

**Springfield Civic Association (SCA)  
General Membership Meeting Minutes, 19 September 2017**

SCA First Vice President Gail Nittle called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

After leading the pledge of allegiance, Fred xxx from Springfield VFW Post 7327 provided a brief pitch on VFW membership and invited anyone who was interested in joining to see him after the meeting.

**SCA President's Remarks:**

Gail reminded members of annual \$15 annual membership dues, noting dues could be paid to the treasurer in person tonight or could be paid using PayPal online via SCA Facebook page. Gail highlighted a few positive developments for central Springfield including: the relocation of Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Headquarters to Springfield behind the General Services Administration's facility; planned construction of Lidl grocery store on the old Safford Dodge property; planned construction of a parking garage adjacent to slug line across from Springfield Plaza; planned construction of a pedestrian bridge across Old Keene Mill Road between Springfield Plaza and Spring Road; and ongoing construction of the St. James Sports Complex midway between Backlick Road and Industrial Drive in the Shirley Industrial Park.

Gail also noted two long-time SCA members were recently recognized for their contributions to Lee District. Michele Duell was named "Lady Fairfax" for Lee District for her commitment to improving the standard of living for the residents through her work with the Friends of Richard Byrd Library. Diane Boughton was selected to receive the Les Dorsen Citizenship Award for her long-standing work in support of Lee District.

Gail noted the SCA Board has created a certificate to recognize local businesses for their efforts to beautify their properties. Details of this initiative have not been finalized, but the SCA will seek member recommendations on businesses to nominate for this recognition.

Gail also provided an update on an SCA led traffic calming initiative at the intersection of Dinwiddie Street and Essex Avenue. SCA proposed a four-way stop sign at the intersection. Fairfax County Traffic Engineering found the installation of multi-way stop signs at this intersection was not justified based on analysis of intersection related and current policy regarding minimal distances between stop signs. The county agreed to build a traffic table at this site in an effort to slow down traffic at this intersection which has a high volume of children from Crestwood Elementary School. "Watch for Children" signs have also been added.

**General Announcements:**

Debbie Mays provided an update on the Springfield Swimming and Racquet Club (SSRC). She reported the pool had a good year. SSRC entered into a partnership with Ryan's Landscaping whereby the pool received services in exchange for parking Ryan's vehicles. The pool should be fully operational by May next year.

Mike Slater, SCA Director at Large and Website Administrator, provided an update on SCA's social media initiatives to include Facebook page, online Newsletter, and use of Nextdoor Springfield. SCA has saved considerable money by moving its Newsletter to an online format vice mailing hard copies. Mike noted one does not need to be an SCA member to join the SCA Facebook page. Mike solicited SCA members for feedback to improve the SCA Facebook site.

Sandy Frieswyk, SCA Treasurer, reported the balance brought forward from the last SCA meeting in May 2016 was \$4,414.27. She reported the following credits for the upcoming year: \$1,900 in advertisement revenue; \$28.50 in hospitality donations; and \$3,600.00 recovered from Springfield County Education Alliance (SCEA) unclaimed funds. She reported \$616.37 debits approved by the SCA Board which brought the SCA balance to \$9,246.40.

Gail Nittle noted the Franconia Station Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) would meet 20 September. The CAC meets every third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The CAC does not meet in July and August and no membership or R.S.V.P. are required to attend. CAC's enhance communication between residents and the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) and offer residents a chance to dialogue with members of their local police districts. Members are kept informed about significant safety matters in their neighborhoods, and are encouraged to bring any issues or questions to the attention of local police commanders.

Gail Nittle noted the Springfield Acres Garden Club will next meet Tuesday, 26 September. The speaker will be Master Gardener Anne Alexander.

Gail acknowledged Tim Kasik, Principal Crestwood Elementary School, and Deirdre Lavery, Principal of Lee High School, who were in attendance and were available for questions.

### **Featured Speakers:**

Gail Nittle welcomed FCPD Detectives Corbeau and Hulse to speak on drug and gang activity in Fairfax County.

Detective Corbeau introduced himself, noting he has been a detective for 20 years and is very familiar with our neighborhood. He provided background on the Gang Coordination Unit which was formed in 1993 as a 3-person unit and has grown today to a 14-person unit. Detective Corbeau provided information on the Gang Unit's mission which includes gathering and disseminating information on criminal street gangs; assisting patrol officers with gang related investigations; assisting state and federal investigators, investigating gang motivated crimes; and assisting with prosecution of gang members. He also provided awareness of what defines a criminal street gang and Virginia Code 18.2-46.2 (Prohibited criminal street gang participation; penalty). He noted that violations of VA Code 18.2-46.2 are considered a Class 5 Felony. Detective Corbeau noted that Fairfax County has over 100 identified gangs with about 2,000-3,000 members. Gang related crimes in Fairfax County increased 65 percent from 2015 to 2016. Detective Corbeau provided information on the MS-13 gang including background on its origins during El Salvadoran civil war. He provided information on the indicators of possible gang involvement including graffiti, changes in attitudes towards school and family, secrecy, guns, changes in dress style, changes in friends, unexplained cash/goods, alcohol/drug use, and unexplained injuries. Detective Corbeau provided insights into the differences between tagger

