

 8 January 2022

Hello Neighbors

Here is our latest news for January, which we think will be of interest to the neighborhood.

* First, we have just learned of a **community meeting about MacArthur Elementary** rebuild to be held THIS Monday, 10 January! The meeting will start at 5:30pm, with an advisory group meeting immediately prior (5:00pm).  The materials on the project website (<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/2651>) have been updated to reflect the latest information shared during the School Board meeting on 6 January.  ACPS apologized for the short notice of these meetings and has indicated they can host an additional community meeting with greater advance notice, if necessary.
* For 2020-21, we ran over **budget** by roughly $3,000 (largely because of printing the SRCA Directories and the creation of the website, neither of which will involve substantial future costs). And we are also about $2,000 below targeted **dues collection**.
* To date, only 150 households have paid their 2021-22 dues. We thank those who have paid and ask if you have not done so, please send your check for $50, payable to SRCA, to Maria Browne, Treasurer - or use the seminaryridge.net website to submit your payment. Personal reminders to those who have not yet paid will also be sent out in the coming weeks.
* It’s not too late to provide your input about what (different) **events you would like to see SRCA host** this year! Ideas and budget will be vote on at the 3 February meeting. Here are a few things under consideration: a St. Patrick’s Day beer tasting; a paper (and possibly electronic) shredding day in conjunction with a neighborhood clean-up day; two Screen on the Green movies in the summer with water and popcorn provided; replacing the Halloween house decorating contest with a holiday house decorating event. Let us know your thoughts, please; send an email to: news4srca@gmail.com.
* We are **looking for additional volunteers**, especially to serve on the Duke Street Transportation Committee and on the Communications Committee. Please email us (again, news4srca@gmail.com) if you’re interested!
* From our SRCA Alexandria **Police liaison**, Sgt. Tony Moore, we learned the following: first, the increase in “shots fired” reports at Duke Street and Taney or Early Street are believed to be gang-related. Second, the fire bombing of the 7-11 at Jordan and Duke Streets is the work of a regional team, which is targeting 7-11s. There were no injuries during this incident and ACPD is working to make arrests in the case. It is also hoped that the Police Chief, who was unable to attend the January meeting, will be able to participate in SRCA’s February meeting to address, among other things: whether the Police, as first responders, will take a position on the Duke Street in Motion initiative
* We learned from Seminary Hill Association that in December, City Council approved the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation’s (AHDC) **development plans for the site on Seminary Road** adjacent to the fire station. 31 affordable for-sale townhomes will be built, along with a multifamily building with 5 for sale affordable condos, and condo units to be owned by Sheltered Homes of Alexandria to provide housing for intellectually disabled adults. In upcoming City Council meetings, it will be addressing the High School Project at **Minnie Howard as well as the Parc View II** massive redevelopment on Holmes Run Parkway, which will build a new apartment building in the current parking lot of the existing building and create a 127% increase in the number of units there.
* An update on **Strawberry Run** was included in Mayor Wilson’s 1 January Council Connection email. Now that actual pollutant measurements have been taken (rather than relying on modeling estimates), it has been determined the proposed $1.6 million project would eliminate only one-quarter of the pollution originally estimated. Thus, the question of whether stream restoration is the proper solution, other than to protect specified properties, is on the table as other options for obtaining pollution credits are examined (e.g., in the Landmark Redevelopment project).
* Finally, a cautionary tale to be shared, based on one household’s recent experience: in November, a personal check, mailed at the Seminary Road mailbox, was not delivered to the company to which the payment was being sent. Rather, the check was “washed” and written out for a different amount to an individual, and was cashed using a mobile app. This incident has been reported to the police, who said there have been issues with the mailboxes at this location. Two suggestions to the community: when paying a bill by check, consider not using any envelope provided by the company, as this can be an easy way for someone to know that a check is enclosed and, when putting something in the mail, ensure it goes all the way into the mailbox, not getting stuck in the chute. Banks have confirmed that **check washing incidents have been increasing**.

At the January meeting, the minutes from the December meeting were approved and have been posted on Seminaryridge.net