

Barcroft School and Civic League
October 4, 2007 Meeting
Barcroft Community House, 7:30 p.m.

Attendance: 34

Officers Present:

Heidi Wicker, Bryant Monroe, Randy Swart, Gary Lefebvre, David Michaelson, Peg Lefebvre
Marlene Terreros-Oronao, Wes Stein.

Guests: Paul Ferguson, Arlington County Board Chairman; Captain Michelle Nuneville, Police Department Third District Commander; Chris Pauley, Park Operations Superintendent, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Program: Neighborhood Concerns over Columbia Pike, Buchanan and Wakefield Streets.

Neighbor Association member John Mathews, presented several issues taking place on Columbia Pike at and along the Buchanan and Wakefield entrances to the Neighborhood: They were noted as recurring problems of vendors increasing in number putting pedestrians at risk as sidewalks are being blocked by their business activity. Other safety concern issues are: individuals drinking in public, trash and debris, loitering, rodents, j-walking, traffic lights not being observed making traffic hazardous to pedestrians. In the process of letting the County know about these concerns, Mr. Mathews contacted various officials and was reported being unable to resolve this situation.

Mr. Paul Ferguson, Arlington County Board Chairman had been aware of some of these conditions and deemed them unacceptable while reassuring neighbors of the commitment of County Government in their resolution. A two month deadline was formulated to revisit progress of enforcement. Captain Michelle Nuneville, Police Department, expressed her understanding of the neighborhood frustration corroborating a two month goal to addressing issues, specifically, the enforcement of the vendor ordinance. She introduced Officer Scott as aggressively patrolling during spring and summer months. Officer Chris Henning (?) reported ticket issuance with 2-3 guilty pleas, fifty dollar fines, vendors without identification to process paperwork, a different attendant every time claiming to be non-English speaking. It was mentioned that officers had been previously directed to prioritize enforcement as well as being unable to enforce ordinances when there are no violations in progress. Mr. Ferguson added, Arlington County follows all existing laws and if any are not being enforced it would be corrected and Captain Nuneville would also follow up.

The health inspection process was cited as well as coordination with the Northern Virginia Regional Parks, not under county jurisdiction, to inspect vendors under county or park property. The strip mall poses conflicting problems to the community as various men congregate there. A neighbor mentioned not being able to use the park for that reason. It was mentioned that the Police Department, which has a power of attorney on the lot, is routinely engaging suspicious

motorists and users and is able to van them from the using this lot but many times violators move over to the park where trespassing violations can not be processed or enforced, to the frustration of county police. Captain Nuneville emphasized focusing her goal on ending the problem by getting to the core and not promoting only its displacement. A neighbor reported, possible, homeless living under the bridge, public urinating, prostitution, yet no reports of drug trafficking. Questions were raised as to what the community needed to do to serve as a Police resource. A community watch, volunteering, auxiliary service were suggested. If an illegal activity was observed in progress, Captain Nuneville encouraged everyone to call the police department. She informed of her concern about the increase in robberies at the shopping center. She will coordinate with Virginia Regional Parks. She emphasized it would take a little bit of time to work on these problems which have been around for a number of years and exacerbate during the summer months.

Chris Pauley, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Park Operations Superintendent, addressed the audience and expressed same concerns of neighbors and police.

A neighbor requested to know who monitored the parks hence concern over gang tags (MS13). Park ranger, police patrol in bikes and cars even undercover plain clothes offices –day and evening was the answer by Police. I was suggested to invest on night vision goggles to improve night patrols which could get out of cars. Mr. Ferguson suggested it might be possible to find funding for a couple of these goggles for the police to use for this purpose. It was suggested signage in the area to be made in multiple languages due to the diversity of the population. Another suggestion was the use of cameras at those intersections. Neighbors wondered if some of the shopping center tenants were responsible for the vendor activities. Officer _____ expressed his frustration with the courts action regarding the typical \$50 dollar fine and immediate release of violators who would be back on the street violating the same law for him to repeat the procedure over an over again. This comment prompted Mr. Ferguson to volunteer to talk to judges regarding repeated offences. Mr. Monroe mentioned a pilot project requiring treatment by a facility or payment of a higher fine. A neighbor mentioned having witnessed a certain motorist providing alcohol regularly to by-standers. The non-emergency police number, 703-558-2222, was given out by police for those in the audience who had not already programmed it on their cell phones. Ms. Nuneville closed, by reiterating that she had seen a pattern and would allocate proactive appointment to deal with the increase in robberies and loitering. Crosswalk behavior, lights and other issued would be coordinated with appropriate county agencies.

Mr. Monroe recognized Mr. Ferguson, the Police Department representatives and Mr. Pauley for joining us at this meeting.

Announcements:

Volunteers are needed Saturday 13 WO&D brush clearing between chain link fence–will meet in front of trail.

Pam Ann Volgair , CPRO reported on progress at old Safeway site and gave an update on future plans at Arlington Mill Community Center. She invited everyone to attend the October 10 meeting and October 21 Festival featuring international food

Anne Harold made an invitation for new items to be submitted

Heidi Wicker announced BSCL is looking for a newsletter distributor

Ms. Swart asked everyone to register for the free tree program

Next agenda item:

These are draft minutes not yet formally approved by the BSCL.

Submitted November 20, 2007 by Recording Secretary Marlene Terreros-Oronao.