

Arlington Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday January 14, 2015 7-9 PM
Courthouse Plaza, Birch Room
2100 Clarendon Boulevard

Minutes (approved April 8, 2015)

Attending: Pamela Van Hine, Acting Chair for meeting; John Armstrong; Eric Goodman; David Goodman; David Patton; Jim Feaster
Guests: Tom Norton, Nathan George

Guest Speaker: Tom Norton, Arlington Public Schools Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator
Our guest speaker informally covered the funding (Virginia DOT program) and philosophy (4 "E"s: Education, Evaluation and Engineering, Enforcement, and Encouragement: the extra "e" and described his initial experiences working with various constituencies, from the school principals, to PTAs, the students, parents, and others in the community. He explained that the project is embedded within the physical education and health sections of the school, which works well for them. The project encourages carpooling and walking part of the distance, as appropriate for some communities where walking and biking are not currently realistic options. The committee asked about current challenges, and he mentioned unsafe student drop offs, which are especially risky for cyclists. The lack of sidewalks and safe-street crossing in some areas will require long-term solutions. As part of the project, they gathered data from the students last fall on how they planned to travel to and from their school that day. The committee suggested some refinements to the data and encouraged further analysis of this valuable data set. The committee expressed support for the position becoming permanent because of its importance for student safety and health. Tom welcomed further interactions and discussions with our committee. The project website is: <http://www.apsva.us/saferoutestoschool>
Public Comments: Nathan George had no specific comments, but he looks forward to attending future meetings. He is an engineer.

Approval of Minutes from December 10 meeting: Because the chair was not able to attend the January meeting, and because additional comments to the draft minutes were not received in time to edit the draft, P Van Hine will add the additional comments from T Korn and circulate the revised minutes for approval. During tonight's meeting, the committee did discuss the S. Walter Reed Drive project briefly. Based upon comments from our committee members and other groups, the project may be revised.

Arlington Report a Problem/Make a Request Form: D Patton led a lively show-and-tell and discussion on the Arlington Report a Problem website: <http://topics.arlingtonva.us/reportproblem/> From his discussions with staff who work with the reporting system, he found out that the top half of the form is prepared by Arlington staff, but

the bottom half (including interactive map) is from the software company, Public Stuff. He also distributed a sheet with data on questions asked. Overall use is relatively small, less than 1000 between mid-December and mid-January, and the number one complaint was for trash cart repairs! The reporting system has two main problems - the challenging design of the entry forms and the black box nature of what happens to the requests once submitted, including receiving "completed" status for requests that were not completed in the opinion of the Arlington citizen who submitted the request. As David demonstrated the current system, committee members offered numerous comments and suggestions on the system. Some of the issues raised included: why app version is more user-friendly than the web version, why the categories are so limited (and do not match pedestrian issues), why there is no "other" category or a place for comments, why a user has to login and register and why Face Book is recommended for registration, and how/if a report can be edited once submitted. We tried unsuccessfully to add in the site on the map to a sample report that had been submitted. The committee also briefly discussed the problems with calling a request "completed" when it was not – and how that part could be improved, including either informing the citizen whom to contact if Arlington staff were not responsible or ensuring that the request was forwarded to the appropriate outside group, such as Dominion Power. David is willing to coordinate comments from committee members and continue discussions with internal staff who work with the system, with the goal of creating a much more intuitive and easy-to-use system that will meet the needs of Arlingtonians. Please test the system and send him your suggestions.

Miscellaneous topics:

News boxes and creating a working group: Because the chair was not able to attend this meeting, reporting on and discussion of these projects will be addressed at the next meeting in February. Note ongoing activities with news boxes in Rosslyn as reported on the committee Google Group.

Pedestrian safety in the winter: P Van Hine raised this issue because the conditions in her neighborhood (Aurora Highlands, Crystal City, Pentagon City) remained treacherous for pedestrians for almost a week after the snow on February 6, and she did not know how file complaints or whom to contact for future problems. D Goodman found this website: Report a Snow Issue: <http://egovweb-http-vip.arlingtonva.us/SnowRequest/Home/ESRI>

Appointments to the Committee: D Goodman will submit P Van Hine's and J Armstrong's names to the County Manager.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 11, 2015.