

Seminary Hill Association Board  
July 19, 2005

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Joe Gerard.

Joe Gerard, President and Vice President  
Jack Sullivan, Treasurer  
Laura Vetter, Secretary and EHS  
Cindy Gurne, Communications Officer  
Lilian Patterson, Area 1  
Tom Kerester, Area 2  
Dick Hobson, Area 3  
Dick Hayes, Area 5  
Richard Dressner, Area 8  
Bob Coulter, Area 9  
Charles Ablard, At-Large  
Joe Fischer, At-Large  
Bruce McCarthy, At-Large  
Frank Putzu, Past President

**Police Report**

Sergeant Bartlett was not present to report. Dick Hayes reported on BB gun incidents. A suspect has been caught.

**Treasurer's Report**

Jack Sullivan reported a balance of \$20,941.46. Jack Sullivan noted that a bill was received for website services.

**Minutes**

The June 2005 minutes were approved.

**Expenditure of SHA funds on charitable causes**

This discussion was held to revisit the discussion at the June meeting surrounding Dick Hayes report on the subject of SHA expenditures for unrelated charitable causes. The report was originally presented at the June meeting, but no vote was held, because a quorum was not present at the June meeting.

Dick Hayes raised the discussion of SHA expending funds on unrelated charitable causes, noting that the SHA by-laws prohibit such expenditures. This matter was discussed at the June meeting, but a vote did not occur, because a quorum was not present.

Cindy Gurne questioned what constitutes the mission of SHA, since there are many issues that SHA is engaged in that support quality of life, environment, etc. Additionally, she questioned whether these issues fall within unrelated charitable donations as defined by the current by-laws. Cindy Gurne asked when the referenced by-laws were adopted. Dick Hayes replied 2003. Cindy Gurne stated that she believes that SHA should adopt a broader approach and she wants to know how this article of the by-laws can be revisited. Dick Hayes stated that the by-laws could be changed at the annual meeting.

A resolution by Dick Hayes saying that such charitable contributions would need to be consistent with the mission of SHA was put forward. Jack Sullivan described the expenses, which would be incurred if SHA found itself in a legal fight noting that we would quickly deplete SHA's funds and also that such expenditures are against the SHA by-laws. Bruce McCarthy agreed stating that he receives many solicitations for funds and how is one to determine which causes would be worthy of SHA funds.

According to Cindy Gurne, the membership surveys reveal that many SHA members support SHA giving money to other, unrelated causes. Joe Gerard supports the motion put forth by Dick Hayes. Joe would rather see SHA members volunteer their time, rather than SHA giving money to these unrelated issues.

The motion that SHA funds should only be given for causes that support the SHA mission as stated in the by-laws passed. Cindy Gurne abstained.

### **Membership Directory**

Cindy Gurne reported that she is in the process of preparing a membership directory. She states that 99% of survey respondents would like to have directory. She will be sending out emails every two weeks requesting membership information for the directory.

### **Update on the Pegram/Polk Development**

Catherine Puscar was introduced to discuss the Sign property development at Pegram and Polk. The plan is to subdivide the 3.4 acre property into five lots, rather than six in order to preserve more open space. Prospect Development is the developer. The plan calls for 20,000-21,000 square foot lots for the new houses, but the original house will retain a lot of approximately 60,000 feet. Sidewalks will be added, where none currently exist. In order to minimize tree loss, the developer consulted with the city arborist. The sidewalk will meander to minimize tree loss. The site is zoned R-20 and no rezoning or SUP is required for this plan. The new houses will be approximately 5000 square feet and will probably sell for about \$1.4 million. There are no future plans to further subdivide the existing open space on the lot. Joe Gerard suggested putting in a four-way stop sign at Pegram and Knox as a part of the traffic calming plan. Dick Hobson noted that this is a by-right development. Matthew LeGrant from the city said that the plan will be going before the Planning Commission soon and that he is available for questions.

### **Annual Meeting Review(Dressner)**

Richard Dressner reported on the planning of the upcoming annual meeting.

Tom Kerester, Bob Coulter, Joyce Gates (an SHA member) and Richard Dressner met to plan the upcoming Annual Meeting.

Summarizing their conclusions, Richard Dressner stated that SHA needs to get the message out to our members, prospective members and elected officials early. We need to articulate and communicate our priorities.

Our goal is for 300 attendees at this Fall's annual meeting. At the meeting the committee envisions the outgoing President making a speech about the past accomplishments and what was not accomplished. SHA business should be discussed. A goal is for the Mayor to be the keynote speaker and for him to speak specifically about Seminary Hill, not the state of the city in general. A City Council report card was discussed. Such a report card would show who has and has not supported us on SHA issues. Another goal is for the meeting to be tighter than in the past. A handout to distribute at the meeting needs to be produced.

