

Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations, Inc.

Meeting Minutes, November 30, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Lynn Bostain at 7:05 PM and those present introduced themselves.

Minutes. Upon motion by Annabelle Fisher and seconded by Andrea Dies and carried to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2011 meeting.

Treasurer's Report. David Fromm reported for Amy Slack. He announced two new members: Taylor Run and the Fairlington Civic Association. The treasury stands at \$7,330.55.

Current & Pending Development Projects. Gwen Wright distributed a list of projects to be presented to the Planning Commission through February, 2012. She also presented in detail reports on five agenda items for the December 6 meeting of the Commission.

There is a request for an addition to a classroom building at Episcopal High School. This will involve tearing down a portion of the existing building and replacing it with an expanded new wing. This is intended to provide additional space and is not in anticipation of expanding the student body.

The BradLee Safeway project is being brought back to the Commission with some modifications to the plan submitted in November. There will be 60,000 sq. ft. of retail in the main building and a small detached retail building of 3,000 sq. ft. There were discussions with Sun Trust and the adjacent medical professional building regarding the use of Marlee Lane for delivery trucks, but neither would agree because it would have caused them to lose parking spaces. The new Safeway will include parking and also a community room on the ground level, with retail on the upper level.

The developer agrees to pay \$181,500 for pedestrian and traffic related improvements and also \$200,000 for the Braddock/Lee/Quaker intersection improvement project.

Mt Vernon Village Center will provide upgraded retail space for Mom's Market and the CVS store that are at the site. There will be two buildings on five acres with 478 rental apartments including 28 on-site affordable housing units. Parking will be underground with no parking reduction requested.

The James Bland – Old Town Commons project is being amended to reconfigure the multi-family buildings fronting on Patrick St. between Montgomery and First Sts. There will be a 60' market rate building with elevators and underground parking. On each side of this building will be two 50' (4-floor) walk-up buildings that will be public housing.

The final item for the December docket is the Landmark Gateway Project where an amendment is requested to reduce the retail component from 30,000 to 15,000 sq. ft. The project will be three residential high rise buildings replacing three warehouses now on the site at the corner of South Pickett Street and Van Dorn. There will be 470 rental units with below grade parking (719 residential spaces and 82 commercial).

Poul Hertel suggested that pedestrians need to be taken into consideration and noted that the City overlooks the importance of accommodating pedestrians in an urban environment.

Ms. Wright said that she will provide details of the January docket items during December even though we have no meeting scheduled. Possibly the information can be distributed to the membership by Email.

Alexandria's Budget 2012. Lynn introduced Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager for Alexandria. Mr. Johnson passed out the City Resolution (No. 2480) setting guidelines for the FY2013 general fund operating budget and the capital improvement program for FY2013 – FY 2022.

Johnson noted that because of economic conditions, the increase in general fund revenue is anticipated to be only 2 ¼%. The guidelines show no increase in the base real estate tax rate. The transfer to the schools will be at the same rate as the increase in revenue of 2 ¼ % and the schools will have a deficit that they will have to deal with.

Over-all there is an anticipated shortfall of \$12,500,000.

The budget will include money for hiring and training personnel for the new fire station #210 on Eisenhower Avenue.

For public safety, at least the 2 ¼% rate of growth anticipated for the schools will apply to police, emergency communications, fire, E.M.S. and the Sheriff.

Public infrastructure improvements (street paving, maintenance and sidewalk maintenance) will preserve allocations at current levels.

All Departments are being requested to develop Departmental budgets with a 6% reduction.

Emphasis will be on reorganization that will provide for maintenance of the quality of core services.

Jack Sullivan asked about the status of Fire Station #211 in the Beauregard corridor and Johnson said that it is not in the budget projection.

Annabelle Fisher asked about recent news reports about irregularities in the handling of school finances and also about a City general services employee who had pleaded guilty to the misuse of a City of Buffalo credit card at a prior job posting. Johnson replied that the employee had been put on paid administrative leave pending resolution of the situation which just came to his attention today.

Andrea Dies commented on trees planted in median strips that ultimately grow so that their roots tear up sidewalks and pavement and their foliage blocks signs and site lines.

A question was also raised about why there were vacancies in parking enforcement when this should provide a revenue stream for the City. Johnson said that they have had difficulty filling positions in parking enforcement because people don't like to be parking enforcement officers.

Ms. Bostain thanked Bruce for his interesting presentation.

Federation Web Site. It was decided to post-pone discussion of the web site until the January meeting. David Fromm said that Ms. Slack was working on suggestions for the site that had been submitted by the group.

Federation By-Laws Update. Mr. Waud said that Geoff Goodale had advised him that a new draft of the revised by-laws will be ready to be circulated to the Board within a few days. After the Board has reviewed the revisions, a Board meeting will be scheduled for January after which the draft will be presented for discussion and action by the entire membership.

Report of Federation Liaisons. Poul Hertel reported on the Transit Corridor group for which he and Nancy Jennings are the federation representatives.

The Corridor A (Potomac Yards/Old Town) meeting was attended by a large group of citizens all of whom were opposed to the City plan. There will be a meeting on Corridor A in Room 1101 City Hall at 7 PM on December 15 and Poul encouraged as many as possible to attend.

Regarding Corridor B (Duke Street) citizens are opposed to removal of service roads. The next meeting on Corridor B will probably be on the third Thursday in January.

New Business. Annabelle Fisher suggested that we should host a reception for the new City Manager.

David Fromm announced the death of Judy Lowe, who had been a civic activist in Del Ray for many years. Viewing will be at Everly Wheatley (Braddock Road) on December 2 from 6 – 8 PM and the funeral will be at a church in Del Ray on Saturday afternoon at 4 PM.

Elizabeth Wright announced that the December 1 meeting of the Holmes Run Park Committee will feature a discussion of the sewer repair along Holmes Run with information to be provided on long and short term maintenance plans.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Converse West, Secretary

Present at the meeting were guests:

Alex Braden, Alexandria Office of Management & Budget

Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager

Gwen Wright, Chief of Development, Alexandria Planning & Zoning

Co-Chairs Lynn Bostain and Roger Waud and the following member Association representatives and citizens:

John Broughton

Michael Hobbs

Tom Soapes

Kathy Burns

Dick Hobson

Jack Sullivan

Katy Cannady

Nancy Jennings

Pat Sullivan

Andrea Dies

Joanne Lepanto

Converse West

Annabelle Fisher

Dave Levy

Elizabeth Wright

David Fromm