

Woodmont Civic Association

Quarterly Newsletter
January 2005

A Message from WCA President

Once again, congestion and associated stress are upon us. Examples are plentiful, and we cite some in this issue. Anyone driving on I-66 westbound feels the impact of aggressive suburban development west of Arlington, as far as the next 40-50 miles. Five years ago, Arlington citizens rose to the challenge and formed Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST). They have a town hall meeting to discuss the future of I-66; speakers include representatives of ACST and Arlington County (see details below). I urge you to attend.

Another example is lot coverage restriction that is re-emerging, as some property owners and developers try to push the envelope. We should hear from the County Manager on this matter in the near future. A third example has already created much controversy: that of group homes related to the Cedars as place of worship. The County Board had approved the application for permit, and WCA is presently working with the Cedars and the County to ensure compliance. A monitoring group is being formed for that purpose.

Not all is stressful, however. During a neighborhood Christmas party, the subject of assisting some of our senior neighbors with occasional chores came up. There is good will out there to help, but no one knows if there are takers. If you are a senior citizen and need assistance with occasional chores (grocery shopping, doctors visits, lawn mowing, snow removal, etc.), please let me know. I now know that some of our neighbors do just that, without tooting their horn.

This is also to alert you that elections for new WCA officers will be held this April. So nominations will be sought during and after our January meeting. Remember, however, that you could vote only if you are a paid member. Please make sure you pay your dues. Wishing you a joyful New Year.

WCA Meeting, January 27 at 7:30 p.m. Hendry House

Some of the topics to be discussed include:

- Nominations for April elections
- Humps/bumps? Traffic issues on 24th St.
- Assisting senior citizens in WCA

Delivery Help Needed for Newsletter

We appreciate the loyal and stalwart neighborhood volunteers who deliver the newsletter to WCA. The group has had additional responsibilities this year, delivering the 2004 directory and "Arlington Prepares" materials. Our thanks go particularly to Harry Bacas, Sue Bentley, Stacy Brown, Cindi Kilmer, Barry and Kathy Kowalski, Elizabeth Ludes, Sharon Rogers, Joe Ruth, Palma Strand, David Thacker and family, Tom and Marci Ubois, as well as others who have stepped in when needed.

However, it's the New Year and others may wish to contribute to the neighborhood by serving in this way. The "routes" that are available include the following:

- Edgewood (9 homes)
- 2609-2847 Lorcom Lane (20 homes)
- 3203-3917 Lorcom Lane (18 homes including 3 on Military Road)
- 3700-4124 Nellie Custis (15 homes)
- N. Nelson (6 homes)
- N. Quebec (6 homes)
- 24th Road (11 homes).

Anyone who wants to enhance his or her exercise program should beg to be assigned to the 3203 – 3917 Lorcom Lane segment. The volunteer commitment is for newsletter delivery four times a year. The newsletter is usually available 2-3 weeks in advance of a scheduled WCA meeting (January, April, July, October). Anyone willing to take on one of those routes may contact Sharon Rogers at 703-524-0413 or sjdr@verizon.net

The Community Wildlife Habitat Neighborhood Challenge

The Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Wild Birds Unlimited, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources are partnering to sponsor the Arlington Community Wildlife Habitat project (ACWH). They are encouraging interested people to certify their property as a backyard wildlife habitat. The National Wildlife Federation sets the criteria for this certification. If you are interested in learning more about the project contact ACWH at 703-228-6427 or www.arlingtonenvironment.org.

Environmental Concerns

In its October meeting, the WCA supported the drive led by Mariah Burton Nelson to improve the west-end cul-de-sac of 24th street. She and neighbors in that section hope to install concrete curbs to replace old, crumbling, and ineffective asphalt curbing. Main purpose: channel water away from existing homes, toward the new drainage system the County is installing at the westernmost end of the street, and thus help keep water out of basements. The County will pay for this. The only effect it might have on non-residents is increasing property values, since the street will look nicer. The other streets in our neighborhood have concrete curbs.

Arlington Planning Commission

In view of the recent flurry of interest in the deliberations of the Arlington County Planning Commission, here is their web page:

www.arlingtonva.us/departments/commissions/plancom

If you prefer phone, call Thomas H. Miller, Planning Commission Coordinator 703.228.7440, 703-568-6627 cell, or write to him at tmille@arlingtonva.us

Master Gardener Training

The Master Gardener Training Program for residents of Arlington County and Alexandria begins January 13 at the Fairlington Community Center in Arlington. Classes will meet from 9 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays through March 31.

Participants receive training in practical gardening and landscaping techniques that preserve and protect the environment. The Arlington County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension in cooperation with the City of Alexandria offers the program.

For more information and an enrollment form, call the Virginia Cooperative Extension office at 703-228-6426 or e-mail huttonj@vt.edu.

Group Homes Approved

The two group homes located at 2224 and 2200 North 24th Street have been the subject of much controversy during 2004. At issue was their operation without the required County special exception use permits approval. The Wilberforce Foundation, Inc. owns the home at 2224, which houses 12 young men. The Fellowship Foundation Inc. owns the home at 2200; it houses 12 young women. Both, associated with the Cedars facility, are "nonprofit, tax exempt public charities under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code." They continue to be organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes.

