

ACCF General Meeting Notice

NORMAL START TIME
Tuesday, October 3, 2006, 7:30 PM
Hazel Conference Center
Virginia Hospital Center – Arlington
1701 North George Mason Drive

1. **7:30 pm** Pledge of Allegiance (formal start)
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes (September 5, 2006)
4. Treasurer's Report & Budget Submission
5. Membership Committee Report (*see page 2*)
6. Rules for Bond & Amendment Discussions
7. **7:45 – 8:05 pm** - Legislative Committee Resolution on Constitutional Questions on November Ballot (*See Page 2*)
8. **8:05 – 8:30pm** - Discussion on Parks Bond (panel of 2 speakers – 1 for, 1 against – 5 minutes each; 15 minutes for discussion from floor)
9. **8:30 – 8:55 pm** - Discussion on School Bond (panel of 2 speakers – 1 for, 1 against – 5 minutes each; 15 minutes for discussion from floor)
10. **8:55 – 9:10 pm** Other bond issues – no Pro and Con position anticipated – Discussion
11. **9:10 – 9:15 pm** Delegates vote on bonds and ballot collection
12. **9:15 – 9:45 pm** Affordable Housing Program (*see Page 2*)
13. **9:45 – 9:50 pm** Announce results of voting
14. **9:50 – 10:00 pm** Joint Resolution on bonds (*see page 2*)
15. **10:00 – 10:10 pm** New Business & Announcements
16. Adjournment

Meeting Discussion Rules

We apologize for a very long October agenda. We will endeavor to plan future meetings that do not exceed two (2) hours and, hopefully, less than two hours. In all meetings, the Civic Federation will follow our normal procedure as stated in the Standing Rules, Section 6, to wit:

“During debate, no delegate or alternate delegate shall speak more than twice on the same subject, or more than once, until all others have had the opportunity to speak. No delegate or alternate delegate shall speak more than two (2) minutes consecutively”

Given, the amount of material for this meeting and others, we will definitely cut off individuals after the two (2) minute period – so watch the timekeeper signs and plan appropriately.

Tidbits

It has been a busy month – we thought things would slow down, but they have not. This section will bring you up to date on status of some “old” items. We will also highlight new activities that were approved by the Executive Committee since our September meeting. In all cases, material has been posted to our Web site. Please refer to that resource for further details where noted:

- **Urgent Care Center** – ACCF heard back from the Board detailing actions that they have been taking. Responses are on the Web Site. We have also been informed that a possibility for one alternative site is no longer possible. That developer's proposal was pulled shortly after our September meeting. We are also grateful to Aurora Highlands Civic Association for continuing to keep this issue alive for us all. However, it appears, given December, 2006 lease expiration; it is possible that no replacement location will be identified.
- **Lot Definitions** –If you recall, County Staff estimated that there were 350 constrained or non-buildable lots related to street width definitions. We do not give up easily. Our Planning and Zoning Committee continues to pressure the County to provide information so that Civic Associations may be informed of the affected properties in their areas.
- **LPACAP funding process** – The Executive Committee approved a joint letter with six other organizations to ensure an open public process on budget adjustments (if any) due to cuts in Local Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plan (LPACAP) funding. The letter and response from the Board is available on our web site.

- **BZA Use Permits** – A letter to the Board supporting our previously passed March 6, 2006 resolution and supporting the Manager's a request for deferral was sent on September 14, 2006. Item is deferred until December. – (See Page 3)
- **Master Transportation Plan (MTP)** – The Transportation Committee held a meeting on September 10th as announced. The Draft Sidewalk Policy, requested by members, can be found on the Web Site. The ACCF will reaffirm our April 4, 2006 Sidewalk resolution as part of the MTP review process. Additionally, Parks and Recreation has been discussing elements of the plan in their meetings. While comments were submitted by the September 18th deadline, the process is a long one – and any further comments and concerns should be sent to Jerry Auten who is coordinating the ACCF positions and responses. (see last page for contact info)

November Meeting: Tuesday, November 14, 2006
(one week later due to Election on November 7th)

The Major Topic: Legislative Package

November Newsletter deadline: October 22, 2006

We Are Growing!

