

Minutes
Executive Session, Fairlington Citizens Association
Fairlington Community Center
3308 South Stafford Street
Arlington, Virginia
January 24, 2012, as approved

Board Members Present:

President Rosiland Jordan
Vice President Bryan Pettigrew
Secretary Carol Dabbs
Treasurer Ed Hilz
Director Guy Land
Director Jacob Gelbaum

Board Members Absent:

Director Kent Duffy
Director Mark Jones

-- AFB and strategic communications (editorial decisions)

President Jordan – suggests that in the 21st century, we need to make our communications instruments more user friendly, and expand our communications methods beyond the AFB. We could do a better job of communicating with the various communities in Fairlington. Especially given the outside influences on Fairlington, need better communications with the residents. She wants to put more emphasis on other communications methods, and use AFB as record of what has happened, not a vehicle to announce what will happen. Vice-President Pettigrew--the AFB deadlines are driving us, not vice-versa. We need to use social media more, where instant information is available; tweets and Facebook, for example, permit more notice to recipients than the AFB allows. Moran meeting was an example of a quick turnaround event—we got a good turnout, but would have been even better had we used other media as well. Director Land indicated that we can't ignore those who don't use social media, but we also need to recognize that our income is from AFB. Would it be possible to transfer some of that income to other media? But he worries that we might have same experience as Fairlington Villages (FV); only 250 or so there have signed up for e-mail only newsletters. Secretary Dabbs reflected that she's hearing two main ideas from this discussion: to use AFB more as record than to convey future info, and to shift to more use of social media. Many are willing to look on the web for the latest news or updates—especially if they know the link from an e-mail or the paper newsletter. Treasurer Hilz asked if we'd track our success by the number who join the Fairlington Appreciation Society? Yes, or by tracking the number of our tweet followers. Director Gelbaum indicated that we'd need to develop a matrix of the types of events/info that will be covered in each media, and who of us would be responsible for getting the information posted, when. President Jordan indicated that we'd add this to the agenda for the February business meeting. She'd also like to do a survey re: AFB—after discussion, we were in agreement that we should find the prior survey results, use similar questions, and compare results. We'll need to pull in Gretchen and Christine for this discussion in February.

Discussion followed re: the deadline and the mechanics of putting the AFB together. President Jordan asked that we all think about this and suggests that we meet with them to discuss in the near future.

-- AFB (regular B/W editions -- production costs/ad rates)

Treasurer Hilz provided the board with information from bids from Global and Stanley Adams, and a copy of the RFP he and Gretchen had sent out. One more bid is still expected, as well as Global's bid for color. Gretchen is interested in our reviewing some of the non-cost factors as well before we make a decision; working relationships do make a difference. All agreed it is useful to have asked for competitive bids, and to do so every so often. President Jordan asks if our prices are similar to those that others pay? Treasurer Hilz doesn't know of other civic associations with similar size publications or revenue streams from advertisements. This started during Nancy Hunt's presidency. President Jordan asked how Beth works with the advertisers? Treasurer Hilz indicated he could ask Beth to seek out information regarding ad rates for other newsletters. We haven't increased mini-ad rates in a long time; we did bump up the commercial rates in March 2007.

-- AFB (special color editions -- production cost/ad rates)

We expect that Global's bid will be competitive, but will be interested to see what comes in from them and from the other printer still to respond. Director Land brought us a sample of the FV newsletter—one side of one of the pages of paper is in color, but the rest of the newsletter is in b/w.

-- Budget Review, including All Fairlington Day expenses

Treasurer Hilz passed out the 2010 budget as well as the FCA 2011 approved budget and the draft AFB Profit and Loss Statement for 2011. He walked us through the 2011 budget with ideas for the 2012 budget. He described in detail the situation for the Neighborhood Conservation Plan Update. Questions were asked about Tee Shirt income (it's been netted out), expenditures for the Santa Ride (about \$55, recorded as a Community event), and accounting fees (Treasurer Hilz explained the increase in 2011 (\$3686) over 2010 (\$2859)—we're an anomalous account for them, and they've suggested that perhaps we'd want to choose a different firm in the future. All billed on an hourly basis; we have good backup for any future audits. This is a firm specializing in non-profits.) Director Land suggested that we consider talking to the firm that does FV books to get an alternate quote for the same services. Director Gelbaum raised the point that our accounting fees are 30-40% of our budget, which seems high. Vice-President Pettigrew brought up the question of who is our telephone service provider? Secretary Dabbs recommended the idea that all of our vendors (focusing on the high cost items or recurrent costs) be reviewed regularly. Director Gelbaum suggested that we could group the line items into those that are for community events/benefits for which we're willing to spend a little more than budgeted if needed. Director Land's advice was that we focus on those items that are >\$1000/year, or that are recurrent over long periods, and review them regularly. Director Gelbaum noted that looking at priorities, we've been spending only \$1500 for July 4th and All-Fairlington Day—is this how we want to allocate our money? Secretary Dabbs suggested that we may want to divide the budget into categories for keeping ourselves running vs. doing things for the community. Are we in the balance we want to be from this perspective? Treasurer Hilz noted that revenue is relatively flat, and hard to increase. Director Gelbaum asked if perhaps we

could bring in more with color advertisements. Director Land suggested we might be able to cut AFB costs with less editorial content vs. ads. Vice-President Pettigrew described this as our grand bargain—figuring out how to increase AFB revenue vs. lowering some of our costs or finding possible special revenue.

-- All Fairlington Day

Committee will gear up to begin planning. Secretary Dabbs raised the question of date of Arlington Neighborhood Day (and subsequently learned from Susan Kalish of Arlington County PRCR that it will be May 12th); best contact going forward will be Laura Corridon, 703-228-3329, lcarridon@arl.va.us. We had previously tentatively set All Fairlington Day for May 19th.

-- Fourth of July Parade – expenses--Discussion pending.

-- Firehouse Santa parade – expenses--Discussion pending.

-- Fairlington "swag" (T-shirts, dog collars, mugs, etc.) – expenses

President Jordan: Based on Director Duffy's email, any thoughts? Treasurer Hilz indicated he'll need a little front-end money to stock up on whatever items we decide on, with unknown market. Vice-President Pettigrew—need survey on this as well, asking “What kind of swag would you buy?”

-- Community donations (Wakefield HS, FHS, etc.)--Discussion pending.

-- Emergency fund (funeral flowers/donations, etc.)--Discussion pending.

-- Monthly and special meeting expenses (food, utensils, beverages)

There was general agreement that the more limited food for our executive meetings is just about right.

--Future meetings: Vice-President Pettigrew has the law enforcement forum all lined up for February 8th.

TO DO LIST FROM MEETING:

1. Treasurer Hilz: Identify other accountants & explore fees with them. May be different from an RFP.
2. President Jordan: Set up 2 surveys—one on AFB, also one on swag. She's done a draft; likely will use Survey Monkey.
3. Treasurer Hilz: 2012 draft budget—can we have for our February meeting? Yes, can be presented.
4. President Jordan: Set date for All Fairlington Day committee meeting
5. President Jordan: Set date for meeting with Corinthian.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Dabbs