

**Leeway Overlee Civic Association
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Tues., June 11, 2013, at Westover Library (Conference Room)**

1. Civic Association (CA) President Kim Klingler called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and invited participants to introduce themselves. Following introductions, she invited the Secretary to read or summarize the Minutes of the prior General Membership meeting of April 3. He deferred to Rob Swennes, who had served as acting Secretary. Mr. Swennes reported that the Civic Association at that meeting had approved a donation for Yorktown High School's alcohol-free graduation party and the purchase of neighborhood signs to support the Farmers' Market in the Westover area. The main topic of the April meeting was the commercial re-development in the Westover area, including a new store supporting fair trade movement, and the monthly "first Fridays" event. While a "facelift" for the buildings had been discussed, owners had said there was little incentive for such expense. Based on the summary, the minutes were duly approved.
2. CA Treasurer Jenni Michener then reported on CA finances. Since the prior Report, the CA had paid for the Community Day/yard sale permit, and received signage reimbursement from Tara CA, among other items. The net balance was an overall increase of \$83, to \$2,369.
3. The next agenda item was the Election of Officers. Chips Johnson of the nominating committee noted that the only nominations were for the current officer slate, namely: Kim Klingler as President, Brian Pandya as VP, Ladd Connell as Secretary, and Jennifer Michener as Treasurer. The current officers all indicated willingness to serve again. They were re-elected by the Leeway Overlee residents present at the meeting, with no opposing votes. Rob Swennes and Michael O'Connor were likewise re-elected as the CA representative and alternate, respectively to the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) and for the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF). Jerry Auten and Pierre Boyer were re-elected as delegates, along with Kim Klingler & Brian Pandya (both *ex officio*) and Ed Robinson, Rob Swennes, and Ladd Connell as alternates.

Developing a Vision for Lee Highway

4. The main topic for the meeting was "Developing a Vision for Lee Highway," with a presentation by Waverly Hills CA Pres. Ginger Brown on the long-term planning process for the Lee Highway corridor. Ms. Brown noted that Waverly Hills had recently completed its Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan update, and in the process, Waverly Hills CA had conducted a survey asking all residents what they think about commercial as well as residential aspects of the neighborhood. Survey results indicated neighborhood interest in more shops, cafés, and the like. Waverly Hills' NC plan leader also spoke with a business revitalization specialist. This and other developments—notably, the bulldozing of garden-style apartments on Glebe just south of Lee Highway and the plans for two ten story buildings on Bergsman's site—led to greater interest among Waverly Hills and neighbors in the Lee Highway corridor. Ms. Brown and other volunteers interviewed a slew of local stakeholders, County officials, and

Columbia Pike civic leaders, among others. Following on this, they decided to use the Columbia Pike “Presidents’ breakfasts” model to arrange regular meetings. They then started talking to civic associations (CAs), including Waverly Hills (which includes the Lee Heights shops, a valued feature they would like to retain), Yorktown, Donaldson Run, E. Falls Church, Rosslyn, and now Leeway Overlee. The planning group wants the vision to be consistent for the length of Lee Highway in Arlington.

5. Turning to process, Ms. Brown explained that the group’s first goal was to organize and develop trust, research, educate themselves and others, identify goals & strategic vision, and to establish a Lee Highway Task Force officially. The County planning director, with whom she had met, had helped them launch their own Presidents’ breakfasts. The next step would be to have a community-wide design charrette¹, come up with a Task Force vision, report it to the County Manager, then to the County Board. In this way, the vision would precede any County action. The goal is a community-driven, grassroots vision, presented to County officials, then to expand to become a joint task force, with County experts, but working from the community-developed vision.

6. Andrew Schneider, President of the Yorktown CA and a planning group member, addressed some of the issues faced in such planning. He noted that a lot of development in Arlington can happen by right. One example was the “Garden City” strip mall, just east of George Mason Drive: it had 14 different owners, so there was not sufficient incentive for improvement among individual shop owners. One area for the group to consider was the intersection of Glebe Road & Lee Highway, which now has two banks, a gas station, and a picture framing shop. He added that the group had no agendas, other than that it wanted the neighborhood to be a better place.

Lee Highway Questions and Answers

7. Questions and answers followed. Concerning the use of the East Falls Church re-development plan as a model, Ms. Brown said it was their intention to meet with them, to review the issues that arose, and see what was good or bad. Another question was how the Columbia Pike re-development effort worked with CAs. Ms. Brown responded that they shared Columbia Pike’s intent to come up with a consistent vision, e.g. “we want walkable streets.” However, as with Columbia Pike, they also accepted the principle of local control for each sector. Mr. Schneider added that they envision activity nodes, which worked well in Columbia Pike. Ms. Brown said the Columbia Pike effort focused on major commercial areas first, then filled in

¹ *Charrette* may refer to any collaborative session in which a group of designers drafts a solution to a design problem. While the structure of a charrette varies, depending on the design problem and the individuals in the group, charrettes often take place in multiple sessions in which the group divides into sub-groups. Each sub-group then presents its work to the full group as material for future dialogue. Such charrettes serve as a way of quickly generating a design solution while integrating the aptitudes and interests of a diverse group of people.

residential plans later. To implement the principle of local control, their goal was for each CA to send representatives. The Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) did receive some County funding, but the CA Presidents' (breakfast) group was unofficial.

