

**NOTES**

**SRCA OPEN MEETING AND DISCUSSION**

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

**In Attendance:** Mike Brookbank, Historian; Dave Cheney, Duke Street Committee;Susan Clark-Sestak, Communications Chair; Jeremy Flachs, BEHC Liaison; Lemuel Houston, Sheriff’s Department; Jeanne Jacob, President; David Pritzker, SR member; Joe Sestak, City of Alexandria Liaison; Mike Souza, Parliamentarian; Natalia Vasylenko, ACPD.

It was noted that sometimes people join the meeting without identifying who they are. All residents are welcome to join the meetings, but it would be greatly appreciated if you would identify yourself (if your name does not come up on the screen).

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

Jacob welcomed everyone to the meeting and was advised by Parliamentarian Souza that there wasn’t a quorum of officers present, so no meeting could officially be held. Jacob noted that there were Committee Chairs and members, representatives from both the ACPD and Sheriff’s Office, and SR neighbors in attendance, so the meeting would continue as an open meeting and discussion with no voting to be done. She reminded everyone that the “Open Mic” session for questions/concerns from SR Residents would be first at the end of her remarks and then again at the end of the meeting. Then, she asked for reports from SRCA’sACPD Liaison/Alexandria’s Sherriff’s Liaisons.

* 1. **SRCA’s ACPD Liaison/Alexandria’s Sherriff’s Liaisons Reports**

Sgt. Houston reported that there has been an increase in “intake” at the jail (more crimes being committed) since people have gone back to work and COVID restrictions have been lifted. He reminded all that to prevent theft, people should lock their cars and homes when they are away. He reminded us again of the Sheriff’s Office’s “Home Away” program where they will, if requested, drive by property on a daily basis while homeowners are away. Sgt. Houston further suggested that video surveillance or security systems are very helpful. He also stated that the Office has a “robust” hiring program going on.

Officer Vasylenko said that she was currently on “desk duty” due to an injury and had nothing specific to report. When asked about auto break ins and doorbell ringing by kids, she did say that petty crime is on the increase.

* 1. **Report on Work Done in Seminary Ridge**
     1. **Trees being planted in FWP Median Strips**

Jacob reported that she is working with the City Arborist on a plan to replace the trees that have come down in the FWP median strips. The SRCA Beautification Committee will be finalizing a plan to share with the Arborist so there is no haphazard planting. Focus also will be on how to provide better maintenance to these areas.

* 1. **June Activities Report**
     1. **City Elections**

Jacob noted that the Democrat Primary was over and the next elections would be in November. Sestak, Souza, and the Board can discuss at the August or September meetings whether there will be another series of Forums prior to the November elections.

* + 1. **FEMA Zoom Meeting on New Flood Plains – June 7**

Jacob reported on the City’s Zoom meeting regarding FEMA’s new floodplain maps. She encouraged those living near Strawberry Run to be aware of possible changes in the floodplain areas and the possible need for flood insurance or an increase in fees for insurance.

* + 1. **Second Smaller Community Yard Sale Held**

Jacob thanked Maureen Brookbank for organizing a second community yard sale for those who still had items to sell. It wasn’t officially sponsored by SRCA, but SRCA did provide the signage for the neighbors to use. There were six to ten households who participated and sales reportedly went well.

* + 1. **Duke Street In Motion Zoom**

A report on the Duke Street Corridor plans would be made later in the meeting by Dave Cheney.

* 1. **July Activities Report**
     1. **Nominating Committee and Candidates**

A call has gone out to SRCA members to join the SRCA Board. Clark-Sestak included information in her last SRCA email and additional reminders will be sent. Jacob encouraged anyone interested in becoming involved with the Board to let her know.

1. **Secretary’s Report – Jacob**

**2.1 Approval of June 3, 2021 Minutes**

As no votes were being taken, the Minutes of the June meeting could not be approved. They will be presented at the August meeting along with the minutes or notes from the July open meeting and discussion.

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Browne**

Brown submitted her report by email as she was out of town. She reported that there was no change from June and she would have a complete report at the August Board meeting.

1. **SRCA Committee Chair Reports – Committee Chairs**
   1. **BEHC (Beth El Hebrew Congregation) Liaison -- Jeremy Flachs**

Flachs reported that their second out-door service was held in June and in-door services will begin in July. Masks were required for those not vaccinated. There still is interest in Karig Estates and it is unclear why construction has not begun. BEHC held an outdoor clean-up, focused mainly on its border area with Karig Estates. They hope that the land near homes on St. Stephens Road may remain undeveloped, so the trees remain. Also, voting for the Democrat Primary in June was held at BEHC; all went well.

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

Chase sent her report by email noting that the campus would be quiet except for the summer camps that are in session. She also asked to have neighbors contact her directly if they had questions about the removal of the two old trees at the front of the campus, which were diseased/dying. SSSAS will be planting replacement trees when the weather is cooler.

* 1. **Seminary Hill Civic Association Liaison – Paul Judge**

Judge did not attend and there was no report for SHA Issues.

* 1. **City of Alexandria Liaison – Joe Sestak**
     1. **“Duke Street In Motion” Zoom Meeting – Cheney**

Cheney explained that the Duke Street in Motion meeting was mainly an information session, not an explanation of a plan for Duke Street because the City has no specific plan yet. The meeting reviewed the history of possible Duke Street changes and there was a great deal of questions and answers, ranging from plans for Inova hospital at Landmark, bike lanes, Seminary Road, and the importance of transparency in this current process. The City is holding numerous pop-up information stands to reach of to people who might not otherwise have their voices heard. Cheney noted that the City POC, Mark Schnaufer, believes the effort is starting from scratch (i.e., that nothing has yet been decided). During the Zoom meeting, there were polls taken of those who were listening; many participants were from 22304 and many have lived here for 20+ years.

