

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**SRCA BOARD MEETING**

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

**In attendance:**

Jeanne Jacob, President; Kate Hennigan, Second Vice President; Susan Clark-Sestak, Secretary; Maria Browne, Treasurer; David Pritzker, Parliamentarian; Mike Brookbank, SRCA Historian; Paul Judge, SHA Representative; Beth Chase, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School (SSSAS) Liaison; Laura Plati, Chair SRCA Welcome Committee.

1. **Welcome and President’s Report – Jacob**
   1. Jacob confirmed with Pritzker that a quorum was established and opened the meeting at 7:32 pm. There were no non-board SRCA residents on the Zoom call, so the open mic session did not occur.
   2. **Reports from SRCA’s ACPD Liaison/Alexandria’s Sherriff’s Liaison**
      1. Officer Moore was unable to attend this month’s meeting, but provided information on:
         1. the arrest of a student with a gun at Alexandria City High School on 6 October, which was also widely reported in the press.
         2. October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. The City’s Domestic Violence Hotline includes a Safe House shelter; counseling; confidential support groups; and legal help, including court accompaniment and assistance with protective orders. All services continue to operate throughout the pandemic. **Visit**

[alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence](https://www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence)**for more information. If you or someone you know may be a victim of domestic violence, call 703.746.4911 to speak with skilled staff about services that are available. If someone is in immediate danger, always call or text 911**

* + 1. Officer Houston was unable to attend this month’s meeting and had no update.
  1. **Update on Karig Estates Meeting** – Jacob

Jacob reported that a large number of people attended the information meeting held at Temple Beth El on the Karig Estate development plans the last week of September. It appears that groundbreaking will not occur for some time to come. The builder has indicated he is willing to sell all or part of the property “for a price,” but no price has been mentioned. It has previously been noted that the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) has been hoping that Beth El would spearhead an effort to purchase at least part of the land, but there is nothing to report on this front at this time. Of possible interest, NVCT has in recent months been very active in opposing the sale of River Farm, but now that River Farm is no longer for sale, this might allow NVCT to focus more attention on Karig.

* 1. **October 6 City Council Forum** – Clark-Sestak

SRCA hosted a forum on Zoom webinar for all nine City Council candidates on October 6. The forum was open to other civic associations and the press and SRCA has received considerable positive feedback. SRCA’s First Vice President Richie Weiblinger moderated the forum, asking each of three candidates to address a specific question and then offering a different question to the next three candidates in rotating fashion. This allowed a breadth of topics to be covered. The webinar was recorded and a link to it is posted on the seminaryridge.net website.

SRCA will also host a mayoral forum on October 19, 7:30-8:30 pm, also via Zoom webinar. The link is posted on our website. Clark-Sestak requested that Board members (and all residents) submit questions in advance to: news4srca@gmail.com.

1. **Secretary’s Report – Clark-Sestak**

2.1 **Approval of September 2, 2021 Minutes**

The draft minutes for the September Board meeting had been distributed earlier and all changes were incorporated. **Brookbank made a motion to approve the minutes; it was seconded by Judge. The minutes were unanimously approved**.

2.2 **Approval of Annual meeting Minutes**

The draft minutes for the September 19th annual meeting had been distributed earlier and all changes were incorporated. **Brookbank made a motion to approve the minutes; it was seconded by Plati. The minutes were unanimously approved.**

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Browne**

3.1 **Dues Income/New Members Through September**

Current 2021 dues that have been received: $6,164.87 (note this includes one dues payment of $500 and one of $100 and also reflects Paypal processing fees). This total reflects 37 payments made using PayPal with remainder by check ($4,500) for 80 households, for a total of 117 households paid to date.

In contrast, by this time last year approximately $8000 in dues had been received for 160 households. Looking to next year, it will be important to consider whether to revert to personalized invoices to solicit a better return. (This year, the block captains delivered packages, including a general request for dues payment to every SRCA-eligible household, which saved on the mailing expense but personalized invoices were not included.)

3.2 **Total Assets**

As of October 7, SRCA has a balance of $19,934.32 (but this does not include $143.28 waiting to be eligible for transfer from Paypal).

3.3 There was a discussion about whether the Treasurer’s report needs to be approved. Since there was some uncertainty, **Hennigan made a motion to approve the report; Clark-Sestak seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously**. (*Secretary’s note*: Subsequent to this meeting, Pritzker confirmed that, consistent with Robert’s Rules, a Treasurer’s report does not need to be formally approved or accepted by motion, unless it is of sufficient importance, as an annual report, to be referred to auditors, in which case the board would accept the auditor’s report.)

