

**Leeway Overlee Civic Association
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at Westover Library (Conference Room)**

1. Civic Association President Karla Brown opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and requested reports from officers. Secretary Ladd Connell summarized the April 13 meeting at which the featured speaker was Dr. Alison Denton, Facilities Planner for Arlington Public Schools (APS) [adenton@arlington.k12.va.us]. Dr. Denton had explained that Arlington Public Schools had experienced extraordinary growth over the past five years, APS was facing a capacity problem, and was pursuing a range of solutions. Treasurer Jenni Michener reported a current Civic Association account balance of \$3741.27, reflecting income of \$760 from membership and yard sale fees, offset by \$949.70 in expenses for the yard sale music and permit, newsletter printing, Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) dues, and donations of \$100 each to the Yorktown HS graduation cruise and Friends of the Arlington Planetarium. Concerning the yard sale, the Civic Association had previously been allowed using a block party permit; this time the County required the Civic Association to have a special event permit. Often the County risk management office requires insurance for such events, but NCAC delegate Rob Swennes reported that the County had not responded when he pointed out that there was no insurable entity.

Old business

2. Ms. Brown invited reports on old business. Concerning Neighborhood Conservation projects, Rob Swennes noted that N. 22nd St. had been completed except for installation of shade trees and LED street lights on the south side of the street [between Powhatan and Quantico]. Ms. Brown noted that Nottingham Street project was funded, and had had its final design meeting with the County in May. The water main could be installed any time, as it precedes all other work, while street improvement would occur this fall or next spring, with a goal of completion by June 2012. Concerning the Illinois St. project, Ms. Michener reported that it had been recommended by the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) to the County Board; approval was expected at the next County Board meeting. Funding for the Leeway area's next project would likely take time because the Civic Association would need to accumulate points under the NCAC scoring system. Concerning upcoming projects, N. 24th St. would be next in line. Rob Swennes noted that the Civic Association would advertise for a new round of projects in the fall.

3. Turning to other projects of interest to the Civic Association, it was noted that the N. 22nd St. block between Kentucky & Lexington has a new sidewalk, installed as a "missing link." The Civic Association endorsed it via letter since it borders our Civic Association. Ed Robinson observed that now the block is effectively a one lane street as it is too narrow for two cars to pass. Others noted that block residents are supportive as this would slow down traffic and added a sidewalk. Ms. Brown reminded members that for the Civic Association's next meeting, people should be thinking about new Neighborhood Conservation priorities. As to other topics of Civic Association interest, Ms. Brown reported that the Civic Association has 100 people is on its discussion listserv, and it was being well-used; for example, people needing moving help were able

to get local teenagers to help, and two lost dogs were found. Rob Swennes encouraged members who were interested in County events to see the Arlington Now website.

4. Ms. Brown provided an update on the proposed farmers' market: John Reeder had proposed to the County a weekly market to be held (in season) in front of Westover Library, possibly extending to the neighboring ballfield. He had met with the County Manager's office. County Board changed the zoning ordinance to allow such use with supporting testimony from Tara Leeway and Leeway Overlee. This still needs formal permission from both the County and the County's school system. Arlington Public Schools Facilities Planner Dr. Alison Denton [who spoke to our previous general membership meeting] is the point of contact on this matter for Reed School. Arlington may need two new elementary schools, but the market would not interfere with the school or any future construction. Asked about Westover Market owners' views, Ms. Brown said she was not aware of any objection. Concerning parking, the plan was to use the street and lot in back of the school.

5. Turning to Westover Market's request to operate an open-air beer garden, Ms. Brown noted that Civic Association had offered its support, with proper limits on the operation, via letter to the County Board, and the County Board had approved the use permit. Concerning County "micro-projects," Ms. Brown explained that these are approved two times per year, from a total budget of \$100,000 to allocate. Leeway Overlee applied for improvements to old Westover Library site. Our request was denied, but the improvements we requested may be funded under the County's Dept. of Environmental Services. The existing DES plans just include grading, planting trees & grass, and extending the sidewalk; we had asked for park benches and trash cans. The property remains under the County's Dept. of Parks & Recreation, and will remain parkland. Support was expressed for additional amenities. Members were encouraged to offer ideas or proposals for other micro-projects as well.

6. Regarding follow-up from prior meetings, Ms. Brown noted that Dr. Denton's powerpoint slides would be on the Civic Association website, and that Overlee Pool still planned to appoint a Community liaison as the Civic Association had requested;¹ Civic Association members can also contact Overlee's new president, via president@overlee.org, or Chris Tai at planning@overlee.org. Finally, concerning the E. Falls Church re-development, we had no news.

New Business: Civic Association Elections

7. Turning to new business, Ms. Brown invited the report of Nominating Committee Chair Pierre Boyer for Civic Association officers. The Committee nominated Karla Brown to serve as President, Kim Klinger as Vice President, Ladd Connell as Secretary, and Jenni Michener as Treasurer. Other nominations were invited, but none received, and the committee slate was elected by acclamation. For Arlington County Civic

¹ Subsequently, we heard back from Overlee Pool with their POC for neighborhood concerns as they go through construction will be former President Pat Shapiro who spoke at our general membership meeting in April. Her contact info is: Email: Patse2@aol.com; home phone: 703-536-7420; Cell: 703-966-6257.

