

Leeway Overlee (LO) Civic Association (CA)
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, June 19, 2019 – 7:30pm,
Westover Library Meeting Room #3, 1644 N McKinley Rd.

Civic Association Updates, Election

1. Leeway Overlee CA President Jack Grimaldi welcomed attendees and requested **reports** from officers. Ladd Connell, LOCA Secretary, summarized the Minutes of the prior general membership meeting, held March 13, at which County Board member Matt de Ferranti spoke, addressing issues around Amazon HQ2 (incentives, taxes), in-fill development, and Arlington Public Schools funding. In the absence of LOCA Treasurer Jenni Michener, Mr. Connell also gave the Treasurer's report: LOCA had a starting balance (as of March 13) of \$788.77, and an ending balance (as of June 12) of \$1,602.25. The increase primarily reflected income from the annual yard sale (table fees of \$1,030) and member dues, offset by the cost of printing the Leeway Leader newsletter (\$273.76).
2. Mr. Grimaldi noted that the full Minutes could be found on the Leeway Overlee [website](#). In the absence of Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) representative Rob Swennes, Mr. Grimaldi reported that equipment is on site at Kentucky St. for street widening, to be finished by end of this summer.
3. Mr. Grimaldi then turned to Stu Nagurka, representing the Nominating Committee for LOCA officers, who reported that the committee didn't receive any nominations. Mr. Grimaldi noted that current officers, apart from himself, had agreed to be re-nominated, and that Mike Weinstein had volunteered to be next President. Mr. Grimaldi introduced Vanessa Guest, the current Vice President, and asked for any other officer nominations from the floor. Receiving none, he asked for a vote on the slate of officers as presented by acclamation, which resulted in their unanimous election.
4. Mr. Grimaldi noted that for NCAC, Rob Swennes had agreed to continue as Representative, and Jenni Michener as Alternate. In the absence of other nominations, they were also re-elected by acclamation. As for Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF), LOCA's President and Vice President are automatically delegates; as 3rd & 4th delegates, Jerry Auten and Tom Wolfe had agreed to continue to serve, with Rob Swennes as an Alternate. Mr. Grimaldi asked for a volunteer for a second Alternate, and Chris Langelo volunteered. These nominees were all duly nominated, seconded, and elected by unanimous vote.
5. Mr. Grimaldi reflected that during his tenure serving LOCA, he had worked with Mr. Langelo on an amendment to by-laws, resulting in Article 10 on letters of support, that the Executive Committee now meets pursuant to notices, that those meetings are open to members of the community, and had attendees at a meeting last July, that posting of Executive Committee meeting notices will continue, that he would like to keep working on getting people involved in the Civic Association, and that as immediate past president he would support Mr. Weinstein. He then introduced the meeting's featured speaker, Chris McBride, Rivendell School's Neighborhood Liaison.

Rivendell School: New Building, Same Use of Lee Center Park

6. Chris McBride opened by noting that she lives on 19th St., next to Parkhurst Park, so was a Leeway Overlee member prior to the Leeway Overlee boundary change. She explained that Rivendell requires 12 hours/month parent involvement. As a parent, she has staffed the office and lunchroom, and taught music and art. She is now in her 14th year as a parent at Rivendell, which is a K-8 school. The school has only one class per year/grade, with a maximum per class of 17 children. The range is 135-153 students (15-17/class x 9).

7. A resident asked whether the new building would be used to allow an increase in size. Ms. McBride said no, it will have the same number of classes per grade and same number of grades. The old building was part of a church, but had been used as a school building. The school did use the chapel as a chapel, but it had been there since the 1940s and had challenges structurally. Rivendell had first operated in Ballston—but had generous donors, including Dennis Bakke, one of the founders of AES, which allowed it to acquire its Lee Highway property. The new building should be open for classes in Sept. 2020. Once the new building is done, old building will become a courtyard and green space. The 2nd part will likely be worked on through the fall of 2020. The new building will have a gym, a theatre (usually the school produces musicals by the 8th grade in February), and classrooms on the 2nd floor. The school is trying to be a good neighbor throughout the process, Ms. McBride said.

8. Responding to questions, Ms. McBride explained that the student drop-off will be on Kensington St., and pick-up on Kentucky St. The school emphasizes classical education, including Shakespeare every other year. The name came from *The Hobbit*, signifying a place where kids can explore within the boundaries. The school's new green space/courtyard won't replace the use of the Lee Center Park. Concerning the use agreement, Mr. Grimaldi explained that the Memorandum of Agreement goes through Arlington's Dept. of Parks & Recreation. The use agreement is up for renewal; it is renewed every five years. The Civic Association is not party to it, but provisions give LOCA a place at the table, and they had met a couple of weeks previously. The MOA provides for a neighborhood liaison, and allows two hours/day use of Lee Center Park.

Reed School, Lee Highway, Census, Goddard School, Little Ambassadors Academy

9. Mr. Grimaldi thanked Ms. McBride and introduced speakers for other topics. LOCA Vice President Vanessa Guest, a member of the Reed School Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) briefed on Reed School re-construction. Work on the site will start Sept. 9. The current school building will be demolished to allow construction of a four-story, 725 seat elementary school, with a low area of new impermeable surface—the site only loses 5% of the existing greenspace. However, the park will be closed off during construction for staging of materials, etc. The BLPC will continue to get updates. The process for setting school district boundaries is still underway. Meanwhile, the four greater Westover CAs are planning an event in the park before construction starts.

