

LHA BOARD MEETING MINUTES – November 19, 2020 (virtual meeting via Zoom)

Directors Present (16)

Peter Bota, Mike Cantwell, Sandi Chesrown, Michele Cornwell, Elaine Furlow, Pamela Gillen, Edith Gravely, Lauren Harris, Ralph Johnson, Tom Korn, Jim Lantelme, Laura London, Richard Price, Matthew Weinstein, Michelle Winters, Tom Wolfe

Directors Absent (1)

Scott Matties

LHA Staff Present (2)

Ginger Brown, Executive Director
Maia Potok-Holmes, Communications Manager

Guests Present (5)

Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, CPHD Planner, Arlington County,
Duke Banks, guest
Katie Cristol, Arlington County Board, Liaison to LHA
Cindy Donohoe, guest
Susan Soroko, Director, Creative Economy, AED, Liaison to LHA

Welcome & Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Pamela Gillen, President, at 5:30 pm. Pamela welcomed Board Members and introduced Lauren Harris, the new member of the Board.

County Board Update

Katie gave an update on Arlington County's response to COVID-19, the growing number of cases, and the public launched of the Missing Middle Study. She also discussed the \$39 million dip in revenue for the County and \$22 million for Arlington Public Schools and how that will impact this year's budget cycle.

Plan Lee Highway

Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed provided an update on the Plan Lee Highway, presenting the current schedule and phases. With Phase 1 completed, Phase 2 has started. The Plan Lee Highway team works on Land Use Analysis Scenarios, community engagement, and neighborhood focus groups. Adoption of the plan is scheduled for Spring of 2022.

AED Liaison Update

Susan Soroko spoke about the new COVID-19 restrictions and the upcoming budget. AED has published "Arlington Villages," a new webpage highlighting Arlington neighborhoods and their various attractions and businesses. Lee Highway was added to the page this week. Susan thanked Maia and Ginger for their work, putting together information on Lee Highway.

President's Report

Without any changes, the Board voted unanimously to approve the September 24 minutes.

Pamela spoke about the current county budget crisis due to the drop in the revenue stream and increased demand for resources. She explained how the Alliance has stepped up during this time to support local businesses and by taking on the County's charge to replace the words "Lee" and "Highway." These tasks have taken up a great deal of staff time – time that LHA was able to fund to pay staff because LHA gave up their office space and re-directed those funds. The Alliance is requesting an increase in funding for the 2021-2022 FY, maintaining that the organization should not be forced to choose between an office space or paying hard-working staff decent salaries. Sandi and Ginger are working on ways to increase LHA's fundraising efforts through pledges and sponsorships to fill in the funding gaps.

Pamela announced her recommendation that LHA considers the creation of an Economic Development Committee. As COVID-19 continues to impact local businesses, such a Committee would be created to support businesses, help with the eventual change of address, and provide marketing support. **XXX seconded the motion.** The Board discussed whether the committee should be AD HOC, but Pamela believed it should be a permanent committee that can provide continued support to businesses. The voice vote was unanimous, with no nays or absentia.

Pamela noted that Edith Gravely and Scott Matties are stepping down at the end of their Board terms on December 31, 2020. Pamela and Board members thanked Edith and Scott for their years of excellent service. Scott will remain on the Planning Committee. Mike Cantwell, the Nominating Committee Chair, will relinquish chairing the committee board. Laura London will take over as Chair. Laura explained that one of the new members would represent the community, and the other will represent businesses. She asked Board members to send her suggestions.

Lastly, Pamela presented potential changes to LHA's By-Laws. The first change would extend term limits from 2 terms to 3, allowing the original Board members, who served 1 year and 2-year terms, to serve longer. The other proposed change would the two non-voting County Board appointed Directors to voting status. Mike Cantwell brought up a concern about whether there may be legal implications of having County appointees have voting privileges. Ginger agreed to contact LHA's attorney to clarify.

Finance Committee

Michele Horwitz Cornwell presented the Treasurer's Report. As of November 15, 2020, LHA had \$24,776.79 in the accounts. The FY2021 County grant was restored to the FY19 level of \$85,500. With the County's requested to submit separate payment requests, the first half of the grant, \$43,750, has been received, with the second half likely to arrive in January 2021. Due to the pandemic, the Broadview fundraiser is unlikely to occur in Spring 2021. There are ongoing discussions as to how the Alliance can make up these funds.