graffiti which is usually more artistic in nature and less artistic gang graffiti. He encouraged citizens to report all forms of graffiti. He indicated the Gang Unit often gains insights into gang members and activity from graffiti. Detective Corbeau also discussed the evolution of MS-13 clothing which has become less prevalent since the advent of VA Code 18.2-46.2. He also discussed some of the criminal activities that local gangs are engaged in to include homicide, assault, extortion, destruction of property, sex trafficking, and graffiti. Detective Corbeau also discussed the challenges with getting victims and witnesses to cooperate with police in investigating gang crimes. Many victims/witnesses are immigrants who are worried cooperation with police may lead to deportation or retaliation. Detective Corbeau discussed resources for children/young adults who want to get out of gangs. He noted Fairfax County has Gang Prevention Counselors and noted the importance of working with school administrators and teachers to recognize the signs of gang recruitment to get ahead of the problem. Detective Corbeau noted that the majority of gang members are juveniles or young adults. Some children join gangs as early as 12 years old, but generally most gang members are 15-18 years old.

Detective Corbeau took several questions from SCA members. In response to a question regarding safety of runners in Lake Accotink Park, Detective Corbeau indicated there is no reason to be afraid, but recommended that runners be smart and take precautions when not in public view. He also fielded questions about undesired activities at Brookfield Park including smoking pot, drinking and painting graffiti on the pavilion. Detective Corbeau noted this area was well known to the Franconia Station officers who patrol this park frequently. Another question addressed recent helicopter activity in vicinity of Brookfield Park. Franconia Station Crime Prevention Officer Allie Eggers provided insight to a link to FCPD Helicopter Division which provides insight into recent helicopter missions. Responding to a question regarding the uptick in gang related crimes in the last year, Detective Corbeau noted there has been a surge in unaccompanied minors and a surge in population which corresponds to the uptick in crime. Detective Corbeau also noted that while MS-13 is active throughout Fairfax County, MS-13 presence in Springfield and our neighborhood in particular is not as high as in other areas of the county. He noted it is not illegal to be in MS-13, but gang crime was illegal.

Detective Corbeau closed his portion of the meeting by encouraging SCA members and Springfield residents to say something if they see something. He noted that residents are best positioned to know and understand activity in their neighborhoods. He reinforced that Community Policing and community involvement are the best things to combat gangs. When residents see unusual activity, they should call FCPD.

Detective Hulse took the stage to discuss the drug problem in Fairfax County and America writ large. Detective Hulse is one of four FCPD officers assigned to investigate heroin overdose homicide cases. He noted Fairfax County is partnering with state and federal agencies to combat the ongoing opioid crisis. Based on his experience, Detective Hulse stated prosecution is not the answer to ending the opioid crisis. He noted that people who became addicted to prescription pain pills like morphine, codeine, oxycodone, methadone, fentanyl and vicodin are turning to heroin to continue chasing the high after prescriptions run out. In an effort to increase profits, drug dealers are cutting heroin and other opioid narcotics with carfentanil a substance used to tranquilize elephants. This is very dangerous and can rapidly lead to overdose and death. Often people do not know the drugs they purchased have been laced with carfentanil or other toxic

substances. Detective Hulse noted the opioid problem is one that affects everyone regardless of economic standing, gender, age, religion or race. Fairfax County Police is working closely with the Community Service Board (CSB) to get substance abusers the help they need to fight their addictions. FCPD is also prosecuting those who are selling heroin. Detective Hulse noted that Fairfax County is well stocked with Narcan (naloxone), a prescription medicine that blocks the effects of opioids and reverses an overdose. Fairfax County Fire Department Medic Units and Crime Scene Units are equipped with and can administer Narcan. First responders are at also at risk to falling ill after exposure while answering calls. FCPD is no longer field testing powdery substances due to overdose fears. Detective Hulse indicated heroin transactions occur in many locations. He noted transactions can occur in homes, shopping center and church parking lots, or dead-end streets. Scenarios in which cars stop for short period and people run into a house and quickly return to their cars and drive off are possible indicators of drug sale activity.

Fielding a question regarding an uptick in suspicious activity involving kids in cars in the parking lot near Crestwood Elementary School, Detective Hulse encouraged observers of such activity to call the non-emergency police number. Tim Kasik, Crestwood Principal, noted that he had worked with Fairfax County Schools to set up cameras given some of the drug related paraphernalia discovered on/near school grounds by school custodians. Deirdre Lavery, Lee High School Principal, noted the positive impact being made by its School Resource Officer, Chris Barr, in educating students about and encouraging them to report drug activity. She noted that drugs do not happen in her building. Lee students see their school as a safe haven and they take concerns regarding drugs to Officer Barr. Commenting on how to prevent children from getting caught up in the drug culture, she encouraged parents to talk to their kids and to tell them not to engage with people they do not know.

SCA President Bruce Waggoner adjourned at 9:00 pm