**4. Parliamentarian Discussion – Pritzker**

As a result of the discussion about Robert’s Rules of Order for Treasurer’s reports, an item not on the agenda was brought up. Pritzker noted that the SRCA Bylaws (Art. IV, Sec. 4) require a “book” to document all Board minutes. Clark-Sestak noted that the SRCA website serves as such a “book” for all minutes (and other Board and community documents) since 2020. Brookbank requested that any Board members (or other residents) who have older Board minutes provide them to him so that they can be archived.

In general, Pritzker recommended a careful review of the Bylaws and other official SRCA documents to identify archaic language or other changes that need to be made. In addition, if such changes are to be made, they need to be approved by the SRCA as a whole and the date of any such amendments should be noted in the official documents.

1. **Annual Meeting and Picnic**

5.1 **Annual Meeting** **– Jacob**

The SRCA annual meeting was held September 19, immediately following the picnic, outdoors at SSSAS upper campus. Jacob thanked SSSAS for its willingness to host both events and noted that both were well-attended. Minutes of the meeting have been prepared and now approved for distribution to all SRCA members.

5.2 **Election** **– Jacob**

In Don Frahler’s absence, Jacob thanked him and Marianne Coates for their work as the Nominating Committee. She welcomed all 2021-22 Board members. Jacob also noted that Joe Sestak will no longer serve as Alexandria City liaison; this role will now be filled by Richie Weiblinger. She expressed her deepest appreciation for all that Sestak did in the previous year, particularly with respect to Strawberry Run and the electoral forums. Brookbank added that he was especially impressed by all the Board had accomplished in the past year.

* 1. **Picnic – Plati and Hennigan**

Many residents expressed their appreciation for being able to meet in person for the picnic and annual meeting. The picnic came in just under the approved budget: $1948 for catered food, $75 for miscellaneous food, and $490 for the games, for a total cost of $2513. Hennigan expressed her thanks to Plati and many others who helped to ensure such as successful event.

1. **SRCA Committee Chair Reports – Committee Chairs**
   1. **Upcoming Events/Activities – Hennigan**
      1. **October 19 Mayoral Forum** – Weiblinger

In Weiblinger’s absence, Jacob reminded the Board that SRCA will host a Zoom webinar forum for the two mayoral candidates on Tuesday, October 19, 7:30-8:30pm. This information will be sent out to other civic associations as up to 500 people can sign in. Everyone was encouraged to submit questions for this forum in advance. The format will be similar to the City Council candidate forum, with a short opening statement followed by a series of questions with 60-90 second responses.

* + 1. **October - Halloween Activities - Pizza Party/Parade/House Decorating** – Hennigan

SRCA’s Halloween house decorating contest was such a success last year, the Board strongly endorsed its return for a second year. Anyone interested in participating, should send their name and contact information to Hennigan, [kate@bertlesrealestate.com](mailto:kate@bertlesrealestate.com). She will create a list of all participating homes by 23 October and will drop a plastic pumpkin off at each residence to put out each day of the contest (24-31 Oct) so residents can vote for their favorites by dropping coins in the pumpkin buckets. (Participating homes are asked to please take the buckets in each night to ensure donations are not “lost” as sadly happened in a couple of cases last year). The competition will end at the start of the Halloween parade on October 31, approximately 5pm. All participants should deliver the money they collected to Hennigan. All proceeds will go to charity. Additional information will be posted on the seminaryridge.net website as it becomes available.

The Board agreed with Hennigan’s recommendation for SRCA to host a Halloween parade, as has been done for many years (except 2020). The parade will start on October 31 in one of the cul de sacs (exact time and place yet to be determined). SRCA will provide a packaged snack and drink for trick-or-treaters before they march in a parade, in keeping with protocols to have packaged food (rather than the traditional pizza, dished out by slice). Inquiries will also be made to have a fire truck come by to lead the parade, but this is always dependent on availability.

6.1.3 Jacob noted that some residents had expressed interest in another house tour of renovated houses in the neighborhood and suggested that perhaps sometime in the Spring would be an appropriate time for such an event. Sue Goodhart, past SRCA President, had arranged such tours previously and Hennigan will contact her for planning suggestions.

* 1. **Home Sales in Seminary Ridge – Hennigan**

Hennigan reported that there is one active listing in the SRCA neighborhood (3700 Templeton, listed at $1.137M), one under contract (3916 Terry Place, listed at $1.225M, which sold in 3 days), and one sold (124 Sylvan Court for $915,000). August and September had seen a slight cooling off in the market, but activity is now ramping back up.