LHA received a \$10,000 grant to fund the Missing Middle project spanning two fiscal years. The grant will be paid in quarterly installments, the first payment likely being at the end of December.

Communications and Marketing expenses have increased in order to hire a videographer and graphic designer and printed 8,000 renaming postcards. Maia's hours have also increased from 35 a week to 40 from funds made available with the office lease's termination. LHA plans to make both the Communications Manager and Executive Director positions full time in the 2021-2022 FY.

Transportation Committee

Richard Price discussed the VDOT Briefing held on November 18, 2020. He reported the issues brought up at the Renaming Working Group – the realignment of Old Dominion and the process for selecting a new name for the "Old Lee Highway." Richard also reported on the work of the Vision Zero WG. LHA wrote a letter recommending locations perceived as dangerous for pedestrians along the corridor.

Fire Station 8 Final Meeting

Jim Lantelme reported on the Fire Station 8 final PFRC. He was pleased to report that the "value engineering" has resulted in a more attractive and sustainable product with less impervious surface.

Housing Committee

Michelle Winters provided an update on the Missing Middle project and HCDs. There was not much to report on HCDs. The Missing Middle project is in full swing. LHA and AHS conducted their first focus group last week, and it was successful. An animated video discussing Missing Middle is in the works. Michelle, Ginger, Maia, and Alice Hogan met with the animators to discuss the video at length.

Events Committee

Sandi Chesrown presented on upcoming events. LHA is hosting a Small Business Saturday COVID safe holiday market called "Loving Local with Studio 10" on November 28 at the Cherrydale Shopping Center. Due to new COVID restrictions from Governor Northam, LHA is focusing its attention on encouraging the community to shop local rather than promoting an event. Maia and Ginger have been working with local businesses to create a Holiday Gift Guide that can be found on the Alliance's website. LHA is also promoting the Projection Art Poetry event on December 16 at the Lyon Village Shopping Center.

Planning Committee

Pamela announced that Chris Gordon and Chris Forinash are the new co-chairs for the Planning Committee. She noted that Artis is committed to the project but is seeking other sources of financing to implement it.

Renaming Lee Highway

Matthew Weinstein, Chair of the Working Group On Renaming Lee Highway, provided the Board with an update on the renaming process. The Working Group last met on October 21, 2020, and narrowed the list of the community suggested names from 186 to 20 using the previously agreed upon naming rules & criteria. A public poll on the top 20 names went live on October 23, and, as of this morning, over 3,000 people have filled it out. LHA's graphic designer created flyers hanging in the businesses' windows and postcards, sent out to 8,000 residents. The next Working Group meeting will be on December 2, when the group will work on narrowing the list of names down. LHA will present the top five names to the Arlington County Board. Matt is requesting a special LHA Board meeting on December 9 to discuss the Working Group's top 5 names.

Gulf Branch

Sandi Chesrown updated the Board on the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center's (FOGBNC) request that LHA writes a letter to the Arlington County Board on their behalf. Such a letter would request further funding to help FOGBNC upgrade their nature centers to the standard of other Park and Recreation facilities. It was agreed that LHA would help FOGBNC connect with individual civic associations because the nature center is outside of the Lee Highway corridor.

Black Heritage Museum

Ginger explained the Black Heritage Museum must relocate from their location, which is being redeveloped. LHA would like to help the Museum find a new home on Lee Highway, even as a temporary solution. The Lee Arts Center is an option but is closed due to COVID-19. Dominion Electric has also offered to hold some of the Museum's items in a pop-up display.

Other LHA Activities

Mike Cantwell raised the topic of the empty Titlemax site. He suggested that it might be a good location for the Arlington Artist Alliance that is looking for a new studio and exhibit space. Others on the Board agreed and expressed a desire to bring more arts to the corridor.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:15 pm. Pamela thanked everyone for their participation

Next Board Meeting – Thursday, December 9 at 8:00 am to discuss the Working Group On