

**BVSCA Regular Meeting (Joint with Cherrydale)**  
**September 24, 2018**

Number of Attendees: 50

BVSCA attendees: 29

Cherrydale attendees: 21

**Item 1: Matt de Ferranti – Candidate for County Board**

Mr. de Ferranti (MDF) opened by providing his professional background, followed by his positions. Arlington duties have included JFAC, School Budget Advisory Council, and Housing Commission for last 4 years. Highlights of interest include:

- New vision for future.
- Issues around density.
- Commercial vacancy rate.
- Investing in schools. Need a 4<sup>th</sup> high school. (Did not think it was a good thing to go to 1,300 students at the Ed Center.)
- More info on his brochure on priorities: [mattforarlington.com](http://mattforarlington.com)

**Q&A**

- **Paula Thiede: Tree canopy?** What are your plans for preserving them? What would you say to developers?
  - (MDF). On public side, Arlington hasn't made preservation of trees a priority in the building of schools. It's not a measure and should be. On private side we need more changes in Richmond (General Assembly). Fairfax has a tree ordinance. He has some previous experience as a lawyer in land use law in Texas, and will want to work on this.
- **Jim Todd (Cherrydale President). New pool in Crystal City.** With a lot of infrastructure problems, the county cut the budget and radically reduced spending on basic needs yet spent money on a 'gold plated' pool.
  - (MDF). Cost did come down with a design-build process. It's a good idea to move forward at that lower price. Also concerned about canceling the project without knowing the cost. New facilities will draw people to Arlington.
- **Erin (?) Cherrydale. Vacancy rate.** What's the plan for bringing it down?
  - (MDF). Grow businesses in certain sectors cybersecurity, etc. Need to convene the right people, minds and ideas. Need to 'sell' Arlington – marketing, visioning, having companies relocate, building small businesses. Also think about wifi and connectivity.
- **Cynthia Hilton. Cherrydale. 4<sup>th</sup> High School.** What do we mean by a 'comparable' high school and I am concerned about issues around amenities. (Also, on JFAC and Buck. Hope it doesn't turn out to be a parking lot.)
  - (MDF). In a choice between a pool (i.e., Long Bridge pool) and a school, would choose a school. Agree that it should be fully comparable if it's a 'neighborhood' school. But there is some idea that it might be a choice school – not yet determined.

- **Rhiannon Leautner, BVSCA. Buck.** What do you see should be the plan for the Buck property?
  - (MDF). Salt dome -did not see it as a good temp solution. On white fleet there are valid concerns. For the long term, sites should be planned with a fair process. There is reason not to be enamored of the plan so far. Fair process involves having inputs given and heard. There are issues of 'zoning' and 'history' that should both be considered. The right processes in this neighborhood have not been put in place.
- **Nia Bagley, BVSCA. Parking moratorium.** Where do you stand on the parking moratorium?
  - (MDF). Doesn't know issues too much. Seems like parking enforcement is a bit lax and there need to be resources to enforce them. Leans towards greater protection and enforcement. Moratoriums to delay but not work on them is not good.
- **Al Lewis, BVSCA. Protection of single family and low commercial with service commercial.** Is this important to Arlington? On the flipside, does Arlington need more multi-family and high-rises?
  - (MDF). Going back (and informed by Joe Wholey) there was a deal to preserve single family. There isn't a legal contract to it. Duplexes and 'missing middle' - we are short on these. More management of growth is necessary. On high-rises, there could be a lot of millennials without kids putting a lot into Arlington revenues. Doesn't think we can stay the same but can preserve what makes Arlington unique. Need middle class to be able to live here.
- **Samantha Baker from Ballston Bid** – there is a lack of apartment supply in Ballston.

#### **Item 2 & 3: Barbara Kanninen – Candidate for Arlington School Board + Arlington Science Focus School (ASFS) and Key Swap (proposed)**

Dr. Kanninen (BK) noted that she is the new liaison to BVSCA, and to Taylor School. She has lived in Arlington 25 years, was on fiscal advisory (committee?), ran for the SB in 2014. On the SB she is focused on the "whole child" – behavioral health, expanded recess, academics, arts, STEM, support to teachers and morale (including pay). Growth and change is also an issue with student growth from 17k to 27k now in the last 10 (?) years.

New info on schools. In elementary schools we have a 1,300 seat deficit. Fleet Elementary in 2019 (on County Board (CB) land, caused some delays). Another will open in Westover. By 2021 we will catch up somewhat.

On the transfer policy which was very piecemeal.

