

**Springfield Civic Association (SCA)
General Membership Meeting Minutes, 18 September 2018**

SCA President Bruce Waggoner called the meeting to order and led pledge of allegiance at 7:30 pm.

SCA President's Remarks:

Bruce started the meeting by acknowledging Joe and Betty McGowan, long time Crestwood residents and SCA hospitality leads. They are moving to Richmond and this was their last SCA meeting. Bruce thanked Joe and Betty for their many contributions to the SCA over the years.

Bruce noted that the SCA raises and contributes money to local efforts that benefit the central Springfield community. Bruce announced the SCA was pleased to donate \$500 to the Crestwood Elementary Science, Technology, and Math (STEM) program in honor of former Crestwood Principal Tim Kasik. Marguerite Saitta, new Crestwood Principal, accepted the check, stating she was honored to receive it on behalf of Tim Kasik and would put it to good use. She called Crestwood an amazing school and she has felt welcomed in the four weeks she has been at the school. Principal Saitta said she has an open door and she looks forward to getting to know members of the SCA.

Bruce noted Supervisor Jeff McKay, Lee District, was the guest speaker.

Treasurer Update. Sandy Frieswyk, SCA Treasurer, reported the balance of \$10,301.03. She indicated a total of \$2,000 had been taken in from sponsor's advertisement revenue along with \$30 in dues. Sandy announced SCA has two new sponsors this year: Potts Brothers LLC Painting & Remodeling and the newly renovated Virginia Tire and Auto both located on Backlick Road. SCA recent debts totaled \$118.39 for award frames, newsletter printing and postal, and domain renewal).

Community Updates:

Bruce noted another mission of the SCA is community activism and to spur leadership. Bruce asked several attendees to provide updates on a myriad of topics.

American Legion: Kevin Campbell from the Springfield American Legion made an announcement regarding a pig roast and motor cycle rally on Saturday 22 September. The American Legion will host Legion riders from all over Virginia. Tickets cost \$20 or \$25 the day of the event.

Traffic Calming: Jillian Hanright, Essex Ave Traffic Calming Task Force lead, provided on update the initiative. Jillian noted the speed bumps should have been installed before the start of the school year. Jillian contacted Joan Clark from Supervisor's McKay's office for an update. Joan indicated the project has been delayed but she is hopeful the speed humps will be installed by the end of October.

Crestwood Parent/Teacher's Association (PTA): Jillian Hanright reported the first PTA meeting is 3 October. The PTA is planning a fall fund raiser to sell baked goods on election day at the school polling place. The PTA is accepting donations of baked goods and volunteers to man the tables. Crestwood's first back to school night was scheduled for Thursday, 20 September.

Springfield Community Yard Sale: Springfield United Methodist Church is hosting a fall community yard sale on Saturday 13 October. Information on the yard sale is posted on the SCA website and Nextdoor Springfield.

Halloween House Decorating Proposal: Board Member, Mike Slater, introduced the concept of a SCA sponsoring a Halloween house decorating contest. Mike explained he is looking to be inclusive and generate community spirit by awarding prizes for first through third place. He noted the SCA Board is still debating whether cash will be offered as prizes. Mike is interested in leading this effort and hopes to start a tradition for the neighborhood similar to those he experienced during his childhood. One member commented that perhaps Springfield could consider a Halloween and holiday window painting contest in the future. Windows at local businesses could be used and as a canvas for local school children.