By Membership Committee

At the October 3, 2006, meeting, the membership will vote on the applications of two organizations. Columbia Heights West is asking for re-admittance to the Federation; Arlington Citizens for the Arts in asking for admission.

Legislative Resolution!

By Legislative Committee

The Legislative committee presented a resolution at our September meeting for the three State constitutional amendments on the November ballot. The Committee will affirm or modify the resolution and, present it for member approval at the October meeting. A copy of the resolution can be found on the Civic Federation Web page. Since the Committee is re-evaluating the structure of the resolution, it is not presented here. Again refer to the Web page for latest wording.

Joint Resolution on Bonds

By Revenues and Expenditures and Schools Committees

Whereas: It is recognized that the final cost of a public project to be funded by public bonds significantly depends on its design.

Whereas: Since the 1990s, Arlington County Public Schools have generally asked the county government to put bond referenda on the ballot with design money in one year's referendum, and construction money in the next referendum, when the design studies are complete and there is a better basis for cost estimation on the construction of the project.

Whereas: Since 1984, it has been the practice of Arlington County schools and government to place bond referenda for

public projects on the ballot only in even-numbered years (e.g., 1984, 1986, 1988, etc).

Whereas: Since at least 1990, both the County government and the school system have sometimes placed major projects on the ballot before the plans and budgets for those projects were complete. Examples of such projects include: Cherrydale fire station (1990, 1994 ballots), Westover and Shirlington libraries (1998), North Tract Park and Recreational Facility (2004), Kenmore Middle School (2002, 2004), Washington-Lee High School (2004).

Whereas: In each of the examples listed above, the information provided to the voters before the election about the estimated costs of the project proved to be far below the actual costs when the projects were finally begun.

Whereas: In each of the examples, only part of the cost increases were due to the rising costs of construction. Rather, the majority of the cost increases were due to changes in the nature and scope of the projects that were initiated after the bond referenda had passed. A recent Arlington County Public School study found that, on average, "actual [school] project costs were 46% greater than the initial project estimates . . ." and that the bulk of the increase occurred before the completion of the design studies. (Superintendent's Proposed FY 2007 - FY 2012 Capital Improvement Plan, p. 8, emphasis added.)

Whereas: In each of the cited examples, voters thus were asked to approve money for projects without benefit of reasonably complete information about the true nature, scope and costs of the projects at the time they cast their votes.

Whereas: Often, the justification for putting projects on the ballot before the plans and budgets are complete has been that the projects are important and necessary; citing the rationale that it would be unfair or unwise to delay them for another two years until the next scheduled bond referendum.

Be it therefore resolved:

1. That neither the Arlington County School Board nor County Board should put construction projects on bond referenda until reasonably complete designs and sound budgets for the projects are available. In this way, voters can know the scope, nature and cost of the project when they cast their ballots and public trust will be maintained and fostered; and
2. When necessary for urgent and important construction projects, that the Arlington County Board and School Board add bond referenda to the ballot in odd-numbered years as well, if that is when their plans and budgets are ready, so that the projects are not delayed, costs are contained through comprehensive planning, and the public has the opportunity to approve them promptly.

Affordable Housing Program

Fran Lunney, Coordinator of Housing Planning for the County, will make a presentation on Workforce Housing: **The Expanding Affordable Housing Challenge**. Middle income workers are now impacted by the affordable housing crisis. Police, nurses, teachers and others can no longer afford to buy homes in Arlington. Arlington employers face a growing challenge to attract and retain staff. Ms. Lunney will discuss programs being used here and elsewhere to address this need.

Some background on one aspect - **The Live Where You Work Program:**

Since 2002, the "Live Where You Work" program has provided small grants to help first time buyers with closing costs and down payments. The schools budgeted \$60,000 in 2005-2006 and increased it to \$85,000 in FY-'07. The grants are up to 1% of the purchase price of the unit or home with a maximum grant of \$5000. The schools gave about 15 grants this school year and several more will be available next year. The employee must agree to remain with the schools for three years, or a portion of the grant must be returned. The County administers a similar program for its employees.