8. Asked to clarify the expected end product, Ms. Brown stated they haven't figured out the exact form the plan would take. Arlington County has a comprehensive plan, a General Land Use Plan (GLUP), and Sector Plans (much more detailed), which lead to specific site plans. Lee Highway does not yet have a Sector Plan. Cherrydale has one, as does East Falls Church (EFC), but currently there is no unifying plan for the corridor. Rob Swennes clarified that the GLUP "is the constitution; if it's not in the GLUP, it can't happen." For EFC, the task force had to propose a change to the GLUP to bring it up to date, e.g. to allow increased density at some sites.

9. Asked about County plans to work next on Lee Highway, Mr. Schneider responded that the County wants to make sure they have support for any larger planning action. So the Task Force is not coordinated by the County, but it is supported by the County, in the sense that they now have a staff person they can call. Also, they had two planning commissioners join their walking tour. Chips Johnson observed from experience on the Westover Library/Reed School re-development that it is important to have County Commissions engaged throughout and not coming in at last minute. Ms. Brown replied that the Commissions have been supportive so far. Another question addressed the example of the Metro corridor, expressing the view that they would hate to see Lee Highway develop like Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. Ms. Brown replied that that was unlikely ever to happen since Lee Highway doesn't have Metro, but it could have build-up of density in spots, e.g. around Lee Highway and Glebe. Mr. Schneider added that in the Yorktown area, residents would be happy to see re-development of Garden City shops with an extra story. He noted it is also important to bear in mind that Lee Highway is a state road. Resident Bob Moore noted that VDOT is not planning any widening of Lee Hwy. in Arlington.

10. Returning to the comparison with Columbia Pike, Mr. Schneider said that big development in Arlington now is focused there. Ms. Brown said that our neighborhoods benefit from having small businesses. At the same time, local businesses have been thinking about consolidation of the real estate at the Glebe-Lee intersection. Leeway Overlee member and past President Bill Ross noted that along Columbia Pike, some businesses and residents have concerns about lower rent buildings and the businesses in them being forced out. Along Lee Highway, he noted, we could face a similar situation, e.g. affecting Caribbean Grill. Ms. Brown said that provision can be made for affordable retail. A current example on Lee Highway was Moore's barber shop, which had been preserved when Faccia Luna sold air rights but left the barber shop intact.

11. Other topics raised included transportation. Ms. Brown said they group hadn't discussed it yet, but will look at all options. Many residents are grateful for ART buses. On green space, Ms. Brown said they would like more trees along the corridor. On overall planning, CA member Bob Moore noted that zoning rights go with the underlying land, so the question is often when do

the economics support more intensive development? In Lee Heights, for example, the buildings can be as tall as 45 feet by right (without a zoning variance). But they are not built to that height.

12. Asked how residents could get involved, Ms. Brown said they would like a representative from each CA; it doesn't have to be the CA President. Planning group meetings are held monthly on a Sat. morning. Planning the Lee Highway corridor is a huge discussion, and for planning group members, a lot of learning is going on. All are invited to participate in the design charrette; details are in the Waverly Hills newsletter. The group has set a timeframe for the design charrette, although members want it privately led, which can be expensive, Ms. Brown noted in conclusion.

Neighbors Express Concerns re Suburban Builders' Work at 6046 23rd St.

13. The next topic was 6046 N. 23rd St., a Suburban Builders site, with one house to be replaced by three new houses. Suburban Builders is asking for an easement. Neighbors met with the developer, but didn't organize a joint response. A major concern was water flow/displacement. One neighbor filmed the water flow, and sent it to John Krasnick, the developer. Suburban Builders' response was to say they would plant rain gardens. Neighbors believe this would become a pond, and noted that Suburban hasn't actually committed to them on anything. Rob Swennes noted that the owner of the new house on 22nd St. next to the Greenway has had water (flooding) problems already.

14. In response to a question on how to intervene at the County Board meeting (the project is Board agenda item 11), to defer discussion (i.e. from Saturday to the next weeknight Board meeting), it was explained that a person would need to submit a request to that effect; then the item would be discussed at the following meeting (June 18th in this case). Neighbors believe they have a chance for some adjustment to the plans, beyond not allowing infringement on the Greenway, i.e. to ensure no driveway would exit on the Greenway. County real estate specialists have been responsive, but they have recommended the houses go ahead with easements. Neighbors wondered if there is value added by raising this at the Board level. Rob Swennes suggested there could be a value if neighbors get a lot of supporters to attend the meeting. Following supportive comments, Ms. Klingler asked if there was support for a CA rep speaking in support of the neighbors' request, and all replying were in favor.

15. Bob Moore observed the developer had given no commitment on storm water runoff, and neighbors couldn't stop the subdivision; in this context, the next step was to consider what other conditions would be reasonable to impose, e.g. installing an underground storage tank, since the main issue was managing storm water runoff; that was the missing condition. A neighbor added that another condition would be to re-grade, if specifics could be defined. Ms. Klingler offered to put together language for the neighbors' request. Mr. Swennes suggested that if several people are coming to the Board meeting, they should allocate the different aspects of the issue among them. There being no further business, the meeting was then adjourned at 9pm.

Respectfully submitted, Ladd Connell, Secretary