A discussion ensued regarding how to maximize attendance at the annual meeting. Richard suggested that each SHA Board member bring at least ten people to the meeting and that we submit those ten names in advance. Development and traffic were identified as the two hot button issues. Property taxes and city process could be combined as a third issue. Richard Dressner's committee believes that we need to invest more in the annual meeting. The meeting needs to be advertised in advance. The board responded positively to Richard Dressner's report. Joe Gerard reiterated Mary Hix' point at the strategic planning session that we need to make personal contacts to build SHA as an organization. 80 people attended last year's annual meeting. SHA's best years have had 100 people attending. Bob Coulter stated that we need to set the date as soon as possible. November 17 (1st choice) and the 16th (2nd choice).

Joe Gerard called for a draft agenda and core issues and to launch the Nominating Committee. Dick Hobson, Joe Fishcer, Jack Sullivan and Cindy Gurne were appointed to the Nominating Committee. Joe Gerard emphasized that all SHA board members need to work on the Annual meeting. Frank Putzu said that direct mail has been particularly successful in getting the word out about the annual meeting. The City Council report card was discussed and it was felt that such a report card should serve as a neutral reporting on issues of importance to SHA, not graded (i.e. A-...) Joe Gerard will contact Mary Hix about the date. The committee will work on the agenda.

Dick Hobson asked Jim Butler how the residents have reacted to traffic calming on Cambridge Road. Jim Butler says the people on Cambridge like it and it will be go Janneys Lane, as well. Dick moved that SHA support that the funds be reallocated from the connector to another transit project within the city. The motion passed.

### **Transportation Discussion**

Cindy Gurne moderated the discussion. By way of introduction, she explained that SHA invited members of City Council, the adhoc Transportation Committee and the Transportation and Transit office to discuss Seminary Hill area transportation and transit issues.

Participating in the discussion were: Del Pepper (Vice-Mayor), Rob Krupricka (City Council), George Foote (Transportation Planning Task Force), Bob Gerbeck and Tom Culpepper (Transportation and Environmental Services).

#### **Del Pepper-Vice Mayor**

She introduced herself as Vice-Mayor. She stated that we are keenly aware that traffic is consuming us based on a survey conducted last year. Del Pepper explained that she lives on Duke Street and has seen traffic increase. Del Pepper has been working on the Varsity Park overflow parking issue from Seminary Forest by creating a new tool for addressing this issue by restricting overnight parking to those cars with city stickers. With regard to the connector issue, she stated that the new Police Facility will leave no room for a future connector at either Bluestone or Generous George's. Del Pepper reported on a recent discussion to put in a fire station in Eisenhower Valley to remove connector pressure based on demand from the fire station at Duke Street and Quaker Lane.

#### **Rob Krupricka of City Council**

Rob praised Del Pepper for her good work. Rob explained that when he ran for City Council he ran stating that we need to update our transportation master plan. 60-80% of Alexandria traffic is from people who live outside Alexandria. Fairfax County drivers desire North-South movement. He has worked to improve East-West traffic movement for the benefit of Alexandrians. Working with George Foote to revise the city's traffic master plan, Rob has worked on how to make our city safer for pedestrians through the Alexandria Community Pathways Program. Rob raised the issue of speeding on Seminary Road and his work with Christine Michaelis. He is also concerned about incomplete sidewalks, which compromise the safety of pedestrians.

#### **George Foote of the City's Transportation Planning Task Force**

George Foote began by reporting on the work of the Task Force making the following points:

- Alexandria is changing from a suburban to an urban community. It is transitioning from a bedroom community to one where people both live and work. He believes that a connector would fail to address this change.

- Over the next 25 years, the number of jobs in Alexandria will increase by 50%, as will the population. Therefore, traffic will never get better than it currently is. What we have going for us is the street space that we control to get people East-West within Alexandria, rather than North-South through Alexandria, through the use of street cars and dedicated bus lanes. Such a plan would offer through traffic commuters less opportunity to get through the city quickly. Eisenhower Avenue, Duke Street, Potomac Yards and the Northern crescent offer potential transit lines. The Task Force envisions a movement toward an urban transport model.

Bob Gerbeck and Tom Culpepper from Transportation and Environmental Services.

#### **Cindy initiates the Q& A session**

How has the issue of speeding on Seminary Road been addressed. Tom Culpepper says the biggest issue is funding, but potential options are lane narrowing or losing some lanes to transit. Richard Dressner inquired about an HOV ramp from Seminary Road to I-395. City Council requested that such a ramp not be put in, because the primary users would be going to the Pentagon and that a more appropriate location would be at Glebe Road. Del Pepper explained that there was lot of opposition from people West of I-395 and there is

no plan in place. With regard to Seminary Road, Rob Krupricka referenced Christine's Michaelis' petition and explained that money is being retained for slowing down traffic on Seminary Road, not letting these funds dry up. Rob Krupricka recognizes that traffic calming between Quaker Lane and I-395 will be expensive. Tom Foote explained that strategies used on side streets cannot be used on Seminary Road, due to emergency vehicle access.