* + 1. **Brief Updates on Strawberry Run and INOVA Property – Sestak**

**Strawberry Run**. As noted last month, the Natural Channel Design (NCD) proposed for the stream restoration of Strawberry Run is in a Review by the City, along with new alternatives. The City’s Environmental Policy Council (EPC) also is part of the Review and has stated its opposition to NCD and support of considering alternatives. The City had informed EPC last month it would present alternatives for consideration, but EPC has not yet received them. The Review should take until October and EPC also is supportive of the position that to have a fair Review, a scientific expert (e.g., John Fisher who has testified before the EPC) other than just the City’s contractor who designed Strawberry Run’s NCD, should be part of the Review.

**Inova Hospital**. The City Council approved the hospital’s request to sell its present site to a developer in preparation for its move to Landmark. It did so by also approving a re-zoning of the property from single-family, to townhouses and single family. City staff had acknowledged that there was a signed agreement between Inova and the Seminary Hill Association (SHA) not to change the hospital’s re-zoning without the agreement of SHA, which SHA did not give. The Council chose to ignore that. Of issue is that, after the developer has purchased the land, it can request another re-zoning of the hospital property to, for instance, apartment complexes.

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

Power was out in part of the neighborhood and Plati was unable to join the meeting. She had no new contacts to report.

* 1. **Events -- Hennigan**
     1. **Update on “Screen on the Green”**

Hennigan emailed her report to Jacob because she was unable to attend the meeting. She and Chase have identified Thursday, July 29 or Thursday, August 5 as possible dates for Screen on the Green.

The meeting participants discussed the dates and possibility of combining the movie with the annual picnic. Because this was not an official Board meeting, Jacob sent a summary of the recommendations from this discussion to all elected Board members and received majority support for the following plans. Once cost estimates are obtained, the Board will vote electronically on the total costs likely to be incurred.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO FORM A COMMITTEE!! Please contact Hennigan to volunteer.**

Because August 5 is a Board meeting date, July 29 would be better. A rain date should also be determined.

The movie can be selected from the list available at the SSSAS library. Cost for setup is $250. SRCA will pay the rental cost for the film. A suggested movie was Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, but the Committee will make the final selection.

The SRCA Picnic will be combined with this event to draw more families to attend the event. Boxed picnic food will be provided, but it will be important for organizers to know how many people would like a boxed picnic. Therefore, a notice will be sent requiring sign up to attend and asking for food choice (beef, chicken, veggie sandwich, etc.) Bottled water, chips, and cookies/fruit can complete the box. Panera Bread is a possible provider, but the Committee can determine the vendor. The Committee will provide information on food options and movie selection by 10 July to the Communications Chair, who will then use MailChimp and website to disseminate the information to all SRCA residents.

The Events Committee will organize set-up and clean-up crew, etc.

* + 1. **SRCA Annual Meeting & Elections**

Plans for the annual meeting were addressed. As with the discussion about the movie and picnic, the following is a summary of the discussion held among meeting participants and subsequently approved by the Board through electronic vote.

The meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 19 at SSSAS**. Approval to hold the meeting in-person was given, but final decision will depend upon any uptick in Covid cases. **ALL** SRCA-eligible residents (covenant and non-covenant) are welcome to attend the annual meeting, but only covenant members may vote.

The focus of the meeting will be on the election of SRCA’s Board for next year and reporting on the “state of the community,” as required by the SRCA bylaws. The event will be adults only due to concern of many adults of having unvaccinated children attending. (Masks are required for those who are not vaccinated.)

Voting can be done in-person, by proxy, or electronically by printing out a ballot (which will be sent by email and posted on Seminaryridge.net on the Documents page) and returning it. The President, Treasurer, and Communications Chair will organize voting once a slate is developed by the Nominating Committee. Notice has been sent to SRCA members asking for those interested in serving to notify SRCA via email to news4srca@gmail.com.

This meeting will be combined with a wine/cheese reception to draw voting age individuals. (SSSAS has approved the ability of SRCA to serve wine on its premises during this meeting.) There will need to be committee volunteers to help set up, accept proxy votes, and clean up.

* + 1. **Update on Home Sales in Seminary Ridge.**

There is one Active property (3817 Griffith Place), 2 pending listings (112 Sylvan Court and 3806 Colonel Ellis Avenue) and 1 recently closed (3805 Griffith Place) in the neighborhood. There are multiple offers on almost all the listings and sales prices are higher than seen in the past. Average days on market is under one week.

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

Clark-Sestak noted that the newsletter and website will be able to be used for sending out notices to residents for annual dues. The website has the ability to process payments using PayPal, although residents may still write a check and return to the Treasurer. Clark-Sestak offered to work with Treasurer Browne to test these processes in advance of sending notices to everyone. The Board members will serve as part of this trial run process.

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

There was nothing to report.

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

There was no Question/Answer discussion from SR residents participating on the call.

1. **Old Business – Jacob**

There was no old business to discuss**.**

1. **New Business – Jacob**

7.1 The next SRCA Board Meeting will be **Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 7:30 via Zoom.**

7.2 There was no other new business.

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

Jacob thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a happy 4th of July and adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.