* 1. **Seminary Hill Association (SHA) Liaison – Paul Judge**

Judge explained that SHA holds its meetings the third Thursday of even month. Starting next month, the timing will allow him to bring to SRCA’s attention the SHA’s top priorities. He anticipates that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the possibility of a second Alexandria high school, and roads will be top priorities, whereas the Karig Estate is unlikely to be. Judge further noted the tension between two city objectives: being a recognized as a green city, but at the same time pushing for higher housing density.

SHA will be holding its elections at the November meeting and Judge plans to be on the Board again.

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

Chase reported that students would not be on campus on October 11, due to the federal holiday. She also noted that movie night would be continuing for SSSAS middle school students; the next showing would be October 15. And, opening night for the Fall play will be November 5.

Chase also stated that SSSAS plans to host the second annual Spooky Spectacular on Saturday, October 30, 5:00-6:00pm. There will be even more sets created this year by the drama club, and it will remain a drive-through event. She asked whether SRCA would be interested in participating again this year. The Board supported participation and Hennigan will collect the names of families who wish to participate. They will need to sign up in advance, provide the number of children who will participate, whether they wish to receive candy, and if anyone has peanut allergy. For its part, SRCA will provide packages of candy, as it did last year. (Hennigan reported that in 2020, approximately 60 SRCA children from 18 families participated and SRCA provided 53 bags of candy.)

* 1. **BEHC Update – Jeremy Flachs**

Flachs was unable to attend this meeting, but provided a written report. Temple Beth El is slowly and carefully modifying its policies to allow outdoor consumption of certain types of food and drink, but food and drink are not yet allowed indoors.  Beth El is working on terms and conditions for building rentals, which have been shut down since March 2020.

Flachs also noted that he has had no further word on walking the Karig property to confirm which trees will be saved, nor has he heard anything from anyone else since the meeting on Karig estate was held at Beth El the last week of September.

As a reminder, especially to new SRCA residents, Temple Beth El is the voting location for our neighborhood. The Board requested that information on voting (by mail-in, early and on November 2) be included in the next SRCA newsletter (*secretary’s note*: this was done in the October 9 newsletter)

* 1. **City of Alexandria Liaison – Weiblinger/Jacob**

Jacob noted that neither Cheney nor Sutherland (members of the Duke Street committee) were able to attend this meeting. There was no new information to report.

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

Plati had no new residents to report, but did request additional copies of the printed Directory as some new non-covenant members have joined and they now need to be provided Directories. Clark-Sestak promised to provide additional copies within a week.

Plati stated she did not need additional Great Harvest gift cards at this time. (The Board has previously discussed whether to increase the amount of these gift cards as they have remained at $10 for quite some time.)

* 1. **Communications – Susan Clark-Sestak**

Clark-Sestak reported that she had purchased a one-month upgrade to the Zoom account in order to host the two candidate forums in October. The cost was $82.95, which allows for up to 500 attendees. (Zoom no longer allows a webinar for 100 attendees, as was done in May 2021, at a cost of $42.00.)

The website continues to be updated regularly and Clark-Sestak encouraged all Board members and residents to check the website for the latest information. It houses all newsletters, Board minutes, as well as pictures and information on upcoming events. More pictures would always be welcome! They should be sent to: [news4srca@gmail.com](mailto:news4srca@gmail.com).

* 1. **SRCA Historian – Mike Brookbank**

Brookbank had no information to report, except as noted in item 4, above, requesting any old SRCA materials (including Board minutes, Directories, etc.) from residents.

1. **Old Business – Jacob**

There was no old business to report.

1. **New Business – Jacob**

The next SRCA Board Meeting will be Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 7:30pm on Zoom.

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

While there were no non-board residents on the Zoom meeting, three issues had been raised by neighbors.

First, some residents have expressed interest in participating in a **caregiver support group**, whether the caregivers are taking care of a spouse, child, or parents. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dave Cavanaugh, dacavalx@gmail.com. Caring for someone may also mean needing to temporarily use equipment such as a wheelchair, walker, or other items. NextDoor can be a helpful resource for reaching out to see if someone has such equipment available to loan.

Second, several residents have expressed concern about trucks (including dump **trucks** from the MacArthur school site) **speeding** **on Ft Williams Parkway**. The Board will investigate whether a “no through trucks” sign can be posted. (*Secretary’s note*: the city and the construction company have been made aware of these concerns and it appears, at least as of this writing, that the issue may be resolved.)

Third, some other residents have asked what can be done about **scooters being parked on our sidewalks**, in some cases blocking handicap access ramps. We have been told that the City will take no action on this matter and that the specific scooter company must be contacted and asked to remove the scooters. The Board encourages residents to not only contact the scooter company, but also to call the City’s “311” number to ensure your voices are heard.

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

**David Pritzker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 pm; the motion was seconded by Mike Brookbank and unanimously approved.**