

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee
September 14, 2017

Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: Navy League Building
2300 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

1. Roll Call and Brief Neighborhood Report
 - a. Sarah McKinley brought up an issue in her Civic Association. Four parcels of land with a large willow oak tree (private property), the owner is willing to sell this land to Arlington County. The County won't consider purchasing this land until it is in the Columbia Heights CA Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan. Sarah feels the county is asking the civic association to do something beyond the confines of what has been expected in a NC Plan in the past. To do it properly would require a laborious survey process that would be too onerous. Sarah will be looking at other ways accomplish this type of work, and will report back to the NCAC.
 - b. John Seggerman – the construction project planned for next year in the Donaldson Run CA will include the removal of 80 trees and plants that are invasive, and the planting of approximately 200 new saplings. There is a small group of citizens objecting to the project, based on trees being cut down.
 - c. Pete Olivere for Kathleen Reeder - the clipboard petition for a project in Glen Carlyn CA so far has 56% "yes" votes, 24 % "no" votes, and 21% not yet responded. She hopes to have this completed by the end of the month.
 - d. Bill Braswell – Over the next few months, the County will review Virginia Hospital Center's proposed additions, including a parking garage and an outpatient center. Also, APS will begin the design and BLPC process to construct an elementary school on the Reed site.
2. Approval of Minutes from July 13, 2017 NCAC Meeting:
 - a. Correction to Line 1.c.) Alex Luchenitser shared dissatisfaction residents have with a contractor and their work being performed on a NC project in the Waverly Hills neighborhood.
 - b. With this correction, the Minutes from the July 13, 2017 NCAC Meeting were Approved unanimously.
3. Officers and Staff Report
 - a. Tim McIntosh – Next month on the NCAC Agenda will be an update on the progress being made by the Arlington County Lighting Master Plan Committee.

4. Discussion / Action Items:

a. Presentation on the Accessory Dwelling Regulations Update

The presentation was made by Joel Franklin, a Planner with the Housing Division, CPHD

The Accessory Dwelling Regulations are a section of the Affordable Housing Master Plan.

The Housing Division is analyzing options for the use of accessory dwellings in Arlington.

Questions/Comments:

- i. Phil Klingelhofer asked for clarification on the 1 foot minimum property line set back requirement at sideyards

Joel responded that the 1 foot setback will remain as is for accessory dwellings.

- ii. Eileen Janas asked if the current standards will also continue to remain the same for corner lots.

Joel replied yes.

- iii. Dennis McGarry brought up concerns about an increase in parking problems, noting that zoning enforcement and safety inspections do not seem to occur much already, and these would need improvements in conjunction with the adoption of the accessory dwelling changes.

Brian Hannigan further noted that with code enforcement, the county will need greater vigilance to ensure problems are addressed.

- iv. Brian Hannigan asked how many homes in Arlington County currently have detached garages?

Joel did not know the answer, and will find out.

- v. Howard Solodky asked how the single family character of neighborhoods will be maintained?

- vi. Jim Feaster asked why these changes are being considered to Accessory Dwellings

Joel responded that there is a lot of interest in this throughout the county.

- vii. John Seggerman asked how difficult annual inspections would be, and why are they being required so frequently?

Joel replied that they are not difficult inspections, and the timing remains the same as per the original ordinance.

- viii. Jim Feaster asked if there will be a monitoring process put in place, as one of the purposes of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is for the age in place populations?

Joel responded that the working group is looking at how these can be monitored after construction with re-evaluation of the process after several years.

- ix. Howard Solodky asked what the ADU approval process will be?

Joel responded that it will be through a zoning and construction permit process, with requiring the owner to obtain a certificate of occupancy.

- x. Frieda Kulish commented that a large house could have two families living in it without going through a county approval process.

Joel explained that one of the goals of these changes are to encourage residents to bring their homes up to code and sublet them legally.

Alexandra Bocian asked if a house is purchased that already has provisions for 2 households to live there, what happens?

Joel explained that the county will work with the owner to make changes to ensure the home is safe and legal.

- xi. Eileen Janas commented that a 1 foot setback does not seem appropriate for an ADU dwelling from the edge of property lines.

The Presentation on the Accessory Dwelling Regulations will be put on the County website for everyone to see.

b. NCAC Cost Overrun Process, Discussion

Tim McIntosh presented the topic to the NCAC, and explained that staff is working on better ways to assist in more efficiently getting bid packages through approval processes with the County Board. It is being proposed that Cost Estimates could be updated at the 60% and 90% Construction Drawing milestone dates. This would enable the NCAC and County Board to see potential changes in the project cost estimates incrementally, rather than all at once when the drawings are completed.

Questions/Comments:

- i. Jim Feaster commented that this would mean coming before the NCAC more frequently, which would add burden to the NC Staff and NCAC's workload.

Tim responded that this is correct, with the additional benefit of giving greater transparency to the project process and associated costs.

- ii. Pete Oliver asked for further explanation of the intent of this change.

Tim explained that with our cost estimates, NC Staff lists risk factors that may change expenses associated with a project.

- iii. Sarah McKinley observed that this may also allow the County Board and County Manager to better plan and allocate funds for projects.

Sarah also explained there are a combination of factors that have increased the cost for NC Projects, such as an increase in general construction cost in Arlington County, increase in the cost of materials, and more stringent storm water regulations.

- iv. Tim noted that this past year had unusually high costs for a number of projects that had cost overruns. Regarding storm water analysis and regulations, Tim explained

that this is a large part of the increases, and unfortunately DES will not cover these costs.

- v. David Haring noted that this change helps uncover issues and risk factors in a project at the 60% mark.
- vi. Phil Klingelhofer gave his support for the change, noting it provides better financial information.
- vii. Alex Luchenitser asked about the cost of staff time to do this.

Tim replied that there would be additional engineering staff time, but he does not have an estimate for the amount yet.

Alex asked if the threshold for being required to go before the County Board with cost increases to a project if the increase is 10% or more?

Tim replied yes.

Alex asked if the engineers would stop work until approval received by the CB?

Tim replied that typically they would not.

- viii. Sarah McKinley called for a vote to cease discussion and move to vote on the change.

Aye – 23 / Nay – 0 / Abstain – 0

- ix. Sarah McKinley made a motion that the NCAC allow and adopt the provision of incremental cost estimates by the NC Staff, which would then be presented to the NCAC and CB for approval. / the motion was seconded by Bill Braswell.

Aye – 20 / Nay – 2 / Abstain – 1

5. Other/New Business:

(None.)

6. Meeting adjourned.