Recent concerns have been raised regarding the current operation of the Cedars facility. The Zoning Administrator determined the Cedars to be a "place of worship" in 1976; confirmed in 1986. Property right permitted the use as place of worship.

In summer 2004, the owners submitted use permit requests for group homes to County Board approval. County staff determined that subject requests meet the definition of dormitory

as defined in the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance. The two homes are generally surrounded by single-family homes. The two youth groups serve and assist with activities scheduled at the Cedars facility.

The applicant stated that occupants in both homes must meet minimum criteria prior to being accepted. The criteria include: good physical, mental, social and emotional health; desire to live in a fraternal setting; and desire to grow in spiritual life. Participants are typically in the 20's.

County staff has received positive and negative input from residents in the area. Those opposed to the uses have raised issues regarding parking, traffic congestion, and speeding; they have expressed general distrust of information submitted by the applicants. To address the vehicle related concerns the applicants have agreed to limit the number of vehicles for each dormitory to three (3) each.

Until recently, the two homes have operated since 1978 with minimal complaints from neighbors. The applicants have agreed to conditions of use permit approval to minimize impact in the neighborhood. Both the Planning Commission and the County Board concluded that with the agreed conditions, the two group home uses should not adversely impact the area. Use permits were approved subject to several conditions, with a review in six months (May 2005). Monitoring advisory group is being formed in cooperation between the Cedars, Arlington County, and WCA.

Lot Coverage Restrictions

Proposed lot coverage restrictions are back again. Three years ago, the Civic Federation Planning Commission's Zoning Ordinance Review Committee (ZORC) developed three proposed options for reducing lot coverage. The goal was to prevent disproportionate home sizes and excessive infill. At the request of County staff, the Civic Federation held a forum at which participants (developers and homeowners) presented their views about each option to

reduce lot coverage. No consensus was reached.

In September 2004 ZORC issued a new set of recommendations, to reduce the current lot coverage of 56%. For each recommendation a percentage of non-conforming homes would result if the new standards were adopted.

The County Manager has not yet advertised a change to the existing ordinance. Like the initial ZORC options, the latest recommendations have produced some opposition from homeowners and developers. At present, County staff has begun looking at alternatives that would affect fewer existing properties.

For further information you may wish to go to the Arlington County Web site: www.arlingtonva.us. (Search for "ZORC Coverage Report 9-9-04" and click to download).

I-66 Study

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Federal Highway Administration are conducting a feasibility study on how best to ease congestion and keep traffic moving during emergencies on I-66 westbound for the 6.5 miles from the Roslyn tunnel to the Dulles Airport Access Road.

The study seeks to involve all interested communities, businesses, and stakeholders. This transportation project emphasizes direct, clear communication between people who reside, work, and/or travel in the I-66 corridor as well as transit providers, governmental agencies, and independent consulting firms.

Community feedback and support will be invaluable in generating a transportation plan that will be realistic, affordable, and effective. The Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation (ACST) invites Arlington citizens to a town hall meeting on Monday, January 10, 2005, 7:00 to 8:30 PM entitled:

WISER OR WIDER: THE FUTURE OF I-66

IN ARLINGTON

At the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), 4301 Wilson Blvd in Ballston, Ground-Floor Conference Room CC-2

Featured Speakers:

Theresa DeFore, PE, VDOT, Idea-66 Study Project Manager

Jason Rylander, Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation

The Honorable Christopher Zimmerman, Arlington County Board

For further information, contact:

Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation

PO Box 5574, Arlington VA 22205-5574

E-mail: acst@postmark.net

Web: <http://www.acstnet.org>

Arlington County Civic Federation

The Civic Federation is an association of Arlington County neighborhood associations and organizations. The Federation has 16 standing committees that address various issues affecting Arlington County. Following is a list of those committees and the WCA delegate monitoring that committee. Questions or concerns addressed by these committees can be directed to the appropriate delegate.

Sharon Rogers Ad Hoc Airports Comm.
Transportation Comm.

Roy Cook Community Relations Comm.
Governance Comm.

Michael Chellman Cultural Affairs Comm.
School Comm.

Art Lindsley Legislative Comm.
Scholarship Comm.

Norm Mosher Membership Comm.
Special Events Comm.

Lee Rooker Parks and Rec. Comm.
Planning & Zoning Comm.

David Thacker By-Laws Comm.

Housing Comm.

Woodmont Civic Association

<http://www.geocities.com/woodmontca/>

Officers

Naiem Sherbiny, President; 703-524-3470; nasher@erols.com

Sharon Rogers, Vice President; 703-524-0413; sroger7@attglobal.net

Ron & Sue Bently, Treasurer; 703-524-1652; bentleys@saic.com

David Thacker, Secretary; 703 351-5557; david_thacker@aigvalic.com

According to WCA bylaws, new officers will be elected each April.

