. 1. The County is counting only cars going north from the lot. Neighbors complain that it is a menace and dangerous. Sometimes they can't even turn onto Fort Scott Drive and there has been one fender bender. Some say it is an Airport Authority problem since they rented the lot. We need to talk to County Board members and State Delegate Levine. Since May the County has been saying that they would have a public meeting on this. Pollution is also a big concern in addition to safety. There is a gate on Rt. 1 already; this used to be a rental car place. Cutting through CVS or McDonald's can be ticketed, but enforcement is lacking. We need officers to check on Uber and Lyft cars in bike lanes. Call the County non-emergency number and ask for enforcement. People should document infractions and take photos. The County says that it will set up a meeting by the end of September. Email, call, or write to the Board, to Dennis Leach, head of the Department of Transportation, and to Mark Schwartz, the County Manager.

A motion was passed unanimously stating that, in addition to other means of individual communication, AHCA will send a letter to County Board outlining our concerns.

Fall Community Festival

Natasha discussed the possibility of AHCA having a fall festival on Oct. 27 along the lines of the spring event in Aurora Highlands Park on the open soft ball field. There will be no boo-ha-ha this year. Last year there were more than 600 people and it was too big. But we don't have a coordinator, so will have to shelve this idea for next year. There was a suggestion that AHCA participate in the Ridge-sponsored parade on 26th Street. Natasha will contact Arlington Ridge Civic Association to see if there is a way to partner with them.

Other Business

--We need to order more meeting signs. **A motion was passed to provide \$250 to get new signs.**

--We will not be discussing new school boundaries at our October meeting because our meeting conflicts with the PTA meeting at the school on this topic.

--The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Maureen Quinn

Recording Secretary