

LHA COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING MINUTES
March 7, 2019 at LHA

Present:

LHA Board

Ginger Brown (President)
Sandi Chesrown (Vice President)
(Laura L, Michelle W. and Matt W. could not attend)

Civic Associations Present -

DRCA - Deirdre (Anne W. could not attend)
JMLCA - Edith (Wilma Jones could not attend)
LOCA - Tom W.
MCA - Maria
RSCA - Judy (Charlie F. could not attend)
RCA - Terri
TLCA - Bill
WHCA - George, Sarah S., Paul H. (Don P. could not attend/PC)
WWCA - Diane Kelly

Civic Associations Absent -

CCA - Jim Todd
EFCCA - Kelly A.
GCA - Laura Johnson
LVCA - Andy R. (*wanted to participate via remote but not sure contacted*)
MCA - Antony, Amanda, or Joan
NHCA - Antoinette or Ben
ODCA - Mike H.
WCA - Richard P.
YCA - Amelia F. (*wanted to participate via remote but not sure contacted*)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ginger Brown, President, at 8:30 am.

I. Welcome and Introductions.

Ginger noted that the CAC has not met since 2018, as LHA was awaiting the commencement of the Plan Lee Highway process. CAC members introduced themselves.

II. Update on Plan Lee Highway

Sandi Chesrown, in her role as Vice Chair of the Plan Lee Highway Community Forum/Working Group, provided an update on the Plan Lee Highway process. The larger, 53 member Community Forum met twice – in January followed by a public community meeting kickoff on February 12 at Washington Liberty High School. At both meetings, the County staff explained the planning process, a three year effort, and participants were asked for feedback on baseline conditions. In follow-up, AECOM is preparing an existing conditions analysis. The schedule for this year's activities is anticipated to be available within the next few weeks with another public workshop likely in the fall of 2019.

To document existing conditions, LHA's volunteers are doing a walking tour on March 15 at 8:30 a.m. CAC members were invited to participate. The Plan Lee Highway Working Group will engage in a similar tour sometime in April. Once the existing conditions have been documented, the focus will turn to land use issues, which will include a broad based discussion about character, height, density, etc.

Bill Braswell noted that although there have been past discussions regarding the need for setbacks from taller buildings adjacent to residential neighborhoods, this is not being followed in a number of current development projects. When the projects are by right, the community does not have much input. LHA and the broader community have more leverage when the project requires some type of zoning amendment through the site plan review process. LHA will continue to reach out to land owners and developers to inform them of the LHA Planning process and encourage them to not develop by right but rather wait for the re-planning process.

III. Discussion of CAC Communication Strategies for Plan Lee Highway (PLH)

Ginger circulated copies of Article IV of the LHA Bylaws which govern committees. She identified the stated responsibilities of the CAC, which are: (1) monitoring and recommending Arlington County and Commonwealth of Virginia policies affecting the corridor; (2) participating in fundraising efforts; (3) planning and programming activities and events; and (4) advocating for maintenance and improvement of the Corridor.

The CAC members then discussed each of these responsibilities as they relate to PLH.

1. Monitoring policies affecting the corridor.

Ginger noted that there are a number of PLH Working Group and Community Forum members on the CAC. She anticipates that these members will monitor the process and report back to CAC regarding proposed policies affecting the corridor. CAC will serve as a conduit for communication between the civic associations/affected communities and the PLH participants (to provide feedback regarding what is being discussed in the neighborhoods, not only about the ideas and/or concerns of the neighborhood, but also any issues with the process itself). While County staff will control the messaging regarding PLH, CAC members can identify areas where information is lacking, or where there is misinformation that needs to be clarified either by LHA or the staff.

Bill Braswell noted that a number of the civic associations use NextDoor for their communications and inquired about what use is being made by LHA of NextDoor as an information sharing vehicle. Ginger explained that LHA cannot be a member of NextDoor, as it is an organization and not an individual. However, LHA has developed a network of individuals who are able to push out information on NextDoor, but this network needs to be larger. It was suggested that posts be put in the general category, which will reach the widest audience.

Action Item: CAC members will help LHA expand its NextDoor network by sending names of volunteers from their civic associations/neighborhoods, so that information on Plan LH will reach as many people as possible.

It was suggested that in addition to simply pushing out information, that LHA post events on the NextDoor calendar, which would enable the information to be visible until the event occurs, rather than just through a one-time notice.

Action Item. The LHA Next Door Volunteers identified by the CAC will post on BOTH the general site and on the calendar.

It was suggested and agreed that LHA develop a fact-checker process, which would enable it to respond promptly to circulating misinformation with accurate facts.

