

**MINUTES
SRCA BOARD MEETING**

**May 4, 2023 – 7:00-8:00 PM by Zoom Conference Call**

**In attendance:**

Richie Weiblinger, President; Jeanne Jacob, Immediate Past President; Krista Poretz, First Vice President; Karen Meade, Secretary; Scott Sutherland, Treasurer; David Pritzker, Parliamentarian; Mike Brookbank, Historian; Beth Chase, SSSAS Liaison; Resident: Patricia Evans

1. **Welcome and President’s Report – Richie Weiblinger**
	1. **Welcome to SRCA Board Members and SR Residents Joining Meeting:** Weiblinger called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and welcomed those in attendance via Zoom.
		* **Questions/Concerns from SR Residents – “Open Mic”:** No questions or concerns were raised.
	2. **Priority Areas for Tonight’s Meeting:**
		* **SRCA Spring Yard Sale – Saturday, May 20:** Weiblinger asked Hennigan for the yard sale signs that have been used in past years. Hennigan hasn’t been able to locate them so we may need to repurpose the signs used for other events. We can modify them by putting something over them. Jacob added that the shop near Home Depot has all of our artwork from previous years so they could probably make more signs for us. Jacob offered to help identify where signs should be posted.
		* **SRCA Spring Community Party – Sunday, May 21:** Planning is underway. Flyers have been printed and delivered to Karner for distribution to block captains.
	3. **Brief Update on Ft. Williams Parkway and Ft. Worth Avenue Medians:** Weiblinger outlined next steps: On Fort Worth Ave, all invasives have been sprayed and overgrowth trimmed down, but the City doesn’t have the funding to fully fund planting evergreens or shrubs there, so if we want to take the initiative, we can look at doing a revitalization of these areas as part of the Beautification Committee. Weiblinger is looking at partnership programs to help us beautify all of the medians. There’s a particular program where the state will partner with us if we raise a certain amount of funding. More to come on this at a later date.
	4. **Brief Recap of SRCA Community Meeting on April 20 with Bill Rossello re: City’s Single-Family Zoning Initiatives:** [**Zoning for Housing/Housing for All | City of Alexandria, VA (alexandriava.gov)**](https://www.alexandriava.gov/planning-and-zoning/zoning-for-housinghousing-for-all):We had a great turnout for this meeting and it was very informative. Zoning for Housing/Housing for All is a matter we need to stay on top of. There are two upcoming meetings the City is coordinating: Wednesday, May 10from 6:00-7:45pm at Beatley Library, and Monday, May 22from 6:00-8:00pm at the Lee Recreation Center. The link above contains more information. Weiblinger plans to attend these meetings and requested additional representation at them as well. Follow-up meetings will be planned to obtain more input from citizens and to provide updates about what plans they’re considering.
	5. **Reports from SRCA’s ACPD Liaison/Alexandria’s Sheriff’s Liaison:** Officer Moore and Lieutenant Houston were unable to attend the meeting.
2. **Secretary’s Report – Karen Meade**
	1. **Approve meeting minutes from the March 2, 2023 Board Meeting:** Jacob moved to approve the March 2, 2023 meetings minutes as drafted, Weiblinger seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.
	2. **SRCA Community Directory Updates:** Now that Weiblinger and Karner have completed reaching out via email (for residents whom we have email addressess) to non-covenant members who had not yet paid their dues, Meade will work with Sutherland to determine if any have since paid their dues. For those who have paid, their contact info will remain in the SRCA Community Directory; those who have not paid will be removed which has been our standard practice. Jacob asked about non-covenant residents who may be new or whom we may not have email addresses for, and it was decided that we would print and distribute flyers to all non-covenant households who have not yet paid their dues in 2013. Jacob offered to help with distribution of the flyers.
		* **Resident’s Privacy Concern:** A resident brought forth a privacy and public safety concern regarding personally identifiable information (PII) being posted on a public website without one’s consent. The specific matter being referenced is SRCA meeting minutes from September 29, 2021 that included PII pertaining to changes to the SRCA Community directory at that time. Even though resident’s PII was removed from the meeting minutes and the document was replaced with a revised version that does not contain their PII, the original version of the document is still displaying in Google search. Resident feels this is in violation of The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Rule, which Google needs to be made aware of. Weiblinger and Meade have reached out to Google and Squarespace to try and assist with expediting a resolution, but Google has not yet re-crawled and re-indexed the site.

		Resident noted the following: “In many states (including Virginia) and under federal regulations (16 CFR §312) it is illegal to disseminate children's PII online without first obtaining verifiable written consent of their parent or legal guardian. The information SRCA posted to its website allows for both online and real-world tracking, targeting, and contacting of children in our neighborhood. In addition to removing the data and expediting the Google re-index of the site, we think SRCA owes it to the families whose information was posted online to notify them of this issue in case there are sensitivities like ours that I've outlined above.”