Federation (ACCF), the CA president and VP are members *ex officio*. Ed Robinson and Jerry Auten agreed to continue as ACCF delegates, with Ladd Connell and Rob Swennes as alternates. For Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) representative, Rob Swennes again agreed to serve, with Michael O'Connor as alternate. In the absence of other candidates, no vote was required.

Featured Speaker: Delegate Patrick Hope

8. Ms. Brown then turned the floor over to the invited guest speaker, Virginia Delegate Patrick Hope. Delegate Hope reported on the major issues that had faced Virginia's legislators. In 2010, they had had to cut \$9 billion from a \$37 billion annual budget. This had a large impact on Medicaid. This year, the Commonwealth had a surplus of \$400-\$500 million, thanks to more people being employed. Virginia's income tax and sales tax account for 85% of its revenues. This surplus was invested in education, Medicaid (\$100 million each), although because of the huge cuts in 2010, this is still much less than the 2009 budget; it would take time to get back to where we were. Legislators had also voted to put more funds into Virginia's [employee] retirement system, and had put \$250 million into its "rainy day" fund, which had been depleted in the prior year, and would need more put in during the coming year.

9. Delegate Hope also explained that the legislature voted Commonwealth employees a 5% raise, but also required a contribution of 5% of salaries to their retirement system; this will help the Commonwealth meet future obligations. On education, the legislature voted for \$30 million to be added primarily for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The goal is for Virginia to have a highly trained workforce. Northern Virginia continues to be the state's economic engine, thanks in part to federal stimulus dollars.

10. Meanwhile, following the 2010 census, the legislature passed both House & Senate re-districting plans; as a result, there will be three additional delegates representing Prince William and Loudon. This is balanced by reductions in southwest Virginia which lost population, as manufacturing and textile mills closed. In the Senate, there is a 1½ Senator increase for Northern Virginia. This will be reflected in new district lines, with Janet Howell representing more of Arlington as well as parts of Fairfax and Loudoun. Hope acknowledged that the process was messy and partisan, with Democrats in southwest Virginia having been targeted for elimination, for example. More legislators in both parties are now in "safe" seats, which tends to make it difficult to get moderates who are willing to compromise. The re-districting plan is now to be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Justice to ensure that it meets constitutional requirements for equal representation or "1 person, 1 vote."

11. Delegate Hope said that the legislative session had had three themes:

- 1) The budget surplus, already discussed;
- 2) Governor McDonnell's proposal for \$2.9B of bonds for transportation for capital improvements. Hope explained that he had opposed this because it ran up the state's bond issuances to the maximum consistent with its bond rating; this was "like maxing out the credit card," but it became law nevertheless. Virginia is still about \$2 billion/year

short of the revenue it needs for its infrastructure needs. While we have different funding sources for capital and maintenance, Hope explained, we need a permanent source of funding rather than a short-term fix. The one advantage of the bond issuance is that it did get a lower interest rate, and construction labor is also cheaper right now.

3) Election year issues: This included having to dispose of several proposed constitutional amendments.

12. Questions and answers followed. Asked about dipping into state employee pensions for current budgets, Hope said this had occurred two years ago, with \$600 million borrowed, but since there were new jobs created in the state since, that gimmick was not needed now. Any surplus will go to Virginia's retirement system and to its "rainy day" fund. Virginia is benefitting from federal stimulus funds, but will still face a shortfall. The Governor and the Republican-controlled House won't consider revenue increases. Gov. McDonnell has focussed instead on offshore drilling (as opposed to offshore wind energy, for which Virginia also has potential) and on privatizing liquor stores, although the latter is dead-- no one supported it. Asked about raising or indexing the gas tax, Hope said it couldn't be passed even as a user fee, even though it hasn't been raised since 1986, and if indexed for inflation since then, would be 36 cents/gallon, as opposed to 17.5 cents now. Nevertheless, Hope expressed optimism about getting bipartisan support in favor of addressing transportation needs. Concerning health care, following the Affordable Care Act, 400,000 Virginians are newly eligible for health insurance. A state commission is overseeing implementation, and will seek federal funds for health care quality improvements. Another issue Delegate Hope has sought to address is a prison in Wise County that is vacant. But local politicians want to keep it that way. Hope had toured some prisons and had introduced a bill to prohibit shackling of pregnant inmates with chains from waist to hands and ankles. Although the bill was killed in committee, Hope will ask the Corrections Dept. to promulgate this as a regulation. Hope serves on the Health & Welfare Committee and Courts of Justice. He noted that Arlington has a very good, hard-working delegation, with workdays running 7am to 10pm during the 60-day legislative session.

13. Ms. Brown thanked Delegate Hope and reminded members that the Executive Committee welcomed recommendations for future General Membership meeting topics. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ladd Connell
Secretary