For a large school system and the idea of a TEAM and being able to have access.

For Key, that was a neighborhood. It also is an immersion school. (*Minutes note - Some details lost/not heard here.*)

**Q&A.** *Minutes note – most of the Q&A was based on the proposed ASFS/Key SWAP, except where noted.*

- **Cara Troup (BVSCA): ASFS school swap and access to neighborhood from immediate neighbors.** No satisfaction on the equity. No response on the request. No engagement process. When were you made aware of the superintendent's plan and its shortsightedness?

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- (BK). Science Focus doesn't sit within its own boundary and the Key district. And you can sit in this school and not get in. Last Spring there was an exercise looking at maps. Made sense in looking at the maps to switch schools. There are complications, but in the summer the swaps can occur with more ease. *(Minutes note - Some details lost/not heard here.)*
- **Kristin Jeffries, Cherrydale. ASFS/Key SWAP.** The plan does not add up in terms of the data. The provided potential enrolments don't add up and the new ASFS cannot contain as many students as planned and who could come. Need to look at all boundaries in unison. How do you justify dismantling two programs?
  - (BK). After 2019 and 2021, if we do this right, we won't need any new schools. The beauty of the swap is that we don't have to change. It's far less disruptive across Arlington Public Schools. Key has also said the same thing. But by opening the new schools, all of them will be right-sized.
- **Kristin Jeffries, Cherrydale. ASFS/Key SWAP.** On staff morale and the building, curriculum, ponds etc. They are focused and worried.
  - (BK). Aware of stress but acknowledges it isn't smooth.
- **Mai Robertson, BVSCA.** What is the planning process? Analysis, data, projections, etc? Three blocks from where we are sitting there will be 1000 new units coming online (YMCA/Kirkwood area), including 46 affordable housing.
  - (BK). BK is an econometrician and when she came on board there was not a planning office. Now there is a planning office (Lisa Stenghal (?) with 7 staff). Planning is much better and sophisticated. Staff have info on all planning units. This will be built into projections happening now for next 10 years. Will commit to look at boundaries every 5 years.
    - *Minutes comment – There was discussion and expressed skepticism among attendees in the room on what the planning office is doing and can do.*
- **Erin Freed Smith, Cherrydale.** She's a Key parent. She's attached to the community. She doesn't think there is enough outreach to the Hispanic community. They want to walk their kids to school. Many have said they will not come along to new boundaries. What is being done on consideration and outreach to the community? How could family access (walkers) to the school who don't have cars.
  - (BK). Not BK's view that there has not been intentional. She thinks they have been engaging with Key communities. Will guarantee a bus to the Spanish language school in its new location. The new principal will do a good job on explaining the bus arrangements. There are kids from Barrett who are on the bus.
- **Tom Viles, BVSCA.** There are two elephants in the room. There is a lack of equity and transparency in the decision. When it was initially pitched by the Superintendent in August? The Arlington Way process is engagement, surveys, and it'll all be thought about...and then it is decided. It's kind of gaslighting the neighborhood. On equity, there is not enough discussion

between the County. The nearby YMCA development is going to have tower blocks nearby (affecting population estimates). Lyon Village has gotten its own charter school if you look at the boundary. Lyon Village has gotten what it wanted and ASFS was taken out of the neighborhood. Now Key kids have to travel another mile in the porta-cabins. It is beginning to become a growing shantytown. And then the White Fleet and Buses are now being parked at the Buck site and Ed Center. In effect, you've taken away our school (ASFS) and given us a motorpool.

