

**MINUTES**

**SRCA MEETING**

**February 3, 2022 – 7:30 PM by Zoom Conference Call**

**In attendance:**

Jeanne Jacob, President; Richie Weiblinger, First Vice President; Maria Browne, Treasurer; Susan Clark-Sestak, Secretary; Don Frahler, Immediate Past President; David Pritzker, Parliamentarian; Laura Plati, Chair SRCA Welcome Committee; Mike Brookbank, SRCA Historian; Beth Chase, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School (SSSAS) Liaison; Jeremy Flachs, Beth El Hebrew Congregation (BEHC) Liaison; Paul Judge, Seminary Hills Association (SHA) Liaison; Sgt. Tony Moore, Alexandria City Police Department (ACPD) Liaison; Mr. Marcel Bassett, ACPD Public Education and Outreach (PEO); SRCA residents Hugh and Jan Campbell, Juan Jose Garcia, Larry Kocot, Antonio and Teresa Longo, and Jack Roome; and Casey Kaine from Holmes Run Parkway area.

1. **Welcome and President’s Report – Jacob**
	1. Jacob called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.
		1. Open mic session: Roome mentioned interest in better understanding the plans for expanding SSSAS Upper Campus parking area and asked if an SRCA officer or committee chair would attend a planned meeting with Chase. Jacob confirmed an officer or committee chair would plan to attend and requested that she be notified once a specific date and time had been established.
	2. **Reports from SRCA’s ACPD Liaison/Alexandria’s Sheriff’s Liaison**
		1. Recalling the January SRCA discussion about check-washing incidents, Sgt. Moore noted that most thefts from the mailboxes on Seminary Road occur on Tuesdays and Sundays. He cautioned that it was best not to put mail in the boxes when it would sit overnight. He confirmed that the postal police are looking into ways to make the mailboxes safer, but that the mailboxes use a universal system (i.e., they all use a master key), so replacing them all would be extremely expensive. Bassett added that mail thefts have increased by 60% across the country in the last three years, so this is not a situation unique to Alexandria.

When asked whether the Alexandria City Police Department (ACPD), as first responders, will take a position on the Duke Street in Motion initiative, Bassett indicated that any specific public statement would be done solely by the Chief of Police. In general, he noted that ACPD embraces anything that helps slow down traffic speed and contributes to meeting Vision Zero. When it was pointed out that there had been some confusion about first responders’ position on the narrowing of Seminary Road (road diet) and their ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner, it was noted that SRCA interest lies in being assured that ACPD would be working with Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) to ensure that any such first responder concerns be addressed before Duke Street plans are finalized.

SRCA thanked Sgt Moore for having provided data on “Calls for Service” along the stretch of Seminary Road subject to the Road Diet from 2017 until 2021. Bassett explained that these numbers can differ from police report numbers because, unless there is an injury or property damage in excess of $1,500, there is no need to prepare an ACPD report. There was a discussion about the use of the PRISM data base (into which the ACPD puts its data) and TREDS, the state-wide database, which is officially used for Vision Zero, but which is not updated as frequently as PRISM. It was agreed (see section 4.6) to follow up with the City on long-promised data related to the Road Diet.

In response to a question about the apparent increase in violent crime in the City, Bassett explained that, to some extent, the apparent increase is due to the ACPD sharing more and more information with the public in its efforts to increase transparency. He also suggested that residents may also be paying more attention to these reports as they have been more home-bound due to the pandemic. He noted that in 2021, there were 2 homicides in Alexandria, out of a population of 160,000. He also noted that shootings have generally been more targeted, rather than random.

When asked if ACPD is offering incentives for hiring and retaining personnel, Bassett replied that none are currently being offered, which can present challenges when other near-by localities pay more and do offer incentives. He reported that City Council has said they will be looking at the competitiveness of ACPD salaries.

Jacob expressed appreciation for the notices that Moore sends and confirmed that this information, when relevant to SR, is distributed via SRCA newsletters.

* + 1. LT Houston was unable to attend this month’s meeting.
	1. **Downed Tree Limbs and Street Repaving – Jacob**

Jacob explained that, while the City has begun clean-up of the downed limbs, the neighborhood is still waiting for more to be picked up, but recognizes the City is overwhelmed with these demands. Clark-Sestak noted that a tree in Strawberry Run on Fort Williams Parkway at the intersection with Trinity Drive appears to be partially uprooted. She will call 311 to report this.

Jacob reminded everyone that the City has a schedule for repaving streets, with North Garland and Griffith having been identified as planned for the near term. If residents notice other paving needs of particular concern, they should notify the City via 311 and can let SRCA know as well by emailing news4srca@gmail.com. Jacob informed the meeting that the City’s position of “Arborist” has been renamed to “Urban Forest Manager.”

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

**Approval of 6 January 2022 Minutes**

 The draft minutes for the January SRCA meeting had been distributed earlier and all changes were incorporated. **Browne moved to approve the minutes; Jacob seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved**.

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Browne**

**3.1 Dues Income/New Members Through 3 February 2022**

 Browne reported 174 households have now paid their dues for 2021-22, with the amount collected for dues now at $9,348.42. She noted that the recent efforts via email and letter to remind Covenant households to pay their dues was helpful.

**3.2 Budget for 2022**

 Because so much of SRCA’s expenses are related to events planned throughout the year and because Hennigan – as lead for events – was unable to attend the February meeting, it was agreed to defer discussion and approval of the events and budget to the March meeting. It was agreed that Hennigan, Browne and Jacob would develop a budget in advance, to be presented at the March meeting.