VDOT Sidewalk Work: Damian Nashi and Diane Boughton provided an update on VDOT work on sidewalks in the Crestwood neighborhood. VDOT recently began an effort to repair/replace sidewalks and storm drains. It was reported that VDOT was not meeting standard concrete pouring practices. VDOT was not compacting ground and not putting down gravel ahead of pouring the concrete. After confronting and discussing standards with VDOT installers, they admitted they are not installing sidewalk concrete to code. It appeared VDOT was arbitrary in its selection of sidewalks to replace. VDOT indicated it was targeting replacing sidewalks for safety, but many members noted many cracked and potentially dangerous sidewalks still exist. Diane Boughton noted the sidewalk work has been wasteful in breaking sewer drains and damaging fences and lawns. Members also noted that freshly layed concrete has been vandalized. Concerns about VDOT sidewalk work have been forwarded to both Supervisor McKay's office and Delegate Vivian Watts' office. Members were encouraged to take photos and report with street addresses any concerns to VDOT about shoddy sidewalk work. Additionally, Diane Boughton noted concerns regarding the passability of sidewalks on Old Keene Mill Rd between Commerce and Hannover Steets. The grass is overgrown and sidewalks and curbs have not been edged in months which is limited passability. The width in some areas of the sidewalk is only 18 inches. This concern has been reported to Joan Clark in Supervisor McKay's office. Joan indicated that VDOT owns his property and is responsible for its maintenance and they have been recently overwhelmed with storm water management issues. Supervisor McKay noted that VDOT sets its own standards. Fairfax County has its own Transportation Department and typically its standards are more stringent than those of VDOT. But, Fairfax County tries to work with VDOT and local communities.

Shopping Carts. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the continued problem of shopping carts being removed from Springfield Plaza and being left on streets surrounding the Crestwood neighborhood. Caleb Lester, Supervisor McKay's Staff Assistant, and later Supervisor McKay

reported that shopping cart problem is a state of Virginia issue. A shopping cart left on VDOT access or private property is not a violation. Fairfax County is unable to enact laws about shopping carts without the support/permission of the State Assembly. Supervisor McKay advocated handling the shopping cart issue, which is a county-wide problem not unique to Springfield, in same fashion that Fairfax County fought the problem of illegal road signs. Supervisor McKay believes it makes more sense to go after the supplier of the shopping carts and fine the stores who own the carts vice trying to catch those who remove and dump shopping carts in the act. He believes making it financially painful will force the stores to take responsibility for their carts. Supervisor McKay indicated Fairfax County has successfully combated the problem of illegal campaign and business signs by collecting, inventorying and fining those who emplace the signs illegally. Supervisor McKay indicated this is the best path to combat shopping carts per the advice of police and county attorneys. Many members indicated that removing shopping carts from Springfield Plaza is tantamount to theft and the police should make arrests. Supervisor McKay indicated catching those who removed carts in the act is not best use of Fairfax County Police.

Featured Speaker:

Supervisor Jeff McKay joined the meeting at 8:10 pm. Supervisor McKay limited his opening statement and noted flyers available covering his key talking points. In his brief remarks Supervisor McKay indicated that since he started participating in SCA meetings in 2007 that Springfield is in a dramatically better place. As exemplars, Supervisor McKay noted: there are no boarded up buildings on Old Keene Mill Rd; 4,500 jobs with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) are coming to Springfield; the Springfield Town Center is the third most valuable piece of property in Fairfax County; the percentage of good roads in Lee District is higher than any other district in Fairfax County; school renovation projects at Garfield and Crestwood are complete; Richard Byrd Library renovation is also complete; and finally there is a parking garage coming, paid primarily with federal dollars, that will assist sluggers and provide additional bus routes.

Supervisor McKay indicated Fairfax County has a new County Executive, Bryan Hill, who is coming from James City County, Va. Supervisor McKay indicated that Bryan is an impressive hire and Fairfax County is looking to leverage his experience and bring some of the innovation he implemented in Hampton Roads to Fairfax County. Supervisor McKay hopes Bryan can improve Fairfax County median strips in the same fashion as he did in Hampton Roads. Bryan was able to find ways for James City County to supplement funding to maintain medians. VDOT mowing of medians three times a year is insufficient to maintain and keep medians nice looking. Supervisor McKay is frustrated that Fairfax County needs to supplement VDOT efforts, but the County plans to allot \$800K to expedite plans to fix VDOT problems. Supervisor McKay noted that real estate taxes and car taxes are the only two revenue makers for the county. Supervisor McKay indicated VDOT's goal is for 65% of roads to be in good repair. While 86% of Fairfax County roads are in the "fair" or "better" condition, only 39% of secondary roads meet this goal. The more Fairfax County does voluntarily to fix VDOT problems the less funding is available for schools, libraries, parks and public safety.

