

Minutes of GWWCA meeting – November 19, 2019

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m. by the GWWCA President, Larry Dempsey.

The first order of business was the election of officers for 2020. Ken Clare moved to accept the slate of nominees. The new elected and re-elected officers are: Larry Dempsey, President; Brendan Mulvaney, Vice President; Paula Sutherland, Treasurer; and Alex Moch, Secretary.

The first speaker was Rodney Lusk, the newly-elected Lee District Supervisor. He will be sworn in on December 16. He spoke about two of the major issues that will be his primary goals: Richmond Highway corridor growth and affordable housing. The high percentage of Title 1 schools in the Richmond Highway corridor calls for a way to help those students and their families. Affordable housing is one way and Mr. Lusk thinks co-locating housing with county facilities would be part of the solution. He also thinks that trade certification programs that would train people for higher paying jobs would be beneficial to families in the Richmond Highway corridor.

Mr. Lusk then called for questions/comments. One attendee asked about the 4 areas in the county designated as opportunity zones. These zones are a program of the IRS and Mr. Lusk said they had not been established as the county has not been able to get funding for the program yet. Another question was raised about the lack of communication from the Park Authority about the lighting issues at Clermont Park. Mr. Lusk said he will be meeting with the Director of the Park Authority and will bring up the matter. On the subject of affordable housing, one attendee remarked that people right out of college cannot afford to live in Fairfax County. Another comment related to the problems with street-level retail along Richmond Highway. It is suffering because of the low income levels in the corridor, so higher paying jobs are needed. Other comments included the need for younger people to move into the county, the impact of Amazon on the county, an increase in development along Richmond Highway that would encourage the extension of the Yellow Line, and the adaptive reuse of empty buildings (such as former grocery stores or big box stores). Mr. Lusk commented that a result of Fairfax County being included on the Amazon shortlist is that now companies know that this is a strong area for relocating. The last comment was a suggestion that the old Wilton Woods School be converted into an adult education facility and that a program such as a citizen's university be started.

Mr. Lusk concluded by inviting people to contact him via his current website:

<https://www.luskforsupervisor.com>.

The next agenda item was the upcoming property improvements to Hope United Church of Christ on Old Telegraph Road. The Rev. Amber Neuroth and their Building Planning Team leader Jen Mehler-Rardin made the presentation with the assistance of other members of the congregation. The congregation has become very active and they are struggling with accessibility and space. Therefore, they are proposing to expand their parking from 39 to 83 spaces by adding a parking area beside the church, adding a ramp at the main entrance to the church to make it more accessible and adding a classroom annex which will be a one-story, modular building. Significant wooded areas will be left undisturbed. Ms. Mehler-Rardin said a special permit will be required for the improvements. The timeline will be as follows: a this Fall/Winter - zoning application submission, Spring 2020 – site permits, Winter 2020 – building permits, Spring/Summer 2021 – construction (will take 4-6 months). Construction of the new parking area will happen later as they do not have the funding currently. Information will be available on the church website: <http://hopeucc.org/who-we-are/capitalcampaign>. Attendees were encouraged to contact the church via email (pastor@hopeucc.org) if they have any questions.

Larry Belle-Isle from the Montessori School of Alexandria invited all present to a celebration of the school's 50th anniversary the first weekend of October 2020.

The Treasurer's Report was presented. The finances are in good shape. A new directory will be published next year, so that will incur an expense. We will be looking for volunteers to help distribute them once they are printed. One member suggested that everyone may not want a directory, so it may be beneficial to ask who wants one. Another suggested that it be distributed electronically.

The web site GWWCA.NEXTDOOR.COM continues to thrive. Seven households have joined since our last meeting.

Meetings in 2020 will be held at John Marshall Library on Rose Hill Drive. Upcoming meeting dates are: March 17, May 19, September 15, and November 17.

Pike Branch Update – Planting will take place in the Fall (2019) and Spring (2020). Major plantings will be done in 2020. The project will be completed in mid-2020. A draft of the landscaping plan will be shared later this year. The county project, "Telegraph Road Walkway Phase 1 will fill in the missing portions of the sidewalk on Telegraph Road from Franconia Road to Lee District Park. Construction has started and is expected to be completed in the spring of 2020. A guardrail will not be installed at the south end of Old Telegraph, at the corner of Telegraph, as it would require the roadway to be expanded and the adjoining wetlands prohibit such an expansion. There is a long-term plan to mitigate the hard turn at that corner, but no timeline has been set. It was determined that a traffic signal is not warranted at either of the

two (2) intersections of Telegraph and Old Telegraph Roads. There are a few drainage issues along Old Telegraph and those will be addressed.

There will be a public meeting on November 21 at 7 p.m. at Clermont School about the Clermont Park lighting proposal. On December 3 at 4:30 p.m. the same issue is on the agenda of the Board of Supervisors meeting at the Government Center. Individuals can present their views, but must register to speak. To register, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form> or call 703/324-3151. Requests to speak before the Board of Supervisors must be completed by noon on the day of the hearing to ensure your place on the speakers list.

The Bus Rapid Transit route along Route 1 is scheduled to be ready in 4-5 years. For updates on the project, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/richmond-hwy-brt>.

Mr. Dempsey reminded all to support the Little Free Libraries in our neighborhood.

There were 8 police events in our area between September 13 and November 15.

Attendees were reminded that if they have any questions or comments, they may contact the GWWCA Board members at: GWWCA.President@gmail.com. Messages may also be left at 703/859-9000.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.