- (BK). Understand that there appears to be a lack of transparency. Also learned this summer about the superintendent's recommendation. Superintendent's decision versus SB. It is under his purview to make the decision. The SB could weigh in and counter. *(Minutes note - Some details lost/not heard here.)*
- **Allison (?), BVSCA.** How do you justify moving one neighborhood school and one program school? (Cherrydale VP weighed in on how this can be done as per Virginia law?) How does the SWAP improve education at either location? Concerned that the analysis has been untested. The moving costs (\$44k) cannot be correct – the tools used to teach will be taken away? It seems like the move will effectively dismantle the programs? How will this foster the education?
  - (BK). There is a stability issue with kids staying in the same school community. Look at the boundary map. This area is zoned for Taylor. The changes will help reduce trailers. *(Minutes note - Some details lost/not heard here.)*
- **Sara Nimchura, Cherrydale.** As a millennial will have a child in the schools and she lives in an apartment / condo. Her building has 12 kids in 3 years. In the long run with big boundary changes. Maybe the band-aid should be pulled off more quickly and deal with the build-up of multi-family. How are you incorporating orange line corridor? The boundary map is screwed up.
  - (BK). Agree on how boundaries look. On the issue of millennials and babies, the numbers at Ashlawn show overcapacity and that was surprising. There are a lot of changes and a lot of unhappy people.
- **Toni Wexler, Cherrydale.** Concern about the planning and the new department. People in this neighborhood were doing a lot of unpaid analysis – more than the planning department could do. She doubts that the planning department cannot do a look out at 10 years. Need to look at what is most practical and change all the boundaries. Look more holistically in the best way possible.
  - (BK). Community analysis welcome. The whole point of the swap was to look at boundaries for 2020. The Westover school will help.
- **Maurya Meiers, BVSCA.** Our community has continually engaged in a respectful manner with APS and we have been more than willing to partner with you to solve problems, but we feel you have done the same.
  - ✓ We said, we agreed to take our fair share of the 1300 seats at the Ed Center, you gave us 600.

- ✓ We said that we don't want you to park a fleet of buses in our back yard at the Buck site, so you park them next door at the Ed Center
  - ✓ We said that we are willing to take one for the team and allow the white fleet to be parked on the Buck site, but we ask for one small change in the agreement to ensure temporary is in fact temporary ... we were ignored.
  - ✓ We asked to have a formal voice in the planning and strategy on Buck (such as through JFAC or some new committee), but are left with zero representation.
  - ✓ Here we are again with Science Focus. We are tired of being ignored and are beyond frustrated at the lack of transparency and trustworthiness.
  - ✓ Trust in your elected leaders is a hallmark of good governance. How do you plan to engage in good faith with our community and why should we consider voting for you?
- (BK). JFAC just getting underway. It was an 'at-large' committee. Matt Ladd is coming from Planning to support JFAC. On the white fleet - it is an agreement with the County. On the school buses – there is no other space. On Buck long term planning, we have a list of what is needed - we need a 3<sup>rd</sup> elementary, a new middle school, fields, bus parking. From a vision perspective, everything is cooperative with CB, Planning Commission,
- **Closing – Why vote for you?**
    - In response, BK asked the attendees to respond with their lists/interests. Below are the comments from the room.
      - Stop making us feel like we are wasting our time with working on improving things and being engaged, but then being ignored.
      - Stop the bait and switch practices.
      - Community is feeling a lot of stresses. We lose a school, we gain a motorpool!
      - An example on ASFS - there was a huge engagement process and then total 180-degree switch by APS. There should be a pledge to change direction and remain transparent.
      - If you don't know what you want to do, don't engage.
      - On County Board side, transparency was better than SB side. Now that you are here as our rep, could we make it a more truly open way? Please make as much effort to meet us. Tell the BVSCA President about upcoming issues/changes. Give us a heads up.
      - Compare how the County/APS work compared to federal rules. With federal rules, you know what to expect.
      - If you do not actually intend to use the information that the community provides, stop asking for public input to check the box.
      - It's a huge missed opportunity not to engage in this community. People here engage world leaders. You have a huge asset that you are ignoring and not tapping.
      - There is a lot of growth in the east part of the county on schools.

- There could be more overarching questions instead of questions one at a time?  
How can we get broader and better decisions?
  - (BK). In the past everything was very piecemeal, changing at the margins. In the past, John Chadwick was the planner but he's an architect. Now more resources are put into planning.
  - (BK) The swimming pool illustration is that the data that led to the need for that came in 2002. A lot has changed since then. Would we have made that decision now? If we had worked together (SB and CB), we could have done it at the Career Center. Another example of changes and lack of continuity is the year-long school year at Barret. Not happening elsewhere. We know we need to do smart planning and the county is doing better.
  - (BK) Every school site will try to coordinate with parks and school buildings. There should be more consultation. Example is the Stratford School.
- A number of attendees commented on map and GIS data.
  - One member who works for the federal government on GIS and mapping said that a lot of data are available and not exploited.
  - A concern was raised that APS staff don't know how to obtain data, use the data, etc. Also, there are a lot of new buildings coming on board in BVSCA boundaries and there are concerns that these are not being considered (e.g. Ballston Quarter, YMCA/Kirkwood redevelopment).
  - Samantha Banks (Ballston Bid)– Have you looked at alternative locations and partnering with commercial? Ballston Bid would like to work with APS on schools.
    - (BK). We are taking advantage of some commercial spaces. It seems like property owners don't want to lower price, cost of modifications, and lack of green space around buildings. Also, some things are happening like the Ed Center move.
    - Jim Todd (Cherrydale President). Replied that the Ed Center move was raised by Cherrydale 8 years ago.
- Attendees: Can we assume the SWAP is a done deal? Discussion follows.
  - (BK). We have not opposed it.
  - Q. What physical changes are we looking at?
  - (BK). After 2021 we are "reboundarying". The option schools could be an issue. So 2019-20 there will be issues – trailers. We might move pre-K's out in some cases. Also talking to the CB on the Buck site to use trailers.

