

Arlington Heights Civic Association Quarterly Meeting, May 14, 2019, Quarterly Meeting Minutes

The May 14, 2019 meeting of the Arlington Heights Civic Association (AHCA) was called to order by President Kristi Sawert at 7:06 pm in the Patrick Henry Elementary School library. President Sawert welcomed attendees.

Attendees: Nick Carrasco, Marcus Cox, Maureen Critchley, Mary Crosby, Mahender Dudani, Matthew Hurtt, Susannah Keefe, Genevive Kelly, Kimberly Klingler, Carole Lieber, Marilyn Marton, Kathleen Mevkl, Ellen Moon, Jonathan Moon, Doug McCarthy, Jalinta McCarthy, Catherine Newling, Anne O'Brien, Melanie Ciolele-Panno, Blosson Perry, Robert Perry, Morton Posner, Brian Siguitz, Kristi Sawert, Tia Scales, Blaise Scinto, Julius Spain, Aklilu Tesfai, Jessica Vasquez, James M. (Jay) Vennett, Charles Wilson

Reports:

Secretary's report: Carole Lieber distributed February meeting minutes on behalf of Secretary Eileen Janas. Minutes of the February 12, 2019 meeting were approved without revision.

Treasurer's report: President Sawert encouraged residents to pay association dues and advised most money collected from dues funded association picnic.

Neighborhood Conservation update: President Sawert advised there was not much to update but county was close to signing a contract to put planned improvements in place.

Arlington County Civic Federation update: Mahender Dudani encouraged residents to visit the ACCF website.

Washington Gas representative Jeyben Castro, Community Engagement Manager, discussed natural gas and addressed neighborhood concerns about gas odors. He recommended following the 3 Rs – recognize, react and respond and to call 911 if one noticed gas odor. He advised that gas lines are periodically checked for potential leaks. Washington Gas annually conducts surveys and an individual pipe is checked about every 3 years, for potential leaks. In response to survey results and individual calls from the public, Washington Gas investigates and determines if a leak or odor is hazardous or non-hazardous. Hazardous leaks are fixed immediately and on the spot; the company will not leave the site until the repair is made; non-hazardous odors/potential leaks are revisited after 6 months. If the situation persists, the company allows an additional 6 months for repair. He advised that a new program, VA SAVE, is coming to all neighborhoods and will provide funding for infrastructure repair. Mr. Castro advised that 5th and 6th street had been tested four times, most recently on April 5, 2019, and the issue seemed to be a storm drain emitting a gas smell. Mr. Castro distributed materials including safety information and a scratch and sniff card to identify gas odors. He advised that anytime one detects a gas odor a call should be placed to Washington Gas; if one detects an odor 10 times a day, call ten times. These calls are recorded and will be used to determine where to focus efforts for VA SAVE,

which provides 116.5 million dollars of funding over the next 5 years. Mr. Castro advised that if one smells gas, they should not call unless they are 300 yards away from the smell. No cellphones, no ignitions.

Mr. Castro was joined by his colleague Vladimir, who discussed calling 811 before you dig, even if it is just a bush, or even pavers. He discussed the colors used to mark lines, including yellow for gas and red for electric. In addition to calling 8-1-1, tickets can also be initiated through their portal at www.VA811.com. Calls should be made at least 2 business days in advance. The markings are good for 15 days. If project is delayed more than 15 days, another call to 8-1-1 is required. Sewer work also requires a call to 8-1-1. Confirmation emails are sent out to advise when the utilities company will be out to mark the lines, and home owners should advise location of where they want work done. Both representatives advised calling 8-1-1 if they observe any digging and emphasized that under Virginia Law it is the responsibility of **contractors** to phone 8-1-1 and verbiage should be included in contracts stating the contractor will call 8-1-1. Washington Gas is available to speak to other groups.

Arlington County Code Inspector Charles Wilson discussed the process of enforcing code violations. He advised that if he can see a violation from the public right of way, he is required to cite the code violation. He is responsible for code enforcement in Arlington Heights and Penrose. Mr. Wilson passed out his business card and advised residents to call his office and file a complaint if they had concerns about code violations. His office will investigate and provides homeowners with a violation notice and a specified timeline for addressing the violation. He advised that concerns about county property should be referred to DES.

An Arlington County Fair update was provided by Jessica Vasquez, county liaison to the fair. The process for parking passes will not change this year. Concerns were raised about disability parking, and Ms. Vasquez advised that again fair goers will not have access to the parking lot. She also advised buses will not be available this year due to cuts in the county budget, but they are hoping to be able to use school buses for transportation. This year there will be no pigs, but there will be goat yoga, robotics, a pie eating contest and a potential butterfly garden. Residents discussed options for obtaining a stage and buses, including contacting Ft. Myer and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization.

A LED Light resolution was presented and discussed by Genevieve Kelly. Ms. Kelly discussed concerns about health impacts of the high Kelvin first generation LED street lighting and her resolution urged county replacement of these lights with newer, safer 3000 Kelvin LED bulbs. Passing the resolution would prioritize AHCA in the replacement process. The motion passed.

Updates were provided about the potential library move and neighbors were encouraged to write to the county. The proposed left hand prohibition from route 50 on to S Irving is being studied by VDOT. President Sawert also discussed trailers being moved into the career center parking lot and encouraged residents to write to the School Board with their concerns about the elimination of parking spaces to

accommodate the trailers. President Sawert also discussed an upcoming county vote on accessory dwellings and changes to setbacks.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Lieber,
For Eileen Janas, Secretary