

AFCA March 2021 Minutes
March 17, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

Esther Bowring (President) called the meeting to order.

Treasurer's Report (Jeff Horwitz)

Jeff received the letter from the IRS reinstating our tax-exempt status and making this exemption retroactive back to when we lost our status in 2014. He will keep the hard copy of this letter in our files. As the letter states, we need to be diligent about filing the ePostcard (form 990-N) every year (by January 15) so we don't lose our status again. That will be Jeff's responsibility for now, but we must collectively educate future Treasurers. Now we can apply to the Virginia tax authorities requesting that they exempt us from having to pay sales or use taxes; Jeff will turn to that later this month.

From a legal perspective, we have transitioned from an unincorporated (nonprofit) association to an incorporated nonprofit. There are several practical effects of this move. First, because we are now incorporated, officers and members can no longer be held personally liable for AFCA's activities. Second, we can now ask Virginia to exempt AFCA from having to pay local sales tax. Third, we no longer have to file taxes with the IRS (although we do have to file that informational postcard). Finally, because the exemption is retroactive, we do not have to pay any fines for having neglected to file with the IRS for the past 10 years. Those fines would have been several thousands of dollars.

Jeff clarified that we are a 501(c)(4) organization (civic/social welfare), not a 501(c)(3). Thus, anytime we solicit funds, we are required to disclose in an express statement, in a conspicuous and easily recognizable format, that contributions to AFCA are not deductible for federal tax income purposes as charitable contributions.

Report from Neighborhood Sections

Northside (Joel Yudken) - nothing to report. Esther noted that she had tried to contact Officer Montoya to obtain the previously requested status update regarding the break-ins at the Arlington Forest Shopping Center, but she has not received a response.

Southside (Sean Lyons) - nothing to report.

Greenbrier (Tom Smialowicz) - The main thing going on is the work at the intersection of Edison and N. Carlin Springs. They have made some progress in the adjustments to narrow the lanes and widen the curb area to slow down traffic. On N. 2nd Street, there is also ongoing utility pole upgrade/replacement work. With respect to traffic, Beverly Johnston reported that she and Lora Strine met with Takis Karantonis of the County Board. He is looking into the

possibility of traffic signals and/or bollards on the corners at the new curbs. Mr. Karantonis said he had followed up with the County's Environmental Services transportation division to discuss some of the newer technologies, such as a light that turns red if you exceed a posted speed limit. He said that he is building relationships and trying to work with the staff to be open to new ideas. Beverly also noted that the "smart" signal in Bluemont actually has not been maintained properly and does not work (i.e., if the speed limit is exceeded, the light does not turn red).

Question: When the work on Carlin Springs is done, will the County do a new study? Yes.

Guest Speaker: Hayley Gambone, Department of Environmental Services, Solid Waste Bureau, Environmental Management Office

How recycling works in Arlington:

- Haulers collect recycling and take it to a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Elk Ridge, MD
- The MRF sorts, processes, and sells the commodities to end users
- Arlington pays a \$72/ton "tipping fee" to the MRF, and if the MRF profits surpass the tipping fee, a percentage is credited back to Arlington (only recycling loads make money, so residents should be careful to put in recycling bins only materials that are actually recyclable)

What can be recycled curbside:

- Yes: Metal, plastics #s 1-7, paper, cartons, cardboard
- No: Flimsy plastic (bring to supermarket drop-off bin), styrofoam, glass (bring to Quincey Park drop-off bin), hot coffee cups, small containers, food-soiled recyclables

Your purchasing power:

- Choose reusables
- Shop by material
- Buy in bulk
- Decline single-use utensils, napkins, and sauces with takeout orders

Contact Ms. Gambone with any questions: hgambone@arlingtonva.us

Or submit here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BEg1gN8fjkKfX1CR6ZTPVLvPhqFSgoRCIOrOmTUBa4aFUOU01M0dHNzNZMEQ2QkILREVDTIc0VUsxUC4u>

Neighborhood Conservation Plan (Liz Kauffman, Hutch Brown)

N. Henderson and N. 2nd - pedestrian concerns. Would prefer 4-way stop versus traffic circle. This will be added to the NCP. Also a lot of comments about Henderson and Route 50 as a

difficult intersection, but not clear what to recommend. There is already a stop sign and pedestrian crosswalk just north of 50.

