

**Leeway Overlee Civic Association
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2006 at Lee Community Center**

1. Civic Association President Vicki Howard called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. The meeting agenda was adopted, and minutes of the April 6 General Membership meeting approved, absent corrections before the meeting's end (there were none). Treasurer Carolyn Connell reported a decrease in net assets of \$177.65 to \$3,561.09 as of 6/6/06, reflecting \$562 in income from yard sale and membership fees, offset by \$739.65 in expenses for music, advertising, and permit for the yard sale (\$546), along with June newsletter printing (\$193.65). Ms. Howard then reported on **old and new business**:

-- Concerning the gas station at 5501 Lee Highway, Civic Association and County Zoning officials met with the current property lessees concerning the residential strip where trees had been clear cut. The County clarified that the strip is not available for commercial activities. The gas station property is under a 20-year lease. In subsequent discussions with the lessees (gas station operators), they indicated a desire to make improvements to the commercial (C-1) portion, and were open to re-planting the residential strip. An initial cost estimate to plant it with trees is \$7-10,000. The issue remains to be settled.

-- The Association received a letter advising that a "by right" development of three new houses will take place at 5630-5700 N. 26th St. (between Jefferson and Kensington, north of Lee Highway); no zoning approval is required.

-- The Association sent a letter to the County to reiterate concerns about the Lee Center renovation budget, notably the extent/cost of paving and concrete. The letter also noted the daily use by Rivendell School, with many non-Arlington students, paying no user fee.

-- The Westover Library/Reed School reconstruction projects have been merged. More information is in the Leeway Overlee newsletter. Association representative Chips Johnson is looking for a Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) representative to back him up. Rob Swennes noted that the project is now the County's fast track; construction is to start in 2007.

2. The Association then held **officer elections**. The Nominating Committee, led by Amy Appelbaum and Chips Johnson, proposed: Suzanne Kray Idziak for President; Jennifer Michener for Vice President; Ladd Connell for Secretary; Carolyn Connell for Treasurer; and Rob Swennes for Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative, with Michael O'Connor for Alternate. For delegates to the Arlington County Civic Federation, the Nominating Committee proposed Vicki Howard and Jerry Auten as members and Amy Appelbaum, Rob Swennes, and Carolyn Connell as Alternates. All proposed were duly elected. The Association President and Vice President are also delegates to the Arlington County Civic Federation in accordance with the civic association's bylaws. The Civic Federation meets the first Tuesday of every month. Mr. Auten will serve on the Federation's Transportation Committee, which is reviewing the County's Master Transportation Plan.

3. Following the elections, Ms. Howard introduced the evening's featured speaker, Mr. Michael Leventhal, Arlington County Historic Preservation Coordinator. Mr. Leventhal

explained that the **Historic Preservation Program** has grown and become part of the Arlington County Planning Department. Over the last nine years, the Program has surveyed and noted all buildings in the County, some 10,000 properties, for historic value. Following the surveys, the Program has designated districts that have a critical mass of buildings that represent a particular era. Arlington Forest and Fairlington are the largest historic districts. In such local historic districts, architectural changes must be approved by the Historic Landmark Review Board. Alternatively, districts or buildings may be placed in the National Register of Historic Places. This carries no restriction, but may allow federal tax credits for preserving income-producing properties, or state tax credits for homes. To qualify for the National Register, the buildings must normally be a minimum of fifty years old, of historic significance, and still retain its historic form. Nominations are reviewed first by the County, then by a state review board (composed of professionals in American history, architecture, architectural history, archeology, and related disciplines), then by the National Register, maintained by the National Park Service (see <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listing.htm>).

Concerning Arlington, Leventhal explained, the oldest house is the Ball-Sellers House (1737). The Glebe House, originally from the 18th century, was re-built in 1857, with a major addition in 1916-17; it is being restored. From the Civil War, which denuded Arlington of its old growth forests, only the C.F. Smith and Ethan Allen Forts (earthworks) are intact. Arlington has some 50-100 documented farmhouses, mostly 19th century; the Overlee Community Association Clubhouse, from 1898, is an example. Overlee could apply for a preservation easement to lessen its tax burden.

Apart from those few houses, and bungalows from the 1920s, Leventhal noted, Arlington architecture really begins with the New Deal and the Federal Housing Administration, or FHA, established in 1934. FHA transformed the community, with hundreds of garden apartment buildings built from 1934-44. Colonial Village, Arlington Village, and Buckingham are examples. The Pentagon was built 1942-44, and the Defense Department built Fairlington to house Pentagon workers. Many Sears Roebuck houses and “apartment homes” (similar to older neighborhoods in Los Angeles) were also built, with a standard price of \$5,290. A number of all metal “Lustron” houses were built; one on S. 12th St. is being disassembled for preservation elsewhere.

Leventhal said that the Preservation Program would return to analyzing the Leeway neighborhoods in the fall. He can be reached at (703) 228-3813.