Judith Wheat recommended that LHA develop brief newsletter text on PLH which could be shared with the civic associations and included in their newsletters, to make it easier to push information to the community. Introductory articles could/should discuss why the planning process is necessary, what the community expects to accomplish, and why communities should participate. The format could be a monthly column titled “what’s going on in the corridor” or something similar and focus on what’s currently happening in the planning process or otherwise in the corridor. Another suggestion was to have a separate planning column which provided ongoing and up-to-date information about new development efforts in the corridor, as well as new businesses joining the corridor.

Action Item. LHA will immediately develop ‘canned’ text on the Plan Lee Highway process, with calendar dates for meetings being held during the Spring and Summer and send it to CAC members. LHA will also develop an on-going column for dissemination to civic associations for their newsletters, with ways that communities and business can become involved including the County web site and other information networks, such as Arl.Now and Greater Greater Washington (with which LHA is already connected).

It was suggested that CAC needed to be involved in making sure that information gets disseminated to the Lee Highway businesses and other non-residential properties affected by the process, to ensure they have an opportunity to participate.

Action Item. LHA will work with the CAC to develop a list of businesses and institutions within the various civic associations’ boundaries.

2. Recommending policies.

Ginger proposed that LHA’s guiding principles be used to guide recommendations from the CAC. Ginger proposed, and the group agreed, that while every attempt would be made to reach consensus on an issue, the CAC’s recommendations on issues brought before it would include not only the consensus view, but also any areas of disagreement. This will help the decision maker (LHA Board and on to the County staff/Board) in its consideration of the issue. Ginger acknowledged that there may be issues for which CAC members will need to get input or direction from their civic association before being able to take a position.

After LHA brings a PLH item to the CAC for consideration, the discussion would be designed to ensure that everyone understands the issue. CAC members would then either provide their views or take the issue to their neighborhoods for discussion. Prior to any recommendation being put forward to the LHA Board, CAC members would have an opportunity to provide sufficient input, with the goal of achieving consensus to the greatest degree possible. If consensus was not possible, a majority and a minority view would go to the LHA Board for consideration.

It was suggested that LHA consider whether there would be any benefit to submit some of the more universal issues to the Civic Federation, to obtain broader community input, which might carry additional weight with the County, particularly if an issues has an effect outside the

Plan Lee Highway Community. It was recommended that LHA join the Civic Federation, which would provide it with four voting members.

Action Item. LHA will apply to join the Civic Federation, and will then reach out to CAC members with a request to the communities to provide up to four delegates.

3. Participating in fundraising efforts.

Ginger noted that LHA is looking at a potential fundraiser on June 1 (additional information will be forthcoming). There was a brief discussion of LHA's pending funding request to the County for \$95,000. Bill Braswell suggested that the civic associations contact the County Board to support LHA's funding request. Ginger indicated that the work session is 3/14/19 and that she will be preparing a letter to the Board supporting the increased funding request.

4. Planning and programming activities and events.

In addition to the 3/15 walking tour of the corridor, there will be an educational forum at LHA on Saturday, March 30, from 9:45-11:45 on Shared Mobility Devices: E-scooting and E-bikes. Speakers will include Libby Garvey, County Board, a representative from BIRD, and County staff. It was suggested that the Bird representative provide a demonstration about how to ride properly one of the e-scooters.

Action Item. Sandi will ask Bird to provide a demonstration.

Charlie Flickner noted that the educational forums are a very useful way not only to push out information but also to correct misinformation about the ideas/concepts being discussed. Sandi indicated that LHA has proposed that the County have additional educational forums to be coordinated with the PLH process. If the County does not agree, LHA will move forward independently. Possible topics include: Vision Zero (pedestrian safety and walkability); the Changing Face of Retail; Fire Station 8 Community Space; Affordable Housing/Missing Middle; Environmental Resiliency, and Creative Economy including an Arts/Industry Zone.

5. Advocating for maintenance and improvement of the corridor.

It was again suggested that there needs to be greater dissemination of what's going on, including the ongoing briefings every eight weeks that LHA has with VDOT, in order for CAC to be more active in this regard.

Action Item. Lucia will send out the VDOT Briefing minutes to CAC members, beginning with the next briefing. Briefings are always scheduled for 10:30 am on Wednesdays at LHA – future dates include April 10 and June 12.

The group agreed that the CAC should meet approximately every 6-8 weeks, or more frequently if required. The goal should be to limit meetings to no more than 1.5 hours to accommodate people's work schedules. **The next meetings at LHA will be Thursday, May 2 at 8:30 am (held jointly with the PC) and Thursday, June 20, at 8:30 am.**

There being no further business, the Board meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.