

18 April 2022

Happy Spring Everyone!

Here are a few reminders of **upcoming events**:

* This Saturday, **23 April, 9:00am until noon**: we will be having a **Spring Clean Up** of our public areas: the median strip along Fort Williams Parkway (meet at Fort Williams Parkway and Fort Worth Avenue) and the island on Fort Worth Avenue (meet at the island). Remember to bring gloves, a yard waste container or plastic bag and a spade for digging up weeds.
* Also on Saturday, **23 April**, the City Council will hold a **public hearing on the City’s budget**
* On Saturday, **14 May, 8:00am until noon** we will have our **annual yard sale**. Be sure to email Kate Hennigan by 10 May if you plan to participate and want to be included on the map (kate@bertlesrealestate.com)
* We will have our first Screen on the Green for 2022 in June. Date will be determined at the May SRCA meeting.

**In other news around our community**:

* At the March SRCA meeting, a **budget for SRCA 2022** **activities** was approved. It is posted on our website, seminaryridge.net on the Documents page.
* Updates on **Alexandria City Public Schools** (ACPS), courtesy of SRCA resident Bill Pfister. (This information is also on the Issues of Interest page of our website.)
	+ **High School Project - Minnie Howard Campus:**ACPS just had the ceremonial groundbreaking, with substantial construction to begin in June 2022 and go through summer of 2024. Occupancy is planned for the start of the 2024-25 school year.
	+ **Douglas MacArthur Elementary School Rebuild:**Late stages of the construction of the subgrade parking garage are now being completed, and construction of the garage ramp retaining wall is beginning.  They will be pouring additional concrete footers.  They will also be bringing in a large crane, for the structural steel erection, which will be on site through July.  Substantial visible progress in the next few weeks / months should be expected.  Construction will continue through summer 2023, with occupancy for the start of the 2023-24 school year.  Most remediation of the “MacArthur on Taney” campus (building and lot demolished and converted to Patrick Henry fields) will begin in the fall of 2023 and will last the better part of the following year.
* **City assessment of Seminary Road**: A report was supposed to have been prepared 18 months after the completion of the Seminary Road Diet in late 2019. However, this assessment was delayed due to the impact of COVID on traffic patterns. It is now believed that more accurate traffic patterns can be obtained and the monitoring will occur during the month of May, with the analysis expected to the done in June. The scope of the analysis will include vehicle speeds, travel volumes, crashes, and travel times. The project website will house the data collected and can already be accessed for additional information: https://www.alexandriava.gov/transportation-planning/seminary-road-complete-streets-project.

First Vice President Richie Weiblinger has been working with City staff on the focus of this analysis. The staff wants to focus on quantitative data, while he is encouraging them not only to review quantitative data, but also incorporate qualitative data in the form of interviews with people directly impacted by the Road Diet. Indeed, SRCA might wish to provide written suggestions for items they should consider as part of their study in order to make it as effective as possible since our residents probably understand the traffic patterns of Seminary Rd better than anyone. Anyone who wishes to provide such input is encouraged to contact Weiblinger directly as soon as possible (rweiblinger@hotmail.com).

* **Right Turn on Red**: We reported earlier that the City’s Transportation Engineering Services (T&ES) had approved modifying the “no turn on red” sign on eastbound Seminary Road at St. Stephens Road to include “when pedestrians are present.” SRCA and Seminary Hill Association, with the support of St Stephens St Agnes School, sent a letter requesting this modification. We were told in February that it was already approved. Now, we have been informed that the City has reversed its decision and has put a hold on this modification until it reviews City-wide any consideration of adding “when pedestrians are present” to “no turn on red” signs. SRCA is in the process of contacting City staff to better understand the reasoning behind the change to an already approved decision, when it had documented there were no sight distance issues of concern and is now ignoring the expressed desire of residents most directly impacted.
* **Housing density**: SRCA and SHA Seminary Hill Association are concerned about the city’s housing density plans. To fully understand the impetus for this and the other recent zoning changes in our city, it is helpful to go back to 2019 when the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) launched their Regional Housing Initiative to estimate the future housing needs of our region. Mayor Wilson was a member of the COG Board’s housing subcommittee that created and recommended the housing targets to the full COG Board.  The board adopted the COG goals that have the potential to significantly alter Alexandria.

SHA Liaison Paul Judge reported that City Council will have its first planning meeting with a goal of further increasing housing density and affordable housing. While, in theory, zoning for existing single occupancy homes will not be affected, residents are encouraged to review a 2020 memo prepared by City Staff about the push to increase density. This memo is posted on Seminaryridge.net on the “issues of interest page”; page 4 merits particular attention.