10. Tom Wolfe, LOCA Liaison to the [Lee Highway Alliance](#) (LHA), reported that LHA had its quarterly board meeting May 16, at which the executive director had resigned, giving two weeks' notice. In absence of an executive director, LHA President Ginger Brown and VP Sandi Chesrown are guiding operations. LHA had a fundraiser, raising roughly \$20,000 to keep LHA going as a non-profit. LHA has focus groups and community meetings. Interested residents can go to the LHA website or [Plan Lee Highway](#) on the Arlington County website. Input on the topic has been gathered over several years, Mr. Wolfe noted. Resident Doug Watson, an alumnus of Washington-Lee High School, asked if Lee Highway will also be getting a name change. Mr. Wolfe replied that since it's a state highway, that decision falls to the state.

11. Mr. Grimaldi turned to new business. First was a use permit request from [Goddard School](#), which is coming in to open two childcare facilities, one at 5222 Lee Highway, at the corner of Lee & George Mason, just outside the boundaries of Leeway Overlee, and the second at 5328 Lee Highway, next to United Bank at Harrison St., in LOCA. The County Board would be reviewing the requests in July. LOCA has asked the Board to look closely at traffic & parking issues that these facilities might raise. Interested residents should see the Leeway Leader for further information. Second, the County had asked LOCA to be a partner organization in [Census 2020](#). Mr. Grimaldi said LOCA would need a volunteer to be a point of contact for the County. Mr. Watson said he would be willing to consider this; Mr. Grimaldi said he would send him the information.

12. Resident Chris Langelo asked about [Little Ambassadors Academy](#) (LAA); was there a community liaison? Mr. Grimaldi replied that Lauren Harris, the Academy's Executive Director, is it. Mr. Grimaldi noted that LAA had opened in March, and hadn't heard of any problems with respect to traffic or parking. Residents who are parents stated that the facility is at full capacity, and has been from day one. Mr. Langelo noted that there had been no communication between LAA and residents. He suggested forming a committee to express concerns about what happens to parking & traffic on McKinley Road and Lexington Street at 25th St. and 25th Rd. Other residents noted that the current level of traffic "is what you're going to see" and that it was "a lot of your neighbors who are using the school."

13. Mr. Langelo noted that this information was unofficial, and LAA should have a representative come to the LOCA meeting. A resident parent replied that the lawsuit filed by neighbors against LAA was a big impediment to interaction with those neighbors. Mr. Langelo noted that LAA had a requirement to give notice of its building and use to every property adjacent. But LAA had also bought the house behind the school building without any notice and should prepare for how it's going to address its use. Mr. Grimaldi, re-introducing Mr. Weinstein as LOCA President-elect, noted that the LOCA Executive Committee had held an extra Executive Committee meeting last summer to address Encore Recovery Solution's occupancy of a neighborhood house; perhaps an extra meeting would be needed this summer to address issues such as LAA and its use of the house behind the school building.

23rd St. Cul-de-sac Development

14. Mr. Grimaldi then invited neighbors who live on 23rd St. to share information about the new development there. A resident, Jennifer Bauer, explained that the builder who had acquired two adjacent lots was proposing to install a “hammerhead” cul-de-sac that would allow building of five new homes in place of the two existing. The County had given preliminary approval. Some residents had spoken to a lawyer who suggested going through the zoning ordinance for possible violations. One finding was that each home was to have 25 feet of frontage-- but only homeowners can file an appeal. Neighbors proposed that LOCA have a resolution to oppose the development. They noted that issues such as water from expanded impermeable surface would be an issue. They had held a meeting with County Board member Matt de Ferranti that was somewhat helpful, but the bottom line was that to stop the development, they would have to sue, and the County still gets to decide how to enforce zoning ordinance. Another resident noted that Mr. de Ferranti had stated that people want to move to Arlington. She added that developers are constantly looking for more properties to acquire and build new houses on. Meanwhile, residents are “put through the ringer for adding a front porch,” with County staff applying the most restrictive definition of setback limits. Ms. McBride noted that she had had a similar encounter with the County, and that many in Arlington zoning offices don’t live here and have a chip on their shoulder toward Arlington residents. She said she thought the County is being shortsighted in this approach.

15. Turning to the proposed resolutionⁱ, a resident stated that he thought it is a good idea, and that the developer should have to put forward formal engineering plans to deal with the water issues, and address concerns about the loss of tree canopy. Mr. Wolfe then moved to have a vote on resolution as printed in the Leeway Leader. The motion was duly seconded. Mr. Grimaldi read the resolution and asked for a show of hands. The vote was 21 in favor, none opposed.

16. Mr. Weinstein noted that it made sense for LOCA to communicate on such issues to other CAs, to promote shared concerns and see what we can do with it. He added that he looked forward to working with Mr. Grimaldi to ensure a smooth transition as the CA addresses these issues.

ⁱ The Resolution, which was previously published in the [Leeway Leader](#) regarding proposed re-development on N. 23rd Street, is as follows:

Whereas, significant new infill development continues to occur “by-right” within the boundaries of our civic association;

Whereas, such infill development often negatively impacts the existing homes by reducing the mature tree canopy, creating storm water management and runoff problems, and creating shade canyons due to much higher vertical construction as compared to the surrounding existing homes;

Whereas, such infill development may not fully meet all of the requirements of the Arlington County zoning ordinances and other ordinances designed to maintain the character and spacing of single family homes; and

Whereas, home owners within the civic association boundaries who renovate their homes report being held to fully meeting the letter of applicable ordinances by Arlington County staff and are often not given waivers or favorable interpretations of such ordinances;

Now, therefore, the members of the Leeway Overlee Civic Association resolve that:

They object to any "by-right" infill development within the civic association boundaries that increases the number of existing homes by demolition and reconstruction;

They object to any such infill development that does not fully meet the letter of all aspects of all applicable Arlington County ordinances; and further,

They object to any favorable interpretations of existing Arlington County zoning and development ordinances that result in an increase in the number of existing homes by demolition and reconstruction.