**SEMINARY RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

**SRCA BOARD MEETING**

**April 1, 2021 – 7:30 PM by Zoom Conference Call**

**In attendance:**

Jeanne Jacob, President; Nick Giannotti, First Vice President; Maria Browne, Treasurer; Mike Souza, Parliamentarian; Beth Chase, Liaison, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School (SSSAS) CFO; Jeremy Flachs, Liaison, Beth El Hebrew Congregation; Susan Clark-Sestak, Chair Communications Committee; Joe Sestak, City of Alexandria Liaison; Mike Brookbank, Chair SRCA History Committee; Laura Plati, Chair SRCA Welcome Committee; Paul Judge, SHA Representative; and SRCA Transportation Committee Representatives (Duke Street Corridor Committee): Fran Vogel, President Strawberry Hill Civic Association; Dave Cheney; Rick Gould; Scott Sutherland

1. **Welcome and President’s Report – Jeanne Jacob**

1.1 Jacob welcomed the Board to the April Board meeting and noted that no Seminary Ridge (SR) residents were on the call at that time, so any questions/concerns from SR residents during the usual “Open Mic” session at the beginning of the meeting would be held at the end. She then welcomed and introduced Jeremy Flachs as the new SRCA Liaison to BEHC (Beth El Hebrew Congregation). She noted that she had invited the ACPD Liaison and Alexandria’s Sherriff’s Liaison to speak that evening, but had not heard from either of them. She will invite them again for the May meeting.

1.2 Jacob highlighted work needing to be done in Seminary Ridge: cleanup Parkways – leaves, trash, construction fencing, etc.; cleanup areas near sidewalks paralleling Strawberry Run; request street repairs on Fort Williams Parkway after construction; and complete repairs where orange fencing still stands around cable work done on the island near the corner of Colonel Ellis and FWP.

1.3 Then, she reported that there was interest in having SRCA Zoom meetings to introduce the City’s Mayoral and City Council Candidates and opened the matter for discussion. It was agreed that such meetings should not be part of a Board meeting, but if held, be a separate Zoom meeting. Sestak offered to contact each of the candidates and Sousa offered to assist in this effort. They will develop a format (likely via Zoom) and possible dates for these meetings. Candidates also will be offered the opportunity to submit a 5-minute video, which could be posted on the SRCA website. Participation in any of these events is not to be viewed as SRCA endorsement of any specific candidate.

1. **Secretary’s Report – Jacob**

2.1 Jacob reported that Giglio had to step down from being theSRCA Secretary as she had been appointed to a Commission that met on the same day/time as the SRCA Board meetings. Thus, a new SRCA Secretary was needed. She asked the Board to help search for one and, in the meantime, she and Clark-Sestak would prepare the minutes from written reports submitted by the Board members.

2.2 She asked for approval of the March 4, 2021 SRCA Board minutes. Brookbank made the motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Giannotti seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Maria Browne**

3.1 Browne stated there was nothing to report in terms of checks received or written. The bank balance therefore remains $17,266.17.

3.2 Browne was able to establish access to online banking last month, which will allow for more up-to-date reports.

3.3 Browne has been working with the SRCA’s website designer to allow for the use of Pay Pal as an option for dues payment. Residents will still have the option of paying dues by check.

1. **SRCA Committee Chair Reports – Committee Chairs**
	1. **SRCA Historian – Mike Brookbank**

Brookbank wrote a short history of Fort Worth and provided a map of same for inclusion in the soon-to-be-activated SRCA website.

* 1. **Welcome Committee for New Residents – Laura Plati**

Plati reported that there have been six homes in SR either under contract or sold in the last month (4116 N. Garland Street, 3808 Griffith Place, 1005 St. Stephens Road, 3722 Templeton Place, 3939 Fort Worth, and 535 Fort Williams Parkway). She will continue to contact the new residents and provide a welcome gift and Directory to each. Brookbank confirmed that, as Block Captain, he had already provided the Directory to the new residents on Templeton Place.

* 1. **Events – Kate Hennigan**

Hennigan was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a written report to Jacob.

