

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2019

DRAFT

Attendees: 30 people signed in

Proceedings:

Scott Miles called the meeting to order at 7:05pm in the Aurora Hills Senior Center

Announcements:

1. Site plan reviews are coming up for the Verizon lot and infill at Crystal Houses. Residents can attend these meetings but typically only speak at the end.
2. The community engagement for Met Park (Amazon) begins July 10. **The AHCA meeting will be rescheduled to July 17** so residents can attend this meeting.
3. The three civic associations from 22202 are working together to define our goals, particularly in relation to the SPRC process and will share a draft of principles with the community to review.
4. Nelly Custis Park is finishing soon and AHCA would like to have a community event at the end of July. We need a volunteer to organize this social event. We want it to be as inclusive as possible of all residents in Aurora Highlands. AHCA could approve funding, probably a few hundred dollars, and the volunteer could also use sponsorship.
5. Please fill out the county's survey on Shared Mobility Devices (scooters).
6. Zoning updates to allow detached accessory dwellings were approved by the County Board.
7. There is a use permit proposed for Pentagon City mall to have more outdoor seating at Sugar Factory.
8. Residents can apply for a free shade tree.
9. Renaming of Jefferson Davis Highway to Richmond Highway was approved.

1. Pocket Park at 905 20th Street

This property was purchased by the County Board in 2018. It currently has one house and a vacant lot. There is no long-term planning in current fiscal year to develop the property. The next CIP will occur in 2020 calendar year, and this is the neighborhood's opportunity to get more funding.

Parks and Rec will undertake a basic renovation of the property to make it suitable for casual use. All existing trees will remain. Existing fencing will remain on exterior. They have the funds

to demolish the house, remove the driveways, and establish the grassy casual use area in Q4 of 2019.

A project website available later to stay updated. The manager of this project is Kasey Spriggs, Park Service Area Manager, kspriggs@arlingtonva.us You can reach out to him for maintenance and other questions.

Audience questions:

1. Would Parks and Rec consider deconstructing the house rather than demolishing it?
Neighbors have an interest in taking more time to allow for recycling materials.
 - a. Answer: Deconstruction is currently outside of the budget, but Scott took note of this desire.
2. Will Parks and Rec remove the bamboo on the property?
 - a. Answer: No plan to take care of this, due to the desire to limit the area of disturbance
3. Can the fencing along the street remain to keep children from running into the road?
 - a. Answer: Current intention is to remove the street fencing, but keep the fencing along the lot lines. There is a general practice of keeping fencing to a minimum to avoid barriers to the park. They also don't have the budget for additional fencing. Scott thought the prevailing consensus was to remove the fencing.

2. Arlington County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management, Demetra McBride, Bureau Chief

[See the slide presentation](#)

Demetra McBride is new to the role in the Office of Sustainability. In her remarks, she drew a lot on her experience in California.

She discussed the upcoming update to the 2013 Community Energy Plan. There is a public work session on June 25 with the County Board to look at key policy changes. More public engagement will follow in the coming months. Some parties within the County government are pushing for zero emissions by 2050. Her office is recommending 1 megaton rather than zero, because it is more feasible. Some board members want 100% of County operations on renewable energy.

The County is doing a soft launch of a zero-waste plan in 2020. This will work toward a 90% diversion rate.

Questions:

Does the zero-waste goal include incineration?

Answer: Arlington does not count incinerated material.

Discussion: Arlington isn't recycling everything it says it is.

Discussion of the glass recycling program. It only has two drop-off points. Ms. McBride said that the County is actively looking for more sites. Attendees made clear that we want one in 22202, to make it easier for residents to recycle glass.

What is the timeframe for organic food waste in green bins?

An attendee mentioned the community compost program at the Crystal City Farmer's Market

Concerns about stormwater. How do we deal with the amount of density? Is the county making the necessary investments in water and sewage management? An attendee asked, with the claim that 90% of increase in impervious services coming from redevelopment of single-family lots, is Arlington thinking about changing the rules for lot coverage?

3. Waste to Wealth Initiative – Neil Seldman, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Neil Seldman works for a nonprofit that helps communities improve their sustainability and better use resources. He focused a lot on Arlington's use of a trash incinerator. He said we have old technology that should be shut down. He talked about how many other communities are working to shut down their incinerators.

He also discussed the County's claim of working toward "zero waste." The claim of 50% diversion to recycling cannot be accurate. Not everything with think is being recycled is actually being recycled. A community can't have a zero waste goal without a composting program.

The conversation also focused on the changes in glass recycling. Fairfax's glass program is producing good materials for the construction industry.

In general, Mr. Seldman said that companies make money on landfills and burning, not recycling. So, citizens need to be more vigilant.

He recommended asking for a comprehensive, independent audit of our true waste management and recycling programs to determine where we could improve. He estimated this would cost approximately \$10,000 and take 1 month.

He also recommended having a workshop for citizens to learn what other cities are doing to have more profitable recycling programs.