People speed on N. Columbus Street. Can we put speed bumps? Now there's going to be 80 Parks people working at the LRCC.

Guest Speaker: Peter Lusk, Athletic and Facilities Services Division Chief, Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation

Anticipate approval in the budget for Summer 2021 opening of Lubber Run Community Center (LRCC) at the beginning of the new fiscal year (early July). Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff will start to make transition in early June and in the summer open the building for whatever activities are permitted by the Governor. For example, opening the fitness center, indoor track, and indoor sports in the gym. By the fall, hoping to offer the full book of programs such as the senior center, preschool, etc.

Budget will be approved at the County Board's regular meeting in April, so now is the time to write a letter about this if we want to advocate for the proposed opening.

Beverly Johnston: Clearly, LRCC has met an unmet need for outdoor space, because it is being well used. Suggest signage to educate users (e.g., do not throw rocks over the edge, do not run inside the planted stormwater area). Has the County solicited feedback?

Answer: No, they have not actively solicited feedback, but they are receiving it! Mr. Lusk has been communicating with Esther about issues such as lighting. In general, it's clear we are off to a great start. The rocks seem to be the big issue at the moment.

Kathryn Funk: The park is beautiful, and people love it. And understand this is not a normal time (e.g., being used for vaccinations). But parking is an issue: people don't want to park in the garage, they want to park on N. 3rd Street. Seems this is going to turn into the main parking area if there are not plans to encourage people to park in the garage. In addition, there are temporary signs on N. 3rd Street that the park side is reserved for school use -- is this permanent? And there is a weird yellow strip on the curb on N. 3rd.

Answer: Before LRCC opens, there will be better signage pointing people toward the garage and letting them know it will be free for under 4 hours. The APS parking should not be a permanent change; Mr. Lusk will confirm.

Michael Thomas/Beverly Johnston: When will the piles of gravel near the Lubber Run Bridge closest to N. George Mason Boulevard be removed?

Answer: Mr. Lusk does not know.

Michael Thomas: In the Amphitheater parking lot, on the south side, there is a large amount of utility wire dropping onto the ground from utility wires. Requested that Mr. Lusk look into this, and he said he would.

The LRCC Director has not yet been named, but the job will be posted soon.

Esther noted that Peter Lusk has been fantastic to work with, very helpful.

If it starts to feel in the Fall that people are feeling safe/vaccinated, Mr. Lusk noted that we should plan a grand opening.

Update on AFCA Missing Middle Committee (Joel Yudken, Hutch Brown)

Draft letter to be sent soon to County (following review by AFCA Board):

- Purpose is to raise questions that still need to be answered because issues are not addressed in the materials provided by the County
- Some of the nine areas: (1) Affordability/racial equity -- projection that the new housing would be more affordable, particularly for non-white individuals/families. How is this kind of housing going to be affordable to people from lower income, minority communities? (2) Trade-offs with stated County priorities -- what are the tradeoffs, e.g., in terms of footprints/impervious surfaces/fewer trees? What about our historic preservation designation?
- Feeling is that County has not done enough to satisfy concerns.

Esther asked whether everyone is ok with the letter being sent by the Committee to the County. Natalie Roisman said it was hard to know without knowing what all nine areas are.

Hutch:

- What has changed that is causing the housing shortfall?
- What is the role of Arlington in regional housing? The County occupies 2% of the land in the region.
- We need some clear housing goals -- has the County committed to construct a certain number of units? Where would these units be? How many of what type would be built? None of this is clearly stated. If you don't have clear goals, you can't have clear performance information.
- [Note: there will also be additional areas of questioning in the draft letter to be circulated to the Board]

How to Find Statistics on COVID-19 for Arlington (Esther Bowring)

Upcoming

- April clean-up - John Naland has organized for April 24
- May 19 meeting, typically would be a potluck - how should we proceed? Could we do an in-person meeting at the Amphitheater, spaced out, and BYO picnic dinner?
 - Jeff: Let's be conservative and fully consistent with CDC guidelines
 - Natalie: Can we consider a way going forward to make meetings available by streaming/online to enable greater participation?
 - Esther: Let's table the issue of the May meeting for now.
- Volunteers to develop slate of AFCA officer candidates for May meeting