1. **SRCA Committee Chair Reports – Committee Chairs**
	1. **2022 Events/Activities – Hennigan/All**

Hennigan was unable to attend this meeting, but provided the following estimates after the meeting for inclusion in these notes:

* St. Patrick’s Day beer tasting: $350.
* SRCA Yard Sale: $75
* Two Screen on the Green Movies with snacks: $1,500
* Holiday lights contest (winner received a gift card): $50

These would be in addition to the traditional Halloween pizza party and parade, the Holiday adults-only party, and the annual picnic.

Browne suggested that, based on the overall balance and dues collection and the fact that 2021 had the expenses of the SRCA Directory printing and development of a website, it would seem that an additional activity could be planned for 2022 beyond what has generally been done.

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

Hennigan reported the pending sale on Templeton Place has now sold for $960,000; it was sold “as is” and was on the market for 44 days. As of early February, there is a new listing at 4021 N. Garland, listed for $924,900. Overall, homes in Alexandria are selling quickly and prices are up. With the increase in interest rates, buyers are scrambling to find their new home quickly and competition is high.

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

Judge reported that the next SHA meeting will be 10 February on Zoom.

Based on the January SRCA meeting, Judge drafted a letter to be sent to the City supporting a change to the sign on Seminary Road, turning onto St Stephens Road, from “no turn on red” to “no turn on red when pedestrians are present.” Such a change would, as Judge explained, ease traffic back-ups and has precedent at other similar intersections, including Seminary and Quaker and King and Kenwood Avenue (at Alexandria City High School). This signage proposal was raised during an SHA meeting with Hillary Orr, who felt the request would be well received. Judge spoke with SHA President Carter Flemming, who suggested SRCA should write the letter and SHA would support it. **Judge moved, and Brookbank seconded, for Jacob to sign the letter as Judge outlined during the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Judge mentioned that he is still looking for assistance to draft another letter to the City about rules governing scooter parking, etc.

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

Chase reported that classes and back in full swing at SSSAS. She mentioned that construction for changes to the Upper Campus will not begin until June 2023. She is also happy to walk anyone from Seminary Ridge around the campus to overview the planned construction.

Chase confirmed that the sale on SSSAS purchase of part of the Methodist church property on N. Howard Street was finalized. In 2-3 weeks, a new road will be installed, to replace the existing one, as the church’s new building will be located where the existing driveway is. SSSAS and the church will share this one new road, so there will be no increase in impermeable surface.

* 1. **BEHC Update – Jeremy Flachs**

Flachs reported that Beth El has stepped back from plans for a full re-opening. There are some in-person meetings being held, but numbers of participants are carefully limited, social distancing is enforced, etc.

Flachs also reported that there was a Zoom meeting held on Karig Estates the last week of January. It included the developer and representatives from the City, and 32 people were on the call. A detailed plan, including the approved final site plan, for Karig is now available on the City’s website and can be found as follows:

Log into APEX (the City’s permitting system) at the link below and search for DSP2017-00022. Once the case comes up from the search, click on the case number. The first document under the “attachments” tab is the approved final site plan. [https://apex.alexandriava.gov/energov\_prod/selfservice#/home](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fapex.alexandriava.gov%2Fenergov_prod%2Fselfservice%23%2Fhome&data=04%7C01%7CNathan.Randall%40alexandriava.gov%7C5b4630044f5341dc899308d9d79a6142%7Cfeaa9b3143754aeeadccc76ad32a890b%7C0%7C0%7C637777880347651200%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=TPjK%2BljcHX%2FQANyWGCDbEa0cjpjJSrWZyC1R8lqGUOY%3D&reserved=0)

During the meeting, there were a number of questions about the trees that will be taken down, although it is currently hard to know exactly which ones. The developer says that he is receptive to leaving trees in place if he can. There will be a walk-through, at a date still to be determined, which should also include the City’s Urban Forest Manager. The focus will be particularly on the boundary of this property with Beth El. When construction will begin is still unknown, as there are more permits that still need to be obtained from the City, but Flachs believes that the developer hopes to break ground this winter. Once construction does begin, the fourth house in (i.e., the one furthest away from Seminary Road) will be the first built. The sewage from the development will use gravity flow (rather than sending it out to Seminary Road), through the wetland area, and will be hooked up to an existing line at the back of a property on Colonel Ellis Avenue.

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

Weiblinger mentioned there was a meeting with EPC’s Kathy Hoekstra and City Representatives in late January. The City has reported that they do not need to do natural channel design at either Strawberry Run or Taylor Run to obtain the necessary pollution credits. Effectively, all is in a waiting pattern for Strawberry Run. More updates are expected prior to SRCA’s March meeting.

Weiblinger and Jacob will contact the City’s T&ES to learn the status of the promised report on the Seminary Road diet. A report on bike usage, traffic safety, etc. was supposed to have been prepared 18 months after the completion of the Road Diet in late 2019.

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

The sale at 3900 Templeton Place just closed; Plati will provide a welcome package in the next week or so.

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

Clark-Sestak reported that she renewed SRCA’s Zoom account for 2022 at a discounted rate of about $120.00. In addition, the work on archive sections for seminaryridge.net has been completed at a cost of less than $100 (whereas the estimated cost had been $250-375).

An updated Addendum to the SRCA Directory was distributed in early February. This addendum replaces all previous versions.

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

Jacob has found some old SRCA materials and promised to provide them to Brookbank.

1. **Old Business – Jacob**

 There was no old business to report.

1. **New Business – Jacob**

The next SRCA Board Meeting will be Thursday, 3 March 2022 at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

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

**Brookbank moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm; it was seconded by Clark-Sestak and unanimously approved.**