A few years ago, the County partnered with the developer of the Monterey/Sierra Project. The program served a broad range of public employees, not only police officers and teachers. They were first time home owners. Their salaries ranged from 50-100% of median income.

On June 6, 2006, the County announced a much more ambitious program that they hope will enable from 125-250 employees of the County, Arlington Public Schools, George Mason University, Marymount University, the Virginia Hospital Center and the Ethiopian Community Development Council to buy homes in Arlington during the next three years.

Participating employers will have access to the Workforce Home Benefit, Freddie Mac's employer-assisted housing program. Employers will be able to offer their employees a variety of home buying resources, including flexible mortgages, down payment assistance from various programs, home buyer education and credit counseling.

In addition, the County will work with developers to encourage them to set aside properties to be sold at a discount to eligible employees. In the past year, three developers: IDI Group Companies, AHC, Inc., and KSI Services, Inc., have sold a total of 78 properties at a discount to employees under agreements reached with the County.

In addition to the workforce housing presentation, Charlie Rinker of the Arlington New Direction Coalition, will present facets of cooperative housing programs (Co-ops) in general and, possible opportunities for their use in Arlington.

Help Wanted

We Need an ACCF Representative to fill an open three year appointment for the Joint GMU/Arlington County Advisory Board. The Board advises George Mason University and Arlington County on how to meet the mission and goals for the Arlington Campus, on the overall vision for George Mason University, and on issues addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding dated August 24, 1994, together with any issues that may be proposed by either the University or the County. The Advisory Board will also focus on recommendations for enhancing the academic and research activities at the Arlington Campus and for providing it adequate financial support.

The Chair of the GMU/Arlington County Joint Advisory Board is appointed by the Arlington County Board and is currently our own Scott McGear. Membership consists of various Arlington County: Citizens, Public Schools Employees, Public/Private Partnerships Representatives, Business and Civic Leaders

They meet on a quarterly basis and have met to discuss items like the Arlington Phase II project on the Arlington GMU Campus development and the John McCracken Scholarship.

If you have an interest in this position Email or call Larry Mayer (*see last page*).

BZA Use Permits

Key Extracts of the September 14th letter to the County Board. (*Note: - This full hearing on this item, in part due to our request, was deferred until the December 9th Board Meeting*):

The March 6 2006 resolution expressed support for a zoning ordinance amendment that would restore BZA's ability to selectively grant exceptions to the zoning ordinance through a use permit process. The resolution also recommended that staff develop and maintain a list of applications and outcomes easily accessible to the public, and that the County Board take certain additional steps with respect to homeowner and civic association notification.

The Federation believes that the process being contemplated is of great importance to Arlington homeowners. Any limitations to the BZA ability to grant exceptions, such as for coverage, should **not** be excluded from exceptions. This position is consistent with our March resolution and, is contrary to the position taken by both NCAC and the County Manager's language. We stand by our original position in the first part of our March resolution.

For example, from analysis performed during the original lot coverage discussions, it was determined that 19% of the single-family detached homes in Arlington (R-20, R-10, R-8, R-6, and R-5) have less than the square footage required for the zoning district. Thus, there are roughly 5,000 undersized lots. The lot coverage change allowed undersized lots to assume that they had the minimum required for the zoning district to calculate their maximum main building footprint. (Whether people could use the maximum main building footprint would be subject to setbacks of course). However, they could not apply the same figure to calculate overall coverage. Restrictions applied in these situations could have an adverse effect. The result of coverage restrictions in such situations could have undesirable effects such as garages in the front of properties and more teardowns to accommodate lifestyle needs of homeowners.

Committee Calendar

Please look on the ACCF Web page calendar for latest postings of committee meetings – none reported for publication prior to "press time".

In Memoriam

Sophie Vogel, a long time delegate to the Federation from the Arlington Historical Society and the Highland Park– Overlee Knolls Civic Association, died on August 4, 2006, at the Virginia Hospital Center/ Arlington of congestive heart failure.

Before her retirement, Sophie was librarian at Walter Reed Elementary School. After her retirement, Sophie was for many years, the editor of the Arlington Historical Society Newsletter. She was also a source of information when we delved into the history of some of the Federation's member organizations.