

**Membership Meeting Minutes  
Aurora Highlands Civic Association  
September 13, 2023 via Zoom**

**Opening & Approval of Minutes**

President Cory Giacobbe opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with a welcome to the membership and an overview of the agenda for the evening. The group approved the minutes for the June meeting that had been posted to the AHCA web site for review.

**Livability22202 Reboot**

Cory led the group through a history of the Livability22202 process (a coalition of the three civic associations), using many of the slides from the [livability22202.org](http://livability22202.org) website for the discussion. Stacey Meyer also gave background on the impetus for the founding of the group as a way to represent the entire 22202 neighborhood.

Based on the priorities identified by the Livability leadership group, Cory walked the group through the three tiers as prioritized:

- First Tier: Elementary School; Community Center; Libraries
- Second Tier: Housing; Green Ribbon; Route 1; Green Space; Underground
- Third Tier: Childcare services; a second entrance to Pentagon City; Metro; local “jitney” service

During the discussion some of the issues raised were:

- The disconnect between the vision and implementation, how do we ensure that there is an adequate plan for implementation?
- There needs to be a reference to the historic nature of the texture and fabric of the AHCA neighborhood.
- There needs to be a vote by the AHCA membership on the final report. There was a motion that failed due to lack of a quorum to formally request more time to study the draft and that we notify the County in writing that we do not concur if the report goes forward without that study time and formal membership approval.
- The Crystal City sector plan does a good job of identifying how the community benefits are a part of the planning process. How can we do it for this effort? One success has been the incorporation of the green ribbon into development plans.
- Need to be sure that supermarkets with parking remain, especially as the number of residents continues to increase.
- Open space needs to be in the first tier and there needs to be a recognition of the tension between a centrally located new elementary school and Virginia Highland Park open space.
- There was also concern that the community-wide meeting is scheduled for September 25, which is also Yom Kippur. Cory sent a note to the Livability leadership asking for rescheduling.

Based on the issues raised at the meeting, the initial rough draft has been updated and shared with the other two civic associations in Livability. That text follows as an attachment.

## **Airport Noise**

Dr. Heather Spence presented on a new group that has formed to look into noise at the airport. One of their first efforts is to review the FAA's proposed revision to noise metrics. They are proposing to move to noise averages rather than peaks of noise. Dr. Spence also noted that our neighborhood is impacted by the ground noise of the aircraft at DCA and that it is an area that also needs further study.

In response to a question about whether being in the DCA flight path is a disclosure item when selling your house, a participating realtor responded. The answer is no, Arlington County does not have a required disclosure about the DCA flight paths. A local realtor added that you would actually get a lot of pushback from many homeowners in creating one as everyone from Bellevue Forest in N Arlington, to Rosslyn, all the way to our neighborhood hears the planes. It is part of being near the nation's capital, akin to hearing the Metrorail and CSX trains closer to Crystal Drive, or houses near highways and sound barriers (we don't have a required disclosure item for those things either). The County leaves it up to purchasers to decide whether or not they want to live in a busy urban area connected to multiple major transportation systems, or not.

## **County Requests for Comments**

- Followed up with the County on traffic and parking problems at the Avis lot on Eads Street, no response yet.
- Commented on a minor site plan amendment for 1900 Crystal Drive, available on AHCA website.
- Commented on MWAA's Environmental Assessment of a project to reconfigure roadways, build new parking garages, and a new headquarters office building at DCA. Available on AHCA website.
- County just published a draft update to the [Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan](#) and are looking for comments.
- The County's review of the RiverHouse project will be underway soon and AHCA has asked for AHCA to have a representative. Cory asked Nick Giacobbe to represent AHCA.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

- Community outreach on CC2DCA pedestrian/bicycle bridge on 9/19 from 5-7 p.m. at Aurora Hills Community Center
- Community Outreach on RiverHouse redevelopment on 9/21 from noon to 1:30, virtual

## **New Business/Announcements**

Natasha Atkins spoke about the importance of planting new trees as our tree canopy continues to be impacted by its age and developer clearcutting of lots. The County has a free tree planting program and Natasha and Cory are happy to help walk neighbors through the process.

## **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Nicholas J. Giacobbe, Jr.  
Recording Secretary

## **Livability 22202's Three Tiers of Priorities**

### **First Tier - Elementary School, Community Center, Libraries, Open Space**

- *Elementary School* - 22202 needs a new elementary school to alleviate overcrowding at Oakridge. Siting of the new school will be critical and should not adversely impact open space.
- *Community Center* - The neighborhood needs a real community center (similar to Arlington Mill or Walter Reed) to incorporate the senior programs and grow the programming to include art gallery and studios, dance studios, performance places for theater, dance, comedy of various sizes and flexibility; places for hands-on workshops and lectures; game rooms; and flexible community meeting spaces of all sizes.
- *Libraries* – The existing Aurora Hills library is a dated facility and a bigger library is needed in the center of the neighborhood (as well as a smaller, separate branch in Crystal City). If the library and community center can be built in a single central location such as the existing site, the current library/community center programs should continue operations in a temporary facility during construction.
- *Open Space with more green, less hardscape*: Tree Canopy coverage (and native plants); more green park-like open spaces, less plazas with hardscape. Complete the park planning in Crystal City and Virginia Highlands Park – and build them.

### **Second Tier – Needs and asks of high – and continuing – importance, but not first tier:**

- *Housing* – ensuring our current residents can stay in their homes, and providing access to housing for those who work in our community; providing a variety of types to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities and family sizes and arrangements – including senior housing. Provide affordable housing and housing that is affordable by maintaining the existing diversity of housing stock and developing programs that allow new residents to move in and existing residents to stay. Look for ways to preserve and celebrate the historic fabric and texture of Aurora Hills and Addison Heights.
- *Green Ribbon* (pedestrian and bike network): Break up the megablocks by providing continuous connected routes throughout 22202 and beyond – and that are green!
- *Route 1* - The importance of keeping Route 1 grade-separated at 18th Street South for safe and convenient east-west access not only for pedestrian and bikes, but also for emergency vehicles.
- *Save The Underground* – Both as a commuter route as well as new uses for the empty retail spaces.

### **Third Tier – Important Needs and Asks – but lower priorities:**

- *Child care services*: We need more – and more affordable options including qualified individuals offering licensed child care at their homes.

- *A second entrance for the Pentagon City Metro, at 15<sup>th</sup> & Hayes* – historically this has been one of the most used stations in the Metro and a second entrance has been on the neighborhood’s list for many years in order to ease congestion.
- *Essential Services:* The neighborhood needs to maintain supermarkets and other essential services with appropriate parking.
- *A pilot project to test feasibility of a “jitney” service* to provide local, connecting transit option for those who cannot bike or walk to local resources.