

Ashton Heights Civic Association 10/19/2016
Meeting Minutes
Held at the Lyon Park Community Center

At the last minute we found that the Clarendon United Methodist Church would not be available for our use. Scott Sklar was able to get us the Lyon Park Community Center in its place. **Scott Sklar, AHCA President**, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:38 PM. He gave out kudos about what great support we are getting from all our various subcommittees for neighborhood concerns.

Our **District Police Liaison, Officer Patrick Smithgall**, gave us an update of the types of crime that has taken place in our area. For the last month there were 32 criminal activities in our area including a hit 'n run, drunk and disorderly conduct.

- * Auto break-ins are on the rise with 30 reported in our area. Come to find, most of these cars were left unlocked, so again, please lock your cars. This has come to be the type of crime that happens the most frequently and the easiest to deter.
- * A new scam out there is for “cyberkidnapping” where one is called and told that their loved one has been kidnapped and that they should not call the police. In exchange to get their loved one returned, they direct this person and to give a large sum of money for their release. Come to find, once the funds are given, the loved one has not been kidnapped. If you get a call like this, Officer Smithgall suggests that you hang up and call the police.
- * Last month Officer Smithgall told us of a device that could copy the code from our car keys. He walked that back a bit this month. There is a device out there that can be used to unlock cars with combination keypads. Once this device is waved in front of the lock, it pops open. If the key is not in the car, then they are unable to then start the car to steal it. Unfortunately, keys have been left in the car in three instances, so these cars were stolen. Please do not leave your keys in cars that have these kind of locks.
- * For Halloween safety they suggest that kids go house to house while it is still light out. Put reflectors on your child and/or their bag so they can be seen in the dark more easily as they walk the street. Also have a route planned.

- * There has been one arrest made of two masked male juveniles who approached a young woman in East Falls Church, near the W&OD Trail. These juveniles may be linked to similar crimes elsewhere in Arlington.
- * If you do witness a crime, try to get specific identifying information, such as a license plate.

Jim Feaster and Ken Matzkin, AH Neighborhood Conservation Committee had some issues to present. They were:

- 1) Sheri Shephard-Pratt was introduced and she presented her reasons for pursuing having a sidewalk installed on Monroe St. from Pershing Drive north to Fifth or Sixth Streets, through the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Process. There was a dialogue and a vote of 18 pro (originally it was 19 pro, but Dave and I both voted and technically each household can only vote once, as I understand it, so I am subtracting one of our votes from the tally) and 4 con to have this idea submitted as the lone priority in Ashton Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan.
- 2) The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee has a number of revisions to the rules of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee Process, which are all under review. One change that both Jim and Ken want to point out is that any Neighborhood Conservation proposed projects to a neighborhood will shift from a vote coordinated by County staff to being coordinated by the affected civic association. They are concerned that this shifts the burden of any project from the county staff to the civic association. There are other changes that were included in a handout given during our meeting. This will also be posted on the AH Website and will be printed in our November AH Newsletter. These revisions are on the agenda for the November Neighborhood Conservation Committee meeting. The November Meeting is the 2nd Thursday of the month, 11/10/2016.
- 3) Ken mentioned that the VA General Assembly has a proposed law under review to have a legal prohibition against municipalities prohibiting short-term rental requests. Ken and Jim have concerns about this as well. There was discussion concerning just how "short-term" was defined, possibly less than one year. The County Board has a public meeting to discuss on 12/10/2016.
- 4) The proposed B&B on Pershing Dr. - The Lyon Park Civic Association is doing a principle paper that they will share with us, so we can coordinate our response with theirs. We are also building our own formal principles in regard to projects like these.

Gregory Morse, Schools Committee brought us up to date on what is happening with the proposed High School Boundary Adjustment. Over the next four years due to overcrowding, approximately 400 kids attending Washington and Lee High School will need to be moved to either Yorktown or Wakefield High Schools. Input is needed on a Boundary Tool available October 12 - 24 on-line at www.apsva.us/APSboundaries/. Please provide your input. On October 27, 2016 there will be a community meeting held where the Arlington Public School Board will share what they have heard from the community. The School Board wants to make their final decision by December 1, 2016.

Brooke Alexander, Tree Canopy and Native Plants Subcommittee Chair reported (in absentia) that we are to receive 23 free trees from the County Tree Grant.

Dave Phillips, Development/Zoning Committee is working with the area of the neighborhood where a developer is proposing to change the Staples Store into a hotel. At this time we oppose this proposal as it violates the GLUB.

The meeting was adjourned early around 8:40 PM, and AHCA members mingled and finished up the food.

Respectfully submitted by, Jodie Flakowicz, October 21, 2016