

Leeway Overlee Civic Association
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, October 12, 2005 at Lee Community Center

1. Civic Association President Vicki Howard called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The meeting agenda was adopted with the addition of updates on the Lee Center and Westover Library. The minutes of the June 1 General Membership meeting were read and approved with a correction to reflect that an additional Lexington St. speed bump was suggested, rather than to be installed. Treasurer Carolyn Connell reported a current Association checking account balance of \$1038.10, up \$398.90 from the balance reported at June 1, and an unchanged certificate of deposit balance of \$2,738.40, for a total of \$3,776.50. This reflected income of \$1,095 provided by the annual community yard sale (\$505), vendor advertising in the newsletter (\$400), and membership dues (\$190), offset by expenses of \$696.10 (yard sale musicians and ads, \$381; newsletter printing, \$203.33; and Arlington County Civic Federation dues, \$50). She again kindly offered to accept any outstanding 2005 dues from association members.

2. Ms. Howard reported on several general interest items: 1) the County's Secret Santa program (contact jcover@arlington.va.us, 703-228-4757); 2) recycling day at Jefferson School October 22; 3) "Arlington Alert," the County's emergency notification program (contact casupport@co.arlington.va.us or call 703-228-3000); 4) the Neighborhood Watch program (call 703-228-4051); and an offer from Dr. Robert Smith, Arlington Schools Superintendent, to talk to the Civic Association. Ms. Howard also reported that the Association had sent two letters: the first to cite concerns with the use permit request of the Palladium nightclub at the Garden City shopping center; the second to support a request for sidewalk installation on N. Illinois St. between 22nd and 23rd Streets under the County's "missing links" program.

3. Concerning old business, Ms. Howard reported that the update of the neighborhood conservation plan was awaiting the historic preservation report so that elements could be incorporated. On the Lee Center grounds renovation project, Randy Bartlett, Director of Arlington County Environmental Services, reported that the project was delayed because of a funding gap: budgeted at \$171,000, estimated cost was now \$700,000. On the Westover Library renovation, Chips Johnson reported that the County had begun applying for permits, with bidding on construction to occur in March or April 2006 and construction in June. No date was set yet for demolition of the old building. As for the Reed School building, the 2004 school bond had included \$860,000 for planning a new structure, which would house pre-school and teenage parenting programs, among others. The County had \$9.6 million budgeted for the project in 2006. While the library will be moved downhill, both the School and County Boards have protected the green space in Westover Park.

4. On new business, Ms. Howard noted that streetscape improvements for the 6200 block of N. 22nd St. would be funded under the Neighborhood Conservation Program, but it remained unclear when funds would be obligated. A member questioned this choice, saying other streets that lacked even one sidewalk should be funded first—this was a safety issue for children going to their school bus stop, for example. Ms. Howard deferred questions on the selection process to Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative Rob Swennes, who was to arrive later.

5. Ms. Howard then gave the floor to the invited speaker, Arlington County Board Member Barbara Favola. Ms. Favola identified four major Board issues that affected communities:

- 1) Base Re-Alignment and Closure (BRAC): Arlington was targeted to lose Department of Defense (DoD) tenants occupying four million square feet of office space in the original DoD BRAC plan. The County had consulted with Members of Congress and ex-Defense Secretary Cohen. As a result of County efforts, the original plan was modified so that two important tenants would remain in Arlington: DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research and Projects Agency) and the Office of Naval Research. These were important because of synergies they offered in attracting related high-tech business. While 17,000 DoD employees were slated to leave County space, the County had an aggressive marketing plan, and remained well-positioned to lure new business. The final DoD recommendations were to go to Congress on an up or down vote.
- 2) Affordable Housing: The County is seeking a framework to negotiate provision of affordable housing. This received a setback in December 2004 due to a Circuit Court ruling that the County was not negotiating with developers in a voluntary manner. Most developers have to go through a site planning process rather than developing property by right. The County is working toward a "give and take" process, and to avoid Virginia's General Assembly legislating mandates.
- 3) Lot Coverage: The revised rules for residential lot coverage, put forward in July, focussed on lot size rather than zoning categories, i.e. 50% coverage for 5-10,000 s.f. houses, 35% for 20,000 s.f. or more. The goal was to avoid houses of such size that impact negatively on their neighbors, while recognizing the desire for larger houses.
- 4) I-66: While the Federal budget allocated \$28 million and the State \$8 million, the estimated cost of adding a lane to I-66 inside the Beltway is \$100 million. The study conducted by VDOT was flawed in that it focussed on widening I-66 rather than looking at alternatives for reducing congestion. The County Board's view is that expanding I-66 inside the Beltway is not wise; every expansion of a major road in the area has generated increased traffic.

Ms. Favola also answered questions from the audience.

6. The next speakers discussed the development of the AT&T Tower site. Luis Araya, Subdivision and Bonds Administrator of Arlington County Environmental Services, reported that the project was now at the end of the preliminary approval phase, with the developer submitting plans for water, etc. The developer's representative, a lawyer, explained that the plan was for 16 single-family houses on R-6 lots, being built by right, with no re-zoning required. The AT&T building will be demolished, but both aerial towers remain. A significant change from the initial plan was expansion of the buffer area with neighbors from six feet to 22 feet by moving the road, which will be a 28-foot wide public road. There will also be a public sidewalk through to Lee Highway. Groundbreaking is planned for next summer, with houses to be built and sold sequentially. Construction access will be off of 22nd St. Neither the builder nor the marketer have been selected.

7. NCAC Rep. Rob Swennes then explained the NCAC funding process. Because of rising construction costs, design requirements, and lags between approval and construction, there had been tremendous amounts of cost overruns. The result was that fewer projects were funded each year. Each civic association cannot even select another project until those in the pipeline have been completed. Thereafter, one could expect one project every three years until the neighborhood conservation plan is approved. The meeting then adjourned.