		A representative from Squarespace responded that the SRCA website needs to be re-crawled and re-indexed by Google Search Console to ensure that the content is removed from Google search, and they provided a link to start that process, but Weiblinger had already completed this step prior. Unfortunately, Google has yet to re-index our site. Squarespace indicated this process usually takes some time.
		* **Application for Approval of Exterior Modifications/Additions:** A copy of this application is included in the directory and on our website. Weiblinger noted we’ve received a record number of requests recently. Pritzker suggested we may want to consider changing some of the wording on the form. In his email to the Board dated April 12, he stated the following:

		It seems to me that the reason to inform the neighbors is to give them an opportunity to bring to the attention of the Community Committee any such infringement or intrusion that concerns them, so that the Community Committee can take such matters into consideration.  In other words, seeking the approval of the neighbors is not called for, but rather the neighbors are entitled to know what's going on in case they have a problem with it.  Maybe the request form needs some new language to clarify the situation.  Perhaps something like: "In considering your request, the Community Committee expects that you will have informed your adjacent and other potentially affected neighbors of your plans.  Have you done this?"
3. **Treasurer’s Report – Scott Sutherland**
	1. **Status of Dues:** Through May 4, 2023, 153 of our neighbors have paid their SRCA dues. Deposits to the account totaled $482.33 since our February meeting. Our bank account balance as of May 3 was $16,125.61.
	2. **Updates on any Outstanding Reimbursements:** There were four payments made since our last meeting totaling $859.40 to reimburse:
		* Katie Dominick for the expenses incurred for food and supplies for the St. Patrick’s Day party,
		* Scott Sutherland for food expenses for the St. Patrick’s Day party,
		* Karen Meade for printing flyers regarding the Spring party, to pay the annual fee for the SRCA website and for email services,
		* and to pay the annual registration fee to the State Corporation Commission to maintain SRCA’s corporate status.
4. **First Vice President’s Report – Key Updates from Partner Associations/Coalitions – Krista Poretz/Jeanne Jacob:** All three of these organizations’ main focus at this time is the Zoning for Housing topic. Poretz attended the March 29 AFCA meeting and the March 8 SHA meeting. The SHA meeting in April was attended by Beth Chase while Poretz attended the Duke St. meeting. Chase indicated SHA had four journalists participate in the meeting and it was very informative. A lot of good questions were posed by those who attended. They have four very diverse ways of looking at how things are reported. The police also spoke about the recent violence in Bradlee shopping center. At least one day a week school doesn’t start until 10am, so groups of students often congregate at McDonalds and outside of The Fresh Market. There are ten slots open to be filled for off duty policy officers to go and work/monitor the area, but the problem is there aren’t a lot of police officers who want to do it because most don’t live in Alexandria and don’t want to drive into Alexandria just for one shift from 12-5pm. McDonalds is also getting security since that’s where the recent problems have started. There was a lot of push-back asking why the police officers can’t get the students to stay away from the area, and the response from the police was that it’s a parental issue and their hands are a bit tied in that case.

Regarding Zoning for Housing, Poretz echoed what Weiblinger stated earlier, which is that there are two public meeting opportunities being held in the coming weeks, once of which she plans to attend.

One of the major things happening in this area is that the City is considering extending the public comment period. The Del Ray Citizens Association is asking for a 60-day review period once the city publishes their analysis and findings. A common theme is residents want more time to review what the City is planning to move forward with based on their research and analysis. The City indicated it would consider this, but didn’t give an official ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

Different communities in Alexandria are concerned about different aspects of the Zoning for Housing project – it’s not just about the zoning for single-family or multi-family homes. Del Ray, for example, is really concerned about the height modifications. There will be more opportunities to comment on plans and the timeline for the proposals in the near future. The project will remain in the community engagement phase through June, with more engagement sessions occurring in is Sept/Oct.

To tie things back to our community, Poretz shared her assessment with the Board about our covenants and what this project might mean for us. Pritzker and Poretz corresponded and feel we would be susceptible to having properties zoned for multi-family use if the City does enact this for our community, however, they believe the SRCA Board would have to approve or deny it through our established process. This is why the SRCA application for requesting approval for exterior home modifications becomes really important, as that would be the way we can control the process depending on which way the Board leans.

One Board member questioned whether we would have any say/power since we are a civic association and not an HOA.

