

GWCA Minutes for May 20, 2003

Welcome

Sam McCutchen, GWCA President, made announcements of evening agenda at about 7:35pm:

Washington Post article concerning stadium proposal at Engineering Proving Grounds, the idea is generating so far all negative opinions only a few positive opinions of having such a stadium and Kaufman is also against it and Sam will provide Kaufman with the opinions of GWCA

Speakers:

1) Greg Galahan is running for the state senate on a democratic platform and calls for all independents and democrats to vote for him on May 31, 2003 at Government Center on Franconia Road-- Greg spoke to all in attendance and announced and described his progressive ideas and his main interest in putting children first and providing opportunity to "our children", caring more for "our seniors", and also addressed need for tax reform and describes present status as ineffective and inefficient, he also described how his family are long time members of the Civic Association.

2) Dr. and Mrs. Haas, Wilton Woods neighbors for 50 years and novice of history of the area, spoke of the history in and around Wilton Woods, some of their findings have been reviewed by the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC. They took us through 3 eras of Wilton Woods. Beginning with 21 millions of years ago he described Wilton Woods, where our homes are now situated was nothing but an ocean and this finding was based on one of his archeological finds of one or more clam shells which he found in his back yard which dated to be 21 millions years old. It was further determined that this clam shell, found on top of a hill, was from the Glacial Age Period, wherein the sea level rose from 150-160 feet in and around the Wilton Woods area. So this explains any leaking basements—hoped everyone has waterproofed! Next area discussed was thousands of years prior to existence of Wilton Woods, which as explained by Dr. Haas, was thousands of years ago based upon his archeological findings of arrow heads and he also showed an Indian Tribe artist's depiction of how the arrow heads were made. Further, many maps were discussed and shown throughout the discussion. The artist's depiction clearly showed the many varieties of trees of Maples, Dogwood, etc., a very green environment typical of the Wilton Woods area.

It also showed the Indians digging up rocks having quartz deposits out of the steadfast marine clay ground and how they pounded the rocks to shape them into arrow heads. These Northern Virginia Indians used to make tools, too. The Indians would set up their teepees and work right near their homes. NO commuting, how wonderful!! Northern Virginia Indians lived off the land and anyone interested in learning more about Northern Virginia Indians can do so at our local, Franconia Museum (now in the works) and at our National Smithsonian Institute Museum. The next era discussed was Wilton Woods area as it would be hundreds of years ago, during the Civil War. During the Civil

War there was a fort in and around Wilton Woods which was in the shape of a “W” at an intersection of Shadow Walk and Fort Drive. A cannon ball or mortar shell filled with black powder and about 10 inches in diameter was located at this intersection in Wilton Woods. Dr. Haas took the cannon ball to Fort Belvoir and had it diffused there so there would be no chance of an explosion.

Dr. Haas told the attendees about Annie Frobel, who was a long time resident of the area during the Civil War, discussed her diary and read a passage from the diary. Annie wrote of the daily life back then and how on July 18, 1861, 8 horses were being used to haul the big gun (the one used for the cannon ball discussed above) up the hills around Wilton Woods, specifically the road called back then Old Fairfax Road, but now called Franconia Road, and that because the big gun was so big and heavy (weighing over 3 tons) several more horses were required to get the big gun hauled all the way up the road. Wilton Woods during the Civil War, however, used to be called Wilton Hill and what is now referred to as Franconia Road was a part of Wilton Hill back during the Civil War. A publication of Annie’s Diary can be found at the Fairfax County Library. Further reading about Wilton Hill, now called Wilton Woods may also be found at the Fairfax County Library: “This Forgotten Land” by D. Hakenson. Wilton Hall used to be located where the Wilton Woods Elementary School used to be but which is now a County Computer Operations Facility. The Hall was still used back during the Civil War but after the war became dilapidated and its remnants are underneath the now Fairfax County Operations Facility at the top of Wilton Road where it intersects with Franconia Road.

