

DRAFT

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Minutes from Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, 8 March 2017

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: 25 people signed in.

Proceedings:

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

Minutes for the February meeting were approved.

Community Updates

Jenny Sullivan has volunteered to coordinate the Boo Ha Ha, but additional community help will be needed.

There will be a meeting with School Board candidates on 3/16 at 7 p.m. at Oakridge.

The County will have a traffic report on Fern Street at our May meeting.

River House Update

Representatives of Vornado, owner of the River House complex, and the JBG development companies discussed their goals and projects in our area. The two companies are merging, with an announcement of their merger expected in June or July. JBG has been in the DC area for about 50 years with hotels, retail, and a concentration in Roslyn. They also have projects in Potomac Yards, Pentagon City and Crystal City and work only in the DC area. They discussed how they like to think in a holistic way about markets, public space, landscaping, scale and retail, with an emphasis on the overall environment. They are interested in transportation including bike paths, buses and walkability. They have many projects within half a mile of the Metro in both Pentagon City and Crystal City. They would like their projects to have a sense of community and recognize the importance of streetscape. They said that they currently have no concrete plans for the previously proposed additional buildings on the River House location and the Pen Place project has been dormant.

Association members raised several questions and concerns. In terms of our traffic concerns, we would like developers to look not only at individual projects and their immediate impact, but at the neighborhood as a whole entity. Consideration should be given to volume of traffic, speed, cut-through traffic, overloading of Metro and streets. Another issue is that affordable housing should be incorporated into the overall project, not segregated. Interest was expressed in a dog park on their space, pedestrian access to the airport, variety and diversity of housing units,

amenities for school kids, condos for aging in place, a design to complement existing buildings, a Route 1 pass over and removal of the tunnel at 23rd Street. Issues were also raised relating to the importance of trees, lighting, bird-safe windows, and a local hospital.

Residential Parking Requirements

With assistance from a working group of Arlington residents and other stakeholders, the County is clarifying its parking requirements for apartments and condos through the site plan process. James Schroll, chairman of the working group, explained that the County has a comprehensive master transportation plan that balances parking with other transportation alternatives. The current code for the required number of spaces in apartment buildings was issued in 1962 and calls for 1 space per unit. The guiding principles in the current review include: cost, flexibility, predictability, the fact that more parking means more driving, fewer vehicles mean less road use, and spillover concerns.

The closer to Metro a building is, the fewer spots that would be required. There should be reductions in spaces for affordable housing. Bike and car sharing on site could replace parking spaces. Offsite shared parking, if there is at least a 10-year lease on the parking within about 1 block of the building, could mean a site plan amendment would be approved. The goal is to minimize excess parking. There would be some relief for small sites. Online comments are due by the end of the month at the Arlington county website, search “Residential Parking Working Group.”

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

_____ Date: _____

Maureen Quinn

Recording Secretary