A discussion followed about SRCA’s covenants as it pertains to the Housing for All project and several suggestions were proposed:

* Develop a new committee to further research this topic and figure out what the implications are for our property owners. Weiblinger will work with Jacob to put together a suggested list of folks from our community who may be good candidates for this committee.
* Keep our ear to the ground and see what’s happening in other jurisdictions since this doesn’t just affect Alexandria. INOVA Alexandria will be the first area where we’ll start to see major changes in zoning. One Board member noted that a legal suit has already started in Fairfax county.
* Seek legal advice from good land use lawyer regarding whether our covenants could be enforced/would hold up in court. We could pool together with various associations and hire a good lawyer.

One Board member asked what happens if a resident refuses to submit an application to the Board for review and moves forward with their plans anyway because they have a City permit. Or even if they don’t obtain a permit from the City? It was decided this discussion would be taken offline.

* 1. **Seminary Hill Civic Association (SHA) Report**
	2. **West End Coalition (WEC) Report**
	3. **Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations (AFCA) Report**
1. **Second Vice President’s Report – SRCA Events – Katie Dominick:** Dominick was unable to attend the meeting.
	1. **May 20 SRCA Spring Yard Sale**
	2. **May 21 SRCA Spring Community Party at the Wainsteins**
2. **Communications Report – Stephanie Karner**
	1. **SRCA Community Directory – Outreach to Non-Covenant Members completed:** Karner and Weiblinger completed outreach to NC members who have not yet paid their dues, asking that they pay by the end of April 2023 in order to be included in the SRCA Community Directory.
3. **City of Alexandria Projects – Scott Sutherland/ Krista Poretz/Jeanne Jacob**
	1. **Duke Street-in-Motion Updates – Scott Sutherland:** Sutherland attended the Agenda Alexandria meeting on April 24 which was more informative than substantive. We’re nearing the end of the Duke Street in Motion initiative. On May 18 there will be a vote on a set of recommendations that will go to the City Council in June, who will determine what to do and how.

	Poretz agreed that we’re at the finish line. She attended the April 18 meeting in person. What will happen next is that the Advisory Group will provide a presentation of feedback and make a recommendation to City Council on a preferred concept for the busway for each segment of the corridor as well as on curb features such as sidewalks, shared use paths, and bicycling facilities. They’ll then share the preferred concept with Boards & Commissions. In June there will be a public hearing and the City Council will vote on the near- and long-term solution. The design and bidding process is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023. Construction would begin immediately following in 2024 with the goal of completing construction in 2027. At the meeting the only people who were allowed to ask questions/provide comments were the first five people who signed the sheet; Poretz was not one of them and therefore was unable to ask her question. Poretz noted that there’s a connection between Duke Street in Motion and Zoning for Housing. If you are within a walkshed of a bus station, that could be part of the decision-making that goes into whether your community is zoned for multi-family use or not. They’ll have to answer those questions at the meeting on the 18th. Some really good questions were asked by the Board of the City about cost and time savings, and the amount of time that would be saved for anyone in a car, bus, etc. was very underwhelming. One of the proposals actually increased the amount of time it would take a vehicle to travel on Duke St. Concept A is purportedly safer due to islands being put in as well as protected areas, but it’s above budget and what was received in terms of a grant. Regarding speed reduction for buses, one attendee questioned whether speed times were decreased because the number of stops decreased, and that question could not be answered. Another question that couldn’t be answered was about ridership - right now it’s free, but soon there may be a charge, and they couldn’t answer whether their analysis of ridership was for paying or non-paying riders. Stats would likely change a lot if you have to begin paying to ride the bus. In general, it seems there are still a lot of unanswered questions this far into the decision-making process.

	Sutherland added that the City conducted a public outreach poll, which just closed on April 30, and much like one of their earlier polls, it included leading questions and limited answer options. The public input phase is very brief and collapsed.

	Jacob added that the question of eminent domain was posed at the meeting at the Washington Memorial. Deputy City Manager, Hilary Orr, said eminent domain can still be done. So right now, they have their preferred plan (A) which is center running until Jordan St. to Wheeler (where it’s not wide enough) so buses will then go to the side. They have the money to do center running on both ends but not the middle. Jacob’s prediction is that they’ll use their money for center bus lanes from 395 to Jordan St., and Wheeler to King St., and then they’ll come back with a new grant so they can make it a complete run with center bus lanes.

	A vote will be made at the May 18 Advisory Committee meeting and the decision will be rolled out on May 25.
	2. **Inova Hospital Project Updates – Krista Poretz**
	3. **Strawberry Run Updates – Jeanne Jacob:** Jacob noted that if anyone read the Mayor’s monthly email report, either he or his staff mis-stated that Strawberry Run and Taylor Run have been delayed and it’s costing the City of Alexandria money because they had to return the grant. According to Jacob, the City would not be able to gain the pollution credits they would have been able to get if the grant had gone through. Jeanne hopes people will take the time to send an email asking Mayor to correct the statement. There are no pollution credits to be gained, and it’s not the reason the money had to be returned.