Supervisor McKay provided the membership with an update on private equity investment. Lidl, a German grocier, is still moving forward with plans on the old Safford Dodge property in the Central Springfield business district. Lidl representatives told Supervisor McKay they moved through the county processes faster than expected and are putting the project out for bid in two to three weeks. Lidl expects to demolish the existing structure by end of 2018, begin construction in 2019, and open in first quarter 2020. A “coming soon” sign will be posted on the property as soon as Lidl signs and agreement with a general contractor.

Supervisor McKay indicated Hampton Inn and Suites is coming to the property on Old Keene Mill Rd and Backlick Rd formerly occupied by Merv’s auto repair and current strip shopping center. Supervisor McKay noted the Hampton Inn design is attractive and it will solve an environmental problem in that area. The county Board of Supervisors has approved the plan, but it will take six to nine months to obtain site plan and building permits.

Supervisor McKay indicated Kaiser Permanente is committed to Springfield and it plans to build a complex in Springfield similar to one it has built in Tysons Corner. Kaiser Permanente wants to stay in Springfield due to the promise of the TSA Headquarters. Kaiser sees opportunity to serve the TSA federal workers. Supervisor McKay reported Kaiser Permanente will probably build a new building in Springfield near its current site.

Supervisor McKay stated the owners of the Springfield Mall are committed to the plan to work with architects to build the other components of the Springfield Town Center, making good on a promise to fix the mall first.

Supervisor McKay answered a question about recent store closures at Springfield Plaza. Supervisor McKay indicated he has no indication on why stores like Hallmark, the Lamps Outlet and Firehouse Subs have closed. He is committed to improving ordinances to make it easier for businesses to move into vacant retail spaces. He is particularly interested in adaptive re-use of retail space. Supervisor McKay is concerned several large retail spaces (ToysRUs in Kingstowne and Giant in Hayfield) are unoccupied within Lee District. He wants to make it easier for new businesses like craft breweries and libraries to move into these empty spaces. Supervisor McKay would like to see ordinances focus on what the County can do vice what they can’t do.

Supervisor McKay also took a question about the future of some struggling local retail stores like JC Penny and Kmart. Supervisor McKay noted the JC Penny in the Springfield Town Center is the top performing JC Penny store in the nation. For that reason, it is likely to be one of the last JC Penny to close. But, Supervisor McKay noted if it does close, Fairfax County will do its best to find a tenant. Supervisor McKay noted that nationally Kmart and Sears are struggling. He noted the Kmart in Annandale had recently closed. He noted the Springfield Kmart is owned by the Ohio Teacher’s Union, while other parts of Springfield Plaza are owned by Rappaport. He has not heard of any plans for Giant to move to the Kmart space should it close.

Supervisor McKay answered a question about the parking garage planned for the slug parking lot between Springfield United Methodist Church and the Sunoco gas station on Old Keene Mill Rd. He noted the county is working through a redesign based on feedback provided by sluggers. This project is almost entirely federally funded and plans need to be finalized so as to not risk the project. A real challenge associated with the garage construction is how to accommodate sluggers and a highly effective slugging operation. Supervisor McKay noted the private sector does not want to provide sluggers with additional parking as this competes with their commerce. The Springfield Town Center is considering offering some of its garage space for sluggers. Fairfax County is ready and willing to provide leases for parking during the garage construction and is open to suggestions regarding parking options. Supervisor McKay also noted the slugger parking problem is compounded by Metro's plan to shut down Springfield-Franconia Metro Station during same time the garage will be under construction. Supervisor McKay noted the timing of the Metro maintenance is unfortunate, but is necessary to fix failing platforms. He also noted Metro has a reputation of being unaffordable, unreliable and slow. He has suggested they may want to consider waiving parking fees as a incentive for riders to return to Metro when the Springfield-Franconia station reopens prior to start of school year in 2019.

Finally, a member rose to thank Supervisor McKay for his efforts to address a traffic flow and safety problem on Telegraph near Humphreys Engineering Center near Fort Belvoir. Fairfax County Police are now on station directing traffic until a more permanent solution can be implemented to provide safety on this overcrowded section of road that becomes a safety hazard when Ft Belvoir, the Engineering Center and two schools let out in the afternoon.

SCA President Bruce Waggoner adjourned at 9:00 pm after conducting door prize drawings donated by SCA sponsors.