

Donaldson Run Civic Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Taylor Elementary School

October 6, 2021

7:30 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome (Bill Richardson). The meeting had about 30 neighbors in attendance as well as two guests: Paul Hollard and Sandi Chesrown. Bill Richardson welcomed everyone and commented that it was nice to be in person at Taylor ES again after a year and a half hiatus due to the pandemic.

2. Minutes from May 12 meeting. Bill noted that minutes from the May 12 meeting were available and that DRCA is looking forward to getting the Arl Co. Deer Study Action Plan as a follow up to the last meeting.

3. Reports of Secretary, Treasurer, and Board members. Kathy Rehill reported that the treasury is keeping a steady balance of approx. \$3000 with quarterly expenses being the newsletter printing and postage and the income being dues and donations that tend to come in right after a mailing. The account balance on Oct 5, 2021 was \$3555.18. Kathy mentioned that she would welcome anyone in DRCA who could help her figure out how to accept donations through Paypal.

4. Project Langston Boulevard (formerly Project Lee Highway)

a. Introduction (Bill Richardson). Bill announced that Lee Hwy was officially renamed Langston Blvd with a ceremony unveiling a mural of John Langston on a building between N. Edison and N. Dinwiddie on Langston Blvd. The Lee Highway Planning Project (LHP) has been renamed Project Langston Blvd (PLB). DRCA has a history of members being active on Plan Lee Hwy committees over the years and he thanked Deirdre Dessingue and Charlie Henkin for their volunteer contributions

over the years. This past summer Arl. Co. presented 2 scenarios for the corridor. DRCA would like to discern the community's aspirations and concerns over the proposals. So far the concerns include increased density, more traffic, and lack of easy parking. The challenge is to come up with more housing diversity and identify the potential impacts of development (ie.) does more density create need for more schools, impact on infrastructure, water runoff, etc. There was high concern over the tree impact of increased development. A lot of concern was expressed over building height - 10 stories is too high for most residents yet it is in the proposals.

Bill said the goal of tonight's meeting is to encourage DRCA residents to review the Arl Co proposals and share their feedback with Arl. Co. Bill said DRCA did invite county staff to this meeting, but staff declined. DRCA wants to come up with feedback now, before the county develops the preferred concept plan for Langston Blvd.

b. Background (Charlie Henkin). Charlie provided a summary of DRCA's history on the LHP, specifically a July 2, 2021 letter to Arl Co outlining DRCA's concerns on how this new plan impacts the Shops at Lee Heights, the Area west leading to Glebe Road, the Area east through Cherrydale and Lyon Village Shopping Center. Said Arl. Co prefers "urban neighborhood" with a mix of building heights up to 10 stories, wider sidewalks, outside eating, street trees, and reduced surface parking lots with possible lot consolidation to provide the scale to encourage mixed use development including more affordable housing options. DRCA is concerned about "canyonization" of the corridor, and the impact of higher density on schools and parks. Charlie also asked about the time scale on which changes in the GLUB(s) would result in changes in actual zoning and whether the county foresees GLUP changes increasing revenue.

c. Langston Boulevard Community Forum, Paul Holland, Chair and Sandi Chesrown, Vice Chair

Paul and Sandi talked first about the make up of the community forum: comprised of 52 members of civic associations with the purpose of gathering and disseminating feedback to and from the community to help the county develop a preferred concept plan for PLB. Sandi added that several members of the DRCA are included in the LB community Forum.

First Sandi addressed the question: "why should Langston Boulevard change? What's the benefit?" She said that, in the past, Arl. Co wasn't spending money on planning for Langston Blvd, and there was no vision to guide development of this Corridor. The GLUP had no mixed use in their plan. So in 2013, a grassroots effort emerged when several volunteers from Waverly Hills hosted a series of community meetings with civic associations to discuss

possibilities for LB. As a result, a charette was held so that the wider community could provide their input. Eventually the Lee Hwy Alliance established some guiding principles for a new vision for LH/LB Corridor including:

1. develop low-med use density along existing corridor
2. Make it safer to walk, ride and drive
3. Create more affordable housing
4. Want policies in plan to govern density.

Sandi also talked about the history of the Lee Highway Alliance, the visioning study in 2013-2015, formation of the LHA as an NGO in 2016, 2018 opened an office, 2018 & 2019 staff hired, 2019 community forum established. 2021 still talking about the Land Use plan, which should be used to set a baseline for future planning.

d. Arlingtonians for our Sustainable Future, Peter Rousselot

Peter said Arl for Sustainable Future is an advocacy group formed in 2019 b/c the county's accelerated development outpaced their planning. GLUP is the primary planning guide for development in Arl. Co. ASF has concerns similar to DRCA's regarding the proposed density caused by adding 10,000 people to the LB Corridor per the proposed plan. Before the LBP gets implemented, ASF would like Arl Co. to set a baseline of what development can already take place "by right" compared to what would occur under a new LBP, and compare the density by right v. LBP and the costs "by right" v. by LBP.

e. Comments and Questions from DRCA Members. The last 45 minutes of the meeting were a Q&A session with the membership and speakers. There was a general theme to reduce the height limits in the LBP, and protect legacy businesses. The preliminary concept plan has been delayed from fall 2021 into 1st Qtr 2022 . Paul and Sandi expressed frustration with the county regarding this slippage, but said residents have the opportunity now to speak out on their views in the hopes of shaping the preliminary concept plan. They noted that developers have little interest in a 10 story option which would require expensive concrete and steel structures, and that the greater interest lies in being allowed 7 story construction using wood materials.

Deirdre asked Peter Rousselot if an estimate of 10,000 people increase in density is an average under both scenarios.

There was a comment (perhaps from John Seggerman?) about needing a bench mark for the current zoning scenario so that Scenarios A & B can be compared to the status quo not just to each other. The rationale is that the new scenarios for density should be compared to our

current density and landuse as a baseline for evaluating the new scenarios A & B. There was concern that A&B were being compared to each other, not to the present density allowed in GLUP.

Sandi explained the “by right” development that can be done under the current General Land Use Plan (GLUP) compared to the changes that could be made to the existing GLUP in exchange for community benefits during the site planning process. She felt that Arlington County isn’t asking for enough community benefits from developers because they can do so much “by right” under the current GLUP and that perhaps a change in the GLUP can extract more community benefits from developers.

Other members expressed concern about impervious surfaces and others noted that there are already a lot of parking lots that are impervious along Langston Blvd. Sandi mentioned that a redevelopment effort could be an opportunity to turn the parking lots into better stormwater management systems.

Some members expressed a desire to retain historic GlebeWood and not redevelop that community. Others wanted to be able to protect legacy businesses during this redevelopment of LB.

Community members also raised the question of what is “affordable housing” and what is the “missing middle”?. One member replied who works for the county on housing issues and spoke about the economic thresholds for families who meet the requirements for “affordable housing” . there was some discussion that the “missing middle” pertains to perhaps duplexes and other smaller multi-family housing buildings that could be built to maximize density and minimize costs. Not necessarily “affordable housing” per a government income formula, but another housing option in addition to condos and single family homes.

The conversation ended with Sandi suggesting that when the preliminary plans come out in January, residents need to speak out on their views.

Peter said ASF has sample letters on their websites re: the need for current baseline of allowable development and proposed new allowable development and the impacts before changes in the GLUP are approved.