Cindy Gurne asked about the funding process. Tom Foote explained the sources for transportation funding:

- the urban systems program

- resurfacing and maintenance (a source federal funds from the gas tax)

- regional grants for specific projects

Cindy Gurne wants to know when we can stop studying and start implementing.

Cindy asked about neighborhood consensus. The working group develops a plan and then one builds the neighborhood consensus.

Bruce McCarthy believes this situation will continue to get worse and perhaps Alexandria will need to restrict the use of single occupant cars, as has been done London.

Rob Krupricka explained that there are approximately 100,000 registered cars in this city.

Tom Kerester inquired about bicycle trails. Rob Krupricka replied that this is a priority and it is an easy idea is to add a bike lane on Seminary Road. Del Pepper has ridden her bike on Bike to Work Day and she has experienced the problems of biking through Alexandria. There are two biking constituencies: commuters prefer wider lanes for lane sharing, but recreational cyclists prefer off road trails. The interest must be balanced.

Rob Krupricka says that we need to continue to support the open space plan for the green crescent along the perimeter of the city, which would include bike paths. We could invite the Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator to a future meeting.

Bob Coulter asked George Foote about the Transportation Task Force and its timeline. George wants to see the master plan report be presented in the next year. Cindy asked about pedestrian safety and pointed out the lack of signage regarding pedestrian traffic. Tom Culpepper responded that Alexandria actually fares well compared to other areas, but there is room for improvement. The new Alexandria Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator starts on August 8th and his primary responsibility is to improve pedestrian and bike safety. Richard Dressner pointed out that the length of time that people turning left from North Pickett Street onto Seminary Road is quite long. The traffic light in front of Hammond Middle School was also discussed.

Cindy raised the issue of transportation problems flowing into the neighborhoods (i.e. cars from townhouses and apartments being parked in front of single family homes) Tom Culpepper explained that we do have some constraints on this issue, because they are public streets. Many of these issue could be resolved, if people would be thoughtful, because resolving these issues with regulations is difficult. Tom explained a lot of these solutions (i.e. Varsity Park) come from the community. Cindy inquired about the 72 hour rule regarding parking, but Rob explained that in his neighborhood (Del Ray) the 72 hour rule is supported, because there are many houses with no off-street parking and some Del Ray residents walk to the Metro every day. Dick Hayes inquired about the possibility of limiting the number of cars which residents may be allowed to park on the street. Rob believes that there are many parking issues in Alexandria, which express themselves in different ways across the city (i.e. the 72 hour rule). George Foote raised the idea of parking structures on the periphery of the city at the city gateways as has been done in Bethesda. City Council is beginning to require that a new commercial building make their parking available to non-building occupants.

Cindy Gurne then inquired about circulator busses. George Foote explained that people with other options are willing ride circulator busses, but not ride traditional busses. Del Pepper supports circulator busses. George Foote explained that the DASH facility exceeded its capacity 10 years ago and could only service one type of bus, but the new facility will accommodate different size vehicles. Joe Fischer asked about city employees taking public transport. George Foote responded that 300 city employees take public transit based on participation in the subsidized transit program .

George Foot clarified that Alexandria is not trying to move more Fairfax County residents through Alexandria, but he described what Fairfax County is doing, such as the Rex bus system along Route 1 and potentially connecting Rex with another bus line through the city. Rob Krupricka explained that

unfortunately all Metro expansion will go for the proposed Reston/Dulles rail line, so our best hope for metro funding is for buses.

Ginny Hines Parry suggested reallocating the \$15 million allocated for a connector to be reallocated for transit. Councilman Smedberg supports this. Rob wants to see a specific plan before we request that the state reallocate the funds. Del Pepper believes this will move forward in the fall. The City Council must vote that we do not want a connector and then go to the state to reallocate the funds, but she explained that state will have to forgive the city's commitment on the project. Joe Fischer inquired about public transit use by employees of the Patent and Trademark Office. Tom Culpepper explained that among PTO employees the use of public transportation vs. driving has been consistent, but unfortunately the tunnel is closed during off hours which discourages people from using the tunnel in the future. Bob Coulter suggested re-timing the pedestrian route on Duke to encourage tunnel use.

By what measures should City Council and the Transportation Task Force be evaluated in one year.

- The amount of money the city commits to spend on new transit
- city response time to install new stop signs and traffic lights
- reduced speed on Seminary Road
- an education campaign to remind people to be considerate on the road.

In the memo dated March 16, 2005 prepared by Council Members Smedberg and Krupicka, Central City (the area defined as Seminary Road and Quaker Lane) was listed as one of the top priorities for traffic calming and improved pedestrian friendly initiatives.

The panel spoke of the importance of community and political will required to effect any change. The will comes from the community with the help of the SHA we look forward to moving some of these suggestions forward.

#### **New Issues**

A Quaker View meeting will be held, including the representatives from the church next door, the townhouses across the street and SHA.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Vetter  
Secretary