- Nancy Iacommini (Cherrydale Resident and Planning Commission Member) noted that the SB/APS should engage the Planning Commission in changes proposed (on land use?). There are processes in place and adequate time is needed for these.
- Nia Bagley, BVSCA Executive Committee. Could you talk about traffic and bus routes? It's frustrating to be in a neighborhood where you have no shot at admittance.
  - (BK). On immersion there is a 50/50 shot, with 50% for native speakers.
- Q. When will the traffic study occur? We'll have the Ed Center, YMCA, Red Top, ASFS/Key, Buck.
- Q. If you kill the schools with these changes in the SWAP? What will you do?
  - (BK) We care very much about the immersion program.
- Q. But we are not hearing about any adjustments even though valuable and ready information is available.

#### • **Item 4: Draft BVSCA Letter to SB on the Proposed School Swap**

- Steve Leutner, BVSCA, prepared a draft letter. Comments/edits were added. Discussion follows.
  - **Nia Bagley.** Why start with the point that we are the biggest civic association?
  - **Steve Leutner.** It's a political year, plus there is the equity and the number of schools where people in our neighborhood is divided. We are a big association and we want to be heard.
  - **Jim.** Agrees that it's useful given that we have 1/7 of Arlington.
  - **Cara Troup.** It's unique in that we are one of the only civic associations whose residents have to attend 3 schools..
  - **Steve and Cara.** Letter has 3 parts. One says we don't support the swap. We want to get it on the record that process wasn't followed. It's not a good location for a multitude of reasons.
  - **Nia.** Need to try more at 'winning' the PR position. We have been asked publicly and privately to back off.
  - **?** A visual map would be helpful. Start making pictures.
  - **Mai.** Is there anything to incorporate based on what was said tonight that we should incorporate?
  - **Cara.** Yes, we should think about pushing the traffic study. Do we want to beef it up? Also on costing on the swap is wrong. There is a lot more cost.
  - **Sara Nimchura.** Ask for the data.
  - **Maurya.** For the biggest civic association with high walkability, our students are probably most unlikely to be able to walk. Could pull in some data on this on the people

going out and in (with swap)? BVSCA bears all the costs and none of the benefits with ASFS.

- Decision: Collier is to incorporate all discussion into the letter, finalize and send. It was unanimously moved and seconded with no opposition or abstentions.

#### **Item 5: Barbara Januszkiewicz. Metro Micro Gallery.**

Babara Januszkiewicz, an artist, has had a location at Metro Micro Gallery and it is under forced closure. She provided a background on the vision of Arlington putting in place an Arlington artists' community. She mentioned the showing of art in the central library, there was the Elipse gallery on Fairfax street and it was lost some years ago. The Artists' Fair was opened in Arlington, and that closed. County officials started working with private developers on art and exchanges, with swaps including art studios, etc. Metro Micro Gallery was built to have an art studio, low income housing, a restaurant – but the latter two are missing. The building has changed hands over the years, and then there was a turnover of artists. Informed that she needed to vacate the space, and at the same time there. Will move studio out of Arlington. She recommends that Arlington have a watchdog to monitor what happens on the arts.

Kevin Mayeux. He is the head of the HOA at Arc 3409. Wishes Ms. Januszkiewicz well. But there is a new program in place and process in place through an RFP process for emerging artists.

#### **Item 6: Other Business**

The following updates were mentioned.

- **Ed Center Reuse (Steve and Nia).** 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was introductory. Need to look at October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting will involve traffic and conditions. BLPC and FRPC will determine seats.
- **Past meeting minutes.** Cara motioned to approve, Steve seconded. Approved.
- **Treasurer report by Cara.**
- **NCAC.** Jim Rosen gave details. Situation is pretty grim b/c of budget cut of \$12M to \$5M. There is a deeper rethinking of NCAC. For ongoing projects it should be OK and things will keep moving.
- **American Legion** by Cara– Neighborhood comments coming.

Moved to adjourn.