	One Board member suggested we write an opinion article in the local paper. Jacob suggested we tell Bill Rossello and Carter Flemming so they can address the matter since it will be more powerful if it comes from an entire group. Individually we can all send emails to the City Manager who told us to take all the time needed to get it right, only for the Mayor to criticize the fact that it went late.
4. **Parliamentarian Report – David Pritzker**
	1. **SRCA Constitution and Bylaws Update:** no updates to report.
5. **St. Stephens & St. Agnes School (SSSAS) Liaison – Beth Chase**
	1. **SSSAS Updates:** Chase noted that Poretz did a great job talking about the Traffic and Parking Board public hearing meeting. Chase shared the full presentation with the Board via email on May 4. She noted we can also watch the tape on the City’s website, but suggested we fast-forward to the end where it’s discussed.

	SSSAS held an Upper School Project Information Session on April 27 to talk to the neighborhood about the work being done. Chase also shared this presentation with the Board via email on May 4.

	Graduation has been moved up to June 3.
6. **Beth El Hebrew Congregation (BEHC) Update – Jeremy Flachs:** Flachs was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following updates via email:
* A large tree on Beth El’s property line with Karig had its roots undercut by the developer when he cut the road from Seminary along our property line.  After a storm about 1 month ago, the tree (which was healthy) fell onto our fence, playground and wildflower garden.  Beth El’s president is working with our insurance to get the tree removed.  It caused a fair amount of damage, but it was predictable.  Not only did the development of Karig Estates take down a significant number of mature and healthy trees on the Karig property, but it has now also caused the loss of a tree on Beth El’s property, with more likely to be lost.
* Beth El is saying a fond farewell to Rabbi Bailey Romano, who was hired about 4 years ago to head our religious school and perform other rabbinical duties.  I believe she and her husband are moving to New York where a new job is waiting.  Beth El has hired a new religious school director.  We will miss Rabbi Romano.  Among her other attributes, she sings beautifully and is an excellent compliment to our Canton Kaufman.
* For those of you who have taken advantage of the Chapel in Woods for walks, the bridge across our “west” ravine is now rebuilt.  Despite the fallen tree mentioned above, the Chapel in the Woods is still a lovely sanctuary.  All are welcome.  Just park in our lot and take any of several paths into the woods from the rear of the parking lot.
* Beth El members (me included) and many other nonmember volunteers continue to remove invasive plants from the woods and replace them with native flora.
* Liz Bayer remains our executive director, and Dorrit Lowsen will assume duty next month as the incoming Beth El board president.
* Nothing new to report on Taylor Run.  I expect there will be news soon.  City staff has not officially reported out its reaction to the recommendations from the consensus building group.
1. **Home Sales in Seminary Ridge – Kate Hennigan:** Hennigan was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following updates via email:
* 826 Saint Stephens Rd sold 4/11 for $1.6M (I believe off-market)
* 4012 N Garland St sold middle of March for $915,000
* 3948 Fort Worth Ave sold middle of march for $1.575M but was originally listed for $1.4M

\*All sold in under a week. The market is picking up, but inventory is still down over 50% from the last two years. If you are thinking about selling, now is a really good time to start the process. Buyers are out there and looking for homes, and our neighborhood historically sells quickly and holds value tremendously well.

1. **Welcome Committee for New Residents – Kate Hennigan:** Hennigan was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following updates via email:Welcome packets for Garland and Ft. Worth will be going out next week - St. Stephens is moving out today and I don't yet know when the new owners are moving in. I have met the new owners on N. Garland, they have a brand new baby!
2. **SRCA Historian – Mike Brookbank:** no updates to report.
3. **Old Business – Richie Weiblinger**
4. **New Business – Richie Weiblinger**
	1. Next SRCA Board Meeting – **June 1, 2023 at 7:00 pm**One Board member asked if anyone knows anyone who is interested in running for City Council? He suggested we need to get more people who are interested in running to write letters to the editor to get them more face time. He also stated we still need to identify candidates to fill positions in the lower branches of City Council, which are listed on the City’s website. Many terms coincide, but you have to be on constant watch to find those openings.
5. **Continued “Open Mic” for SRCA Community – Richie Weiblinger**One Board member asked if anyone knew what road work was being completed on St. Stephens Rd. Two Board members responded that a channel is being dug and filled in from St. Stephens to the new Karig Estates street to extend the gas line to Karig Estates.
6. **Adjournment of SRCA Board Meeting – Richie Weiblinger:** Weiblinger moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 pm; it was seconded by Poretz and unanimously approved.