

Minutes/DRCA general meeting June 12, 2024

The Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) held a general membership meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at Taylor Elementary School. DRCA President Bill Richardson presided over the meeting, which began at 7:30 p.m. preceded by a social half hour. Five persons also attended the meeting virtually over Zoom. Dana Miller provided instructions for use of Zoom.

Bill welcomed the group and noted that the minutes from the previous February meeting were available on the back table. He had the following preliminary announcements:

1. He provided updates on various traffic issues/projects.
 - a. The County reduced the speed limit on Military Road leading to Langston Boulevard, which DRCA had supported.
 - b. The controversial Nelly Custis/Military Road traffic circle project is in final design phase, and will be put out for bid upon completion. Construction is anticipated to begin late this year or early next year. In the final design, the island will be a true circle, landscaped, and with utilities undergrounded.
 - c. Concerns raised by DRCA (and Hamm MS) about the safety of the Lorcom Lane/Vacation Lane intersection, raised in September 2022, have recently been teed up for a proposed solution in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan scheduled for County Board approval in July 2024. One possible solution identified in the proposed plan is a traffic signal, although we understand that public engagement will precede any ultimate plan.
 - d. Residents of Marcey Road concerned about increased traffic and parking congestion there have raised some possible solutions for consideration by County staff. We have not yet heard back on these proposals.
 - e. The County is continuing to work on design of improvements to Lorcom Lane leading toward DC from Military Road.
2. He summarized the update in the newsletter about the Expanded Housing Option (EHO) or “missing middle” litigation scheduled to go to trial next month. He also provided information about the one April 2024 EHO application filed in the DRCA neighborhood on Vermont Street, and asked anyone interested or concerned about this project to contact him.
3. He updated the membership on the current status of the study funded by the County Board of the lot coverage/height/setbacks provisions of the current Zoning Ordinance. DRCA and other civic associations (and others) are meeting with the Planning Director and County Board members again later this summer to encourage prompt initiation and completion of this study. The Board has applied for a technical assistance grant from the Urban Land Institute to assist in this study.

Charlie Henkin provided an update on the status of DCA airport flights and noise restrictions. The five additional flights added in the recent FAA reauthorization legislation over the objections of the local

congressional delegation will likely be added very soon. We hope that they will be slotted during the day rather than early in the morning or late at night. Charlie explained how the long established FAA restriction on early morning and late night flights work. The measurement standard for acceptable noise is generous, so there are generally very few fines for violation.

Old Glebe Proposal for Adding Madison Center Improvements to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Elizabeth Stevens, a member of the Executive Committee of the Old Glebe Civic Association, presented a proposal for improvements to the very old exercise and other facilities of the Madison Center. She asked DRCA members to support this proposal, which received support and no opposition.

Election of DRCA Officers and Directors for 2024-2026 Term

Pursuant to the DRCA Constitution, a motion was made, seconded, and approved for the election of the following slate of officers and directors as proposed by the Nominating Committee and published in the most recent newsletter, no other persons having been nominated:

President	Bill Richardson
First Vice President	John Seggerman
Second Vice President	Amanda Weaver
Secretary	Dana Miller
Treasurer	Kathy Rehill
Directors	Alisa Cowen
	John Fisher
	Charlie Henkin
	Laura Yoeckel-Kelly

Report on 2024 Virginia General Assembly session in Richmond

State Senator Barbara Favola and Delegate Patrick Hope spoke about this year’s recently completed session. This is the first time since the redistricting of the state legislature that our state delegation has appeared before DRCA. Senator Favola’s district now is centered in Arlington, rather than spread out among various jurisdictions. Delegate Hope’s district has been revised to include DRCA.

Since different political parties hold the Governorship and control of the General Assembly, a number of proposals (e.g., relating to women’s rights and guns) passed by the General Assembly were vetoed by the Governor. The number of vetoes in the past two sessions has been much greater than in prior sessions. The Governor has issued executive orders not to participate in two environmental initiatives that the General Assembly had previously endorsed in legislation – the regional greenhouse gas initiative and California’s increased fuel economy requirements. One of these is in litigation centered around the requirement that the executive branch comply with requirements established by the legislative branch.

Senator Favola mentioned a number of women's rights initiatives she had sponsored, and Delegate Hope described some tree protection bills he had sponsored. One of these, HB 529, would have provided local jurisdictions like Arlington to increase in less dense residential areas the 10% to 20% tree canopy requirements that state law currently limits them to. While this version of his bill, which was coordinated with the homebuilders' lobby, passed the General Assembly, it was vetoed by the Governor. However, his bill provided for study of tree canopy in the state every year was enacted, which may form a basis for future legislation. DRCA members expressed support for additional local tree canopy authority.

Delegate Hope also explained his bill to provide Arlington County with the ability – only if it so chooses – to reform its County Board structure to conform its discretion to what other counties like Fairfax County have. One of these reforms would be to permit Arlington (if it so chooses) to have one of the County Board members run and serve throughout his/her term as chair of the Board. Another would permit Arlington (if it so chooses) to change the size of the Board from five members to more or fewer members. Another would be to permit Arlington (again, if it so chooses) to elect County Board members from districts rather than at large.

Management of Arlington's Tree Canopy

Vincent Verweij, Arlington's Urban Forest Manager, gave a slide presentation on the work of his office in planting, maintaining, and protecting trees and promoting their care, and implementing the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan approved by the County Board last December. He then answered a number of questions about this work. These included how to measure and increase Arlington's tree canopy. He pointed out that the tree canopy requirements measure projected canopy after 20 years. Another question involved watering of trees on County or APS property. Vincent noted that the County handles this for the first two years after planting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.