* + 1. There were 14 participants (adults and children) in the **St. Patrick’s Day Pot of Gold** contest. Winners will receive their prize in the coming week. We received lots of positive feedback about this event!
		2. There was discussion about the desirability of a **Community Clean-Up**, with a particular focus on the islands and areas adjacent to sidewalks along Fort Williams Parkway. It was agreed to hold this event on **Saturday, April 17, 9:00 - 1:00**. All wishing to participate should bring 1-2 trash bags, rakes, clippers, and wear gloves. This is a particularly good opportunity for students and scouts looking to perform community service. Chase offered to provide Jacob with the name of her contact at the scout troop performing some work at SSSAS.
		3. It was agreed that the **Community Yard** sale will be held on **Saturday, May 8, 8:00 - Noon**. There are already two homes signed up. All residents who wish to participate should send an email to Hennigan (kate@bertlesrealestate.com) and/or SRCA (news4srca@gmail.com) with their street address. A map of participating households will be prepared for hand-out during the event at the participating houses. Jacob has the yard sale signs at her home and offered to help set them out. Brookbank stated that his wife has been successful in advertising the SRCA’s previous yard sales at no cost. She will provide this information to Hennigan.
		4. **Seminary Ridge Real Estate Update:** In the last six months, we have had 11 sales (either sold or under contract/pending) in the neighborhood. The average "days on market" is 13 and the average sales price is $1,163,125.00.  The market in general has picked up substantially - people are looking for more space (like home offices and backyards), and with interest rates still historically low, buyers are eager to move quickly and competitively.

**4.4 SSSAS (St. Stephen’s St. Agnes School) Liaison – Beth Chase**

SSSAS was closed for Spring Break week of March 22 and has been having virtual classes this week. Today the entire school community received a covid test. Based on the test results that will be received this weekend, students will return to campus next week if the results are good. After school sports will resume week of April 5. As such, SSSAS continues to request that neighbors not come on campus when students are practicing or competing. We will continue to post signs to notify neighbors.

**4.5 BEHC (Beth El Hebrew Congregation) Liaison -- Jeremy Flachs**

Flachs thanked Sestak for his outreach to BEHC and told the Board a bit about himself. He lives in Del Rey, but worships in SR and will be the Liaison for BECH to SRCA. He reported that BEHC is still virtual, but there is a tent in the parking lot that will be used for Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and some religious school classes are being held outside. He mentioned that BEHC’s property borders the new Karig Estates on the west and SR homes on the south. The two acres on the south have been cleaned up, have walking paths, and are planted with many wild flowers. He encouraged the neighborhood to walk through that area, which can be accessed behind the Beth El parking lot.

Jacob asked if BEHC would still be a place for SR residents to vote given the closure due to the pandemic. He reported that it was open in November 2020 for voting and would be open again for the June 2021 Democrat primary.

**4.6 Seminary Hill Civic Association Liaison – Paul Judge**

Judge reported that SHA continues to track a number of issues, specifically he mentioned:

* **AHDC Affordable Housing Proposal on Seminary Road:**President Carter Flemming has been in contact withAHDCJon Frederick. They will be submitting their revised concept one plan to Planning and Zoning within the week. Plan is for townhomes, not multi-family apartment buildings.
* **Inova Hospital Site Rezoning:**Cathy Puskar has notified President Flemming that INOVA has agreed to change their proposal from RA to RB zoning.
* **Taylor Run Stream Restoration:**SHA and 11 other civic associations are asking that the city explore alternative ways to gain Chesapeake Bay reduction pollution credits by planting trees instead of stream restoration, which takes down trees.
* **ADUs:**6-1 Vote to permit ADUs.  It will be going forward next month after some staff revisions and clarifications.
* **School Colocation:**School Board Voted against co-location 9-0.
* **Alexandria Mobility Plan:** Bill Rossello, representing the Federation, is on an advisory committee for the development of the Alexandria Mobility Plan (AMP) which is intended to update the 2008 Transportation Master Plan. The latest version has now been sent out for public comment. The plan, executive summary, and feedback form are available on the City website (alexandriava.gov). Public comment period is open until April 30.
* **Duke Street Transitway:**Nothingnew to report.
* **Newport Village Redevelopment Project:**Went through Planning and will be going to Council.
* **The Heritage in Old Town:**Was approved 7-0 by Planning will be going to Council for final vote.  This development replaces 244 affordable units with buildings containing 750 units.
* **West End Coalition Candidates Forum:**Nan Jennings is serving as the treasurer for this group. There will be a Zoom forum May 1, 2021.
* **The High School Project Representative:**Tom Fulton will represent SHA as project goes forward.
* **Speed Limit on West Seminary Rd:**SHAwill request that the city provide more information.  There also needs to be more community outreach.