Mrs. Haas also spoke about more current times of Wilton Woods, and the history of the development of the neighborhood. Mr. Jack Crane was the developer of Wilton Woods and bought the 123 acres or so from a farmer, don’t remember his name or the price exactly (but boy was it a steal compared to what one would pay now-a-days-something like \$100,000, maybe), just after World War II. Mr. Crane broke the land down into lots and built most of the old Wilton Woods custom homes in the 1940’s and 1950’s and even had a hand in some the ones of the 1960’s in the older Wilton Woods sections. You tell by the different homes and building styles which areas he had a hand in. Mr. Crane owned personal as well as business property in Wilton Woods. The Crane Family occupied the residence on Telegraph Road, wherein the drive way is accessible from within the neighborhood. He and his family lived there until the Mr. Crane passed away and Mrs. Crane became to elderly and had to move into the guest cottage on the grounds. The Cranes added on to the original property and when Mrs. Crane sold the property back in the 1970s, the Edens purchased the property as is and fixed up and restored the property as it now appears today. The Edens are only the second owners of the property as it appears today. The Cranes did purchase the original property which did having a home on it, however, they added many of the buildings and transformed the home as it appears today, and the Edens restored in the 1970s what the Cranes built and transformed back in the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, actually there have been only 3 owners of the property: the farmer and his family, the Crane Family and The Edens and their Family. Dr. Eden and his wife also have a wonderful Dental Practice located on the Grounds. Mrs. Haas also discussed the Risdon Family who were the first owners of their property which they purchased from the Crane Family in the 1950s. Beth Hullfish (Risdon)

repurchased the property back in the 1980s when it was offered for sale after being owned by another family for a decade or so. Thus, Beth now lives and is raising her family in the house she was born and raised in. That's nice! At the end of their discussion Dr. and Mrs. Haas displayed newspaper articles of many homes as they appeared in the Washington Post/Washington Star Newspapers when they were completed by Mr. Crane and put up for sale. It was very interesting to see the homes and how much they cost back then. Also how the trees of the area had grown and how the roads had changed, etc. Quite a sneak back-in-time-preview if you will. Mr. Crane during the development of Wilton Woods took very special care to preserve the trees and much of the natural landscape of the land during his building and development of Wilton Woods. He should be commended for the development of such a wonderful place of history which we all now fondly call Wilton Woods.

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Fairfax County has the lowest crime rate and reason why they have the lowest number of police per 10,000 people of the total population, low crime saves the county money, therefore, our population has a low crime rate overall. Thus, Fairfax County citizens should be commended for being good and law abiding citizens. Non-emergency number is (703) 691-2131. Ted also gave information regarding a police program called: "Behind the Badge" where citizens can attend a citizen police academy and learn how to shoot every kind of gun they have, how to speed and chase safely in a police car, and other kinds of police stuff, with authorization by the police chief of Fairfax County. However, it is an extensive program which takes time and diligence and is also quite rigorous. Therefore, unless you are prepared to make a commitment of your time please do not attempt to get "Behind the Badge". It is a commitment but you will learn a lot—could be a life changing experience, what do you think?

Sharon Chapel Church announcement:

Oral Rehydration Project for third world countries being sponsored by the Church and looking for volunteers to prepare the rehydration formulas. Please call the church if you can help and volunteer on May 31, 2003.

Lorton Prison Land Transfer to Fairfax County Park announcement:

Lorton Prison is a historic site, over 300 years old, and valuable to the community at large. Over 1600 acres along with the 300 year old buildings and other buildings, etc. are being transferred to the park to be converted for public and institutional uses. Ideas are needed and it is requested that the public assist the park in the decision making process about how to best use the land and buildings. They want everyone to participate and help with providing ideas about what to do with the 1600+ acres. They need help with planning, etc. **PLEASE HELP!! GET INVOLVED!! BE PART OF SOMETHING BIG!! YOU ARE INVITED!!** Think about a Lorton Arts Foundation—what do you think? Got an idea, please share it! The name of the property is going to be called "LAUREL HILL". Contact your GWWCA board members for more information if you are

interested in helping with the planning of "LAUREL HILL" , we can hook you up. No more jokes about Lorton, ok!

GWCA Annual Picnic at Browne Academy announcement:

When: June 21, 2003

What: Picnic and swimming in the Browne Academy pool and games and food, etc.

Where: Brown Academy School (The Castle) on Telegraph Road

Who: Everyone is invited but please RSVP to Sam and Mary McCutchen

Why: To get to know your neighbors and find out what is going on around you and because we want you to be in touch with your home and environment! PLEASE COME IF YOU CAN, OK!

Note: More information is on the meeting announcement for 5/20th meeting mailed out in May.

Old News announcement:

Last meeting: was on March 19, 2003. Dues of \$25.00 per annum for all members are due. Please, the dues are nominal so if you have not joined the GWCA please do so. WE NEED YOU!!!

We have instituted a Committee during a special meeting by the GWCA Board in April 2003 to help with policies/laws, development, etc. of Fairfax County as well as Virginia State Laws that may be in the works that we should know about before they become a policy/law or development, etc., and to make sure that any policies/laws, development, etc., which are passed only help us and don't hurt us. For example, the plans regarding that new pretty grassy lot which used to have the pretty little, but run down, house sitting on it-remember the County tore it down and now its just a pretty little lot. It's being planned for a change to the intersection. The GWCA President has some of the details if you want to know more.

Treasurers Report: Total Amount in our Account is \$3,735.90.