

News for Alcova Heights

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Proposed Agenda – Alcova Heights Citizens Association

September 23, 2003, 6:00 p.m.

Arlington Baptist Church (S. Monroe between 7th and 8th Streets South – please use parking lot entrance on 8th Street South)

6:00 p.m. – Pot Luck Supper – the Haute Cuisine of Alcova Heights will be on display and available for tasting. Bring your finest main dish, salad or dessert to share with your friends and neighbors! Drinks, plastic and paper ware will be provided.

7:00 p.m. Introductions – Good time for you to introduce all the new neighbors you have brought with you!

**7:15 p.m. Introduction of guest speaker – Maura McMahon
Guest Speaker – Chris Nixon, Neighborhood Conservation Coordinator**

Topic – Alcova Heights – Our Environmental Plan: What's in the Works, and Where Do We Go From Here?

The Alcova Heights Environmental Plan was put together by volunteers working with County staff over a period of years, and has specific goals for Alcova Heights, including sidewalks, street lighting projects, tree planting and other improvements. This is an opportunity for you to understand and review the plan and set priorities for what we want to do next.

Guest Speaker (TBA), Representative of Third District, Arlington County Police Department

Discussion of crime statistics for AHCA, protective measures, Neighborhood Watch.

8:15 p.m. Business Agenda

The usual stuff – new and old business – updates, rehashes, etc.

Discussion of AHCA Environmental Plan: Street Lighting, Sidewalks.

We need: a Secretary; a new Chair of the Neighborhood Watch Program; the Chair of a Welcome Committee; Helpers for the Home and Garden Tour planned for the spring.

We need to plan: our Halloween activities – Decorating Contest /not; Parade/not; president does/not trick/treat for Dues; Who Is Our Next Invited Speaker? Want an Old Timers' Program?

We need to discuss: Whatcha Wanna Do? We have some broad statements of purpose. Are they okay? Do you want to change them? Do you want to eliminate them and operate in a state of absolute chaos? What's on your mind and where should we be heading?

9:00 p.m. Adjourn.

Baby-sitting will be provided, so feel free to bring the little ones. It would be helpful if a few folks could hang on until about 9:15 to restore cleanliness and order.

Working Group Plots Strategy for Alcova Heights

A small group of Alcova Heights residents, including the officers of the Association, discussed plans for the fall, winter and spring. Recommendations of the working group included the following:

- Solicit suggestions from Alcova Heights residents on what they wish the Association to do, and, perhaps, broaden the purposes of the Association as outlined in the Alcova Heights Citizens Association (AHCA) goals;
- Specify terms for officers and establish a firm date for elections;
- Establish a "welcome" package for newcomers to Alcova Heights to include a welcoming letter, directory, a copy of the AHCA Environmental Plan, a county services directory and other helpful information;
- Develop an interesting history of Alcova Heights with more detail and substance than the history in the Environmental Plan, make it available for purchase and include it in the welcome package;
- Identify projects for inclusion in the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee funding rounds (typical projects are sidewalks, park improvements, street lighting, etc. – preliminary suggestions for meeting the September 30 deadline for projects are street lighting for South Randolph and 7th Street South, sidewalks for 7th Street);
- Meet no fewer than four times per year at regular, well-publicized dates and times and attempt to coordinate those meetings so that they do not conflict with such other activities as PTA, Scouts, etc.;
- Post signs at key intersections in Alcova Heights announcing "Meeting This Week" to alert residents to upcoming meetings;
- Establish a collection point for non-perishable foodstuffs for the Arlington Baptist Church's Food Bank as partial compensation for our use of the church building;
- Enhance AHCA participation in such events as Neighborhood Day, Night Out, the Columbia Pike Blues Festival.
- Schedule the traditional Halloween parade and gathering in Alcova Park and consider a contest for Halloween house decorations;
- Have regular, well-publicized meetings of the Executive Committee prior to meetings of the entire Association;
- Schedule our first fall meeting for the last week in September, with a newsletter announcing that meeting to be published two weeks in advance (that meeting has been set for September 23, 2003, 6:00 p.m. at the Arlington Baptist Church – see related story);
- Seek additional revenue sources outside of dues, i.e., advertising, a garden/home tour in the spring, and limit solicitation for dues payments to one month per year, preferably in January or February;
- In the mid-winter issue of the newsletter, include a self-addressed envelop for families to pay dues;
- Consider raising dues from the years-old \$5 per year.

During the evening's discussion, the president pointed out the need for a new secretary (the current president is acting secretary), the need for a new Neighborhood Watch chair (the current vice-president is chair), and the need for community volunteers for other functions of the Association, i.e., organizing events, writing a history of the neighborhood, chairing other permanent and ad hoc committees.

Maria Abarca and Mike McMahon agreed to be co-chairs of the AHCA Traffic Committee, and the working group agreed that committee co-chairs is a good idea because all of the work does not fall on one person.

Maura McMahon reported on her first meetings as the AHCA representative to the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC).

Dr. Anthony Toth has graciously volunteered to compile the aforementioned history of Alcova Heights. Individuals with materials or recollections might consider giving Tony a call. Pursuant to that, one of the suggestions to emerge from the working group was to hold an "old-timers" program, inviting long-time residents to participate. Another suggestion was made to tape that session and transcribe it for general circulation.

Suggestions for speakers for the September 23 meeting included a visit from the Arlington County Police Department to discuss recent bicycle and automobile thefts and how to protect against them as well as a discussion of the functions of the Neighborhood Watch program. The Neighborhood Watch program can function as a friendly 'Senior Watch' for neighbors who are elderly or disabled in addition to crime deterrence. Arlington Ministering to Emergency Needs (AMEN) was suggested as a speaker source; the organization collects (and sometimes picks up) house wares, furniture and other household goods for the use of families in need.

Other suggestions for speakers included Chris Nixon, the county liaison to the NCAC, to explain our Environmental Plan and walk us through the steps to achieve neighborhood improvements (see agenda story).

Calendar – Events of Interest to Alcova Heights Residents:

September 17 – Meeting on Left Turn Lanes at Columbia Pike/South Glebe – 6:30 – Assemble at Front Plaza of Bank of America to walk site. Meeting follows in lower meeting room of Fire Station # 9 – 1900 Walter Reed Drive (enter on S. 19th Street Side).

September 23 – Fall Meeting – Alcova Heights Citizens Association – 6:00 p.m. Arlington Baptist Church (Pot Luck Dinner first, business session to follow – see related agenda).

September 30 – Barcroft PTA – 7:00 p.m. Barcroft Elementary School.

October 5 – 'First Annual' Columbia Pike International Music and Arts Festival. Noon to 6:00 p.m. at the Columbia Pike festival site (Walter Reed Dr. between Columbia Pike and S. 9th St -- music, art and food from around the globe at your favorite street festival venue.) Make sure to stop at the Farmers Market beforehand. It will be open at its usual time from -- 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

October 5 – 7 -- Visioning Workshops – Arterial Transportation Management Study for S. Carlin Springs Road, S. Four Mile Run Drive, Wilson Blvd. – Meetings to gather input from citizens on issues and long-term (20-year) vision for these corridors, including walk-throughs, concept plan workshops. For additional information, email or call Richard Best, Project Director, 703.228.3689 or rbest@co.arlington.va.us.

October 31 – Halloween – We'll talk about the details at our meeting September 23!

Briefly Said – Comments from your president

High marks and profound thanks for the hardy crew that met to discuss our past, present and future last month. The meeting was very productive (see related story), and I believe gives us a good foundation for a broader discussion of our mission and goals.

We will attempt to structure future meetings to allow ample time for discussion of just such issues. AHCA has officers and some committee chairs in place to carry out the wishes of the folks in Alcova Heights, but the direction must come from residents.

Who's, What's New?

Got a new neighbor? Introduce yourself and send on names and addresses. We will soon have a "Welcome Committee," and would like to be sure that our new neighbors get a warm welcome. In the meantime, say hi to Amy and Jonathan Baumgarten, who just moved into 3928 South 7th. As you walk by the house, you may hear strains of beautiful music, since Amy is Principal Cellist for the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra and Jonathan teaches flute at American University.

So, What Else is New?

Eighth Street South's lights are installed, and by the time you receive this newsletter, lights on Sixth Street South should be installed and operating. Thanks to all of you on both streets who participated in the walk-throughs.

We reported earlier on the Alcova Heights Yahoo Groups board that the County has approved funding (\$143,000) for traffic calming measures on 8th Street South, and I'm sure you have noticed some of the markings by Alcova Park and elsewhere on 8th Street. The two speed humps, between South Monroe Street and South Quincy Street, may be installed this fall, weather permitting. Otherwise they will be installed in spring 2004. The nubs, however, will require engineering, design and survey work. This will take County staff time, therefore the actual installation of the remaining traffic calming measures may be later 2004. During our meeting the other day, offhand mention was made of examining traffic patterns on 7th Street.

We Need Volunteers!

AHCA is a member of the Arlington County Civic Federation, which meets periodically to discuss, and resolve, issues of mutual interest to all of the neighborhood associations in Arlington. This is the sort of thing that can be shared, so that the burden of attending meetings does not fall wholly on one person or on a couple persons. Holler at me if you are interested.

We need: a new secretary – this would be someone to write up the minutes from our meetings, make brief reports on our executive committee meetings, etc. Again, holler if you are interested; a volunteer to head up our new Welcome Committee and help put materials together for the welcome package; Sarah Uzel, who has generously volunteered to organize a garden/home tour in spring 2004, will need some help.

Keep in Touch

Alcova Heights has a Yahoo site that we use to pass along information to residents, and which residents use to communicate one with the other on subjects as diverse as lamp repairs, baby sitters and reliable contractors. You can be a part of this. Just send a blank email to Alcova_Heights-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; Go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcova_Heights/ and follow the instructions for signing up; or send a message to listowner Mike Rhode at mrhode@hotmail.com with the subject line 'Alcova Heights signup.'

One Final Note

Our meeting on September 23 will afford each and every resident of Alcova Heights to come loaded with suggestions, ideas and enthusiasm, ready to volunteer, and ready to chart a bright, interesting future for our wonderful little community. We live in one of the nicest neighborhoods in Arlington; we're for the most part a good, friendly bunch, and we have proven that we can work well together to achieve good things. Hope to see you there: 6:00 p.m. for the potluck celebration; 7:00 p.m. for the formal program.