**4.7 City of Alexandria Liaison – Joe Sestak**

**4.7.1 Strawberry Run Restoration Project**: Sestak reported that all City Council members, the mayor, as well as several candidates for City Council and mayor, have been walked down the portion of Strawberry Run that shows the ineffectiveness of the Natural Channel Design done there in 2010. Each person also had been given a copy of the SRCA Board-approved resolution on Strawberry Run, which is asking for a delay in any contract until June 2022 to assess why that occurred and if there are better alternatives.

Outreach has also included appearing before City Council in March, during which Councilman Chapman and Councilwomen Jackson, Pepper and Bennett-Parker offered support for a Council review of SRCA’s request. As a result, City Manager Jinks was instructed to respond to the outstanding requests for information, which residents of SR have been requesting for over seven months. Jinks’ seven-page response was sent to Sestak today and is being examined for a response.

The resolution was supposed to be addressed on April 6, but it now appears it will be done on April 27. Nevertheless, engagement on April 6 remains important to draw the Council’s attention to inconsistences in Jinks’ response. Many residents of SRCA and Strawberry Hill intend to speak at the April 6 meeting to voice their concerns about how the City has handled this issue, including the lack of transparency and accountability.

**4.7.2 Transportation Issues**

**4.7.2.1 Duke Street Transportation Committee – Dave Cheney**

Cheney reviewed the set of recommendations which the Duke Street Transportation Committee developed in March and noted the good working relationship the Committee has established with the City’s lead point of contact on this initiative. The Board discussed the recommendations, which had been distributed in advance and recommended one addition: to note that, while not part of the proposed Duke Street project, SRCA believes it important to keep in mind the challenges that the Duke Street – Telegraph Road intersection present. The Committee will add wording to this effect, and the proposed recommendations will then be distributed to all SRCA members (they will be sent in the next newsletter). Once residents have provided any feedback, and the Committee has developed a finalized set of recommendations, they will be forwarded to the City on behalf of SRCA and Strawberry Hill. In addition, the Committee plans an outreach effort to other neighborhood associations in Central Alexandria and the West End.

**4.7.2.2 Alexandria Mobility Plan (AMP) – Sestak**

As Judge reported earlier in the meeting, the AMP is out for final public comment, due April 30. It was to update the City’s 2008 Transportation Plan. Having reviewed the latest documents, Sestak noted that very little has changed since the 2008 Transportation Plan. Notably, in terms of desired “outcomes,” there is virtually no focus on improving car traffic, but there is a heavy emphasis on alternative transportation. For example, of the six chapters of the AMP, only one deals with “Streets” and that has to do with lowering speed and cut-through traffic. All others deal with transit (buses and bicycles) and other alternative modes of transportation (e.g., scooters). The plan, executive summary, and feedback form are available on the City website (alexandriava.gov).

**4.8 Communications – Susan Clark-Sestak**

4.8.1 The **SRCA Facebook group** now has 50 members. It was agreed that all SRCA-eligible residents wishing to join may do so, using the link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4srca>.

4.8.2 There have been several corrections to the new **SRCA Directory**, as well as updates with new residents’ information. All residents are asked to double-check their information and send any corrections or changes to: news4srca@gmail.com by Friday, 9 April. A new addendum will be sent out via newsletter by mid-April.

4.8.3 The **Seminary Ridge website** is nearing completion. All Board members were sent a link to preview the website and provide and recommendations by April 4. The Communications Committee will work with the website developer to finalize the site. It is expected that it will go live within the next 2-3 weeks. It was agreed that, even if PayPal connection cannot be established by then, release should not be delayed. We are still looking for more pictures to put into the photo gallery; these photos will be used on the home page to update it for each season, holiday, etc. Please send any photos you would like to share to: news4srca@gmail.com. And if any residents are photo enthusiasts and would be able to make an effort to take pictures around the community and submit them, it would be greatly appreciated!

1. **Continued “Open Mic” for SRCA Community – Jacob**

Since no SR residents had joined the Zoom call, there was no “Open Mic” session.

1. **Old Business – Jacob**

There was no old business to discuss.

1. **New Business – Jacob**

There was no new business brought forth. Jacob announced that the next SRCA Board meeting would be held on **Thursday, May 6, 2021.**

1. **Adjournment of SRCA Board Meeting – Jacob**

Jacob asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Souza made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Clark-Sestak. The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM.