

Springfield Civic Association Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2010
Crestwood Elementary School

OPENING: President Tawny Hammond opened the meeting at 7:30 PM by thanking Hospitality Chair Sandy Frieswyk for the St. Patrick's Day-themed table decorations and refreshments and the Lake Accotink Park staff for tonight's child care.

Board of Directors Officers Present:

President Tawny Hammond
1st Vice President Jennifer Moody
2^d Vice President Bruce Waggoner
Treasurer Bill Gaylord
Secretary Alice Merrill
Director at Large Gail Nittle
Director at Large Bonnie Pritchard

Also Present:

Hospitality Chair Sandy Frieswyk
Door Prize Chair Diane Boughton
Newsletter Chair Lee Paulson
Sign-in Volunteer Fred Cline
Ron Paulson
Christina Manning, Lee District
Website Administrator Yasuko Riggs



Captain Shawn Bennett

ATTENDANCE. Approximately 63 (57 on sign-in sheets plus Fred's 10% estimate of those who bypass signing in).

ANNOUNCEMENTS. Tawny made (or invited others to make) the following announcements:

- a. **Apr 10 - Spring 2010 watershed cleanup** at Lake Accotink Park. Lend a hand if you can.
- b. **Apr 24 - Lake Accotink Park's 50th Anniversary.** Join the 12-2PM party with cake and free carousel rides/mini-golf.
- c. **Mar-Apr - Lake Accotink Park's Spring Break Camps/Classes** (including chess) start for kids ages 4-14. Frying Pan Farm Park offers the same, plus opportunities to meet the farm animals.
- d. **May 18 - General Membership Meeting:** Supervisor Jeff McKay's update on issues he's been championing; election of the 2011 Board of Directors officers.
- e. **Jun 3-6 - Springfield Days.** Check www.springfielddays.com for weekly updates on events/sponsors. There will be no parade this year for lack of a project chair to organize it. If you know someone who'd like to organize one for next year, this fall is the best time to let Tawny know so it can be integrated and planned.
- f. **Jun 6 - At 7:30AM, a first-ever 15K/5K Road Race** will be integrated into Springfield Days. Bruce Waggoner is working with Mark Russell of Metro Run & Walk to organize it. Jun 6 is the D-Day anniversary and they're reaching out to Ft. Belvoir and other military communities for participation. Since Tawny can't stay through the end of tonight's meeting, see Bruce afterward if you'd like to participate, volunteer to help, or get more information.
- g. **Aug 3 - National Night Out** crime and drug prevention event. Consider a front yard BBQ for your neighbors between 5:30-10PM to show neighborhood spirit and strengthen partnerships with the police in this cause. Springfield Swim and Racquet Club (SSRC) plans to participate to help foster police-community communication.
- h. **SCA Membership Database Manager:** We sorely need a volunteer to develop an accurate database. While we're known as the flagship civic association for our many strengths, we're weak on communication because of this lack. Once it's developed (Tawny will help), applying a tool like Constant Contact will allow quick communication of info like snow removal, land use and other issues affecting members. It can be done at home, and we'd greatly appreciate your help to achieve this important goal.
- i. **Beautiful Home Contest:** Alice Merrill volunteered to chair it, winner to be announced in September. We'll be looking for homes showing major improvement outside (remember to take before/after pictures) and homes that have been long-term standouts on their blocks due to consistently outstanding maintenance and beautification. The next newsletter will give more details.
- j. **Proposal for cell phone tower at SSRC** was addressed at last night's Land Use Committee meeting. One resident spoke in opposition. The Committee overwhelmingly supported the proposal since the revenue it will provide will help the club get past its current low spot until the economy turns around and membership grows as expected from BRAC relocations to Ft. Belvoir. The Committee's vote is just the first step in the approval/rejection process.
- k. **SSRC plans:** The club will open May 29. They plan to attend our meetings more regularly to improve communication between us and build a mutually supporting partnership.
- l. **Tonight's 9PM door prizes:** Gift certificate to Lorraine Hancock's Springfield Massage Center for Women, \$15 gift certificate to Austin's Grill, and a pair of 14K blue topaz earrings from Eddie Greenan Jewelers valued at \$75.

NEW BUSINESS. New Franconia District Police Station Leadership. Bruce introduced tonight's guest speakers, the new Commander, CPT Shawn Bennett, assigned here Jan. 3, 2010, and his Assistant Commander, LT Paul Thompson who's latest assignment here began Jun. 20, 2009. The topic they chose was the new parking restrictions for residential streets and for commercial vehicles. Officer Bob Otten, Fairfax County Police Traffic Enforcement Division Supervisor assisted by Officers Bob Barton of that Division and Allie Eggers, Franconia Station's Crime Prevention Officer, gave the following presentation:

Residential Street Parking: To restrict vehicles like large trucks, boats, and RVs from parking on their residential streets, communities used to have to go through a lengthy, cumbersome process to get a Community Parking District (CPD) approved for specific streets. Once approved, those vehicles (and complaints) were simply moved a few streets away in another community. Last March, the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a pilot program in Mt. Vernon District that created a Large CPD covering the entire District. It encountered minimal opposition and opened the way for every county district to implement the program.

On November 18, 2009, Lee District followed Mt Vernon and Reston by approving a district-wide CPD. He expects Springfield District to be next; the program is moving across the county. It increases pedestrian and traffic safety by prohibiting the following vehicles from being parked on our residential streets; violators may be ticketed and fined.

- watercraft (boats)
- boat trailers
- motor homes
- camping trailers
- trailers or semi-trailers even if attached to a vehicle
- vehicles with three or more axles, or weighing 12,000 pounds or more, or transporting 16 or more passengers (except school busses), or transporting hazardous materials.

Commercial Vehicle Parking (CPV): Officer Otten also explained the new CPV Restrictions on state roads (all our streets are state roads) that Fairfax County adopted from the Virginia state code as follows:

-Taxi and limousines are now designated commercial vehicles, are limited to one per dwelling (apartment, townhouse, house) and must be registered in Virginia, so you may now see taxis with both DC and Virginia plates.

-Commercial vehicles that exceed the following may not park on public streets:

- More than 21 feet long
- More than 8 feet high (including appurtenances)
- More than 102 inches wide
- A gross vehicle weight of 12,000 lbs. or more
- Vehicles carrying commercial freight in plain view
- Trailers or semitrailers – except camper, boat or single axle utility
- Vehicles with 3 or more axles

-Exceptions to the above include:

- Public service company vehicles
- Watercraft or motor home (these are prohibited by the Lee District CPD)
- School busses in current use
- Private vehicles with disability plates
- Cable service vehicles
- Rental/moving type vehicles within 48 hours of leasing
- Propane gas service vehicles



Officer Otten

For streets that are residential on one side and commercial on the other, the restrictions apply only to the residential side. Vehicles parked on a public street must now have both front and back license plates and display a current safety inspection sticker. The fine for a CPV violation is now \$100 which goes to the county, not the state. The following Qs were asked and answered:

-May a school bus be parked overnight in our neighborhoods, restricting traffic visibility from driveways? If it's no closer than 10 feet from the driveway, yes, but call the school transportation officer and ask that it be moved if it's a safety hazard.

What about pods/dumpsters? They can't be parked on the street but can be parked off it. Christina Manning added that the amount of time they can remain on private property is limited.

-May these type vehicles be parked in driveways/back yards? It's OK with the police under parking rules but they're also subject to Zoning rules (amount of a yard that may be paved, number of cars that can be parked at a residence, etc.)

-Is parking across the sidewalk at the end of driveways allowed? No.

-What about vehicles parked across the street from a driveway, limiting room to get out? No restriction. When vehicles are legally parked on narrow streets, be thankful you were taught how to maneuver. The police can do nothing about that.

-How far from a curb can a car be parked? 6" for the farthest tire, including from curbs in cul-de-sacs. You also can't park the wrong way on the street. Parking is restricted for distances shown below on either side of the following:

- 10 feet from a driveway
- 15 feet from a fire hydrant
- 20 feet from an intersection or crosswalk
- 30 feet from a stop sign or bus stop
- Does SSRC need some kind of parking variance for big events? There is no variance. Parking restrictions are designed

to promote safety. Ticketing vehicles in violation at big events is up to the police officer's judgment.

-What about those parking in loading areas, e.g., at Giant? It's illegal and if a vehicle is parked so as to block access to another vehicle, that's now illegal, too.

-Is there a definition of what constitutes "no stopping, standing, parking"? No, it's an officer's judgment call, but most apply the common definition that if it's not moving, it's in violation, unless it's being actively loaded/unloaded.

You can email Qs to Officer Otten at rotten@fairfaxcounty.gov and can make calls to the police non-emergency number 703-691-2131 to ask that an officer come ticket/resolve parking problems. Franconia Station has a full time parking officer.

Bruce introduced CPT Bennett who outlined his personal (born in Groveton) and his 20-year professional background in the area as a Fairfax County police officer. Though he's had a variety of assignments, he said Operations is his heart and the southern part of the county (Mt. Vernon/Franconia) is his home. He informed us that:

-Franconia is the county's busiest station based on number of calls for service. It's a big district covering lots of communities plus I-495/95. To police it, he commands around 160 people, 135 officers and about 30 volunteers (auxiliary officers/civilians) which, tellingly, is the same number as just one Fire Dept in our area.

- Yet his focus is to have police presence in the entire district, instructing his officers that besides attending to those pockets that require the most police attention, they also need to drive through the good communities to ask how it's going with the residents; that they should never be too busy to stop and listen and give the best service possible; that he expects that if they've been trained in a service, they'll always be prepared to perform it rather than say something like, "Sorry, I don't have my traffic ticket book with me today". He and LT Thompson share the same policing philosophy: lock the bad guys up, and treat each citizen like you would your Mom or Dad. He answered the following Qs:

-What about the proposed budget cut? It required that he prioritize everything (personnel, operations, equipment) and caused him to offer up the School Resource Officers (gang prevention and suppression); next will be the front desk people, the community's first contact with the station. Since the County's Police are widely known as a top-notch force and the BOS has always supported the Police Dept/citizen safety, he's hoping he won't lose these assets.

-Are the volunteer programs (reserve officers, neighborhood watch teams) the best ways for residents to help? Those programs are a great help but so is simply being a good citizen who calls the station to report what you see that doesn't look/feel right. You can ask to remain anonymous or to be told the results of your report. Also be aware that the days of unlocked homes and vehicles are over. Many of the crimes reported are crimes of opportunity. The offender may be unwilling to break your window to steal what's inside but, if the door is unlocked, quite willing to take what's easily accessible. Lock your homes and cars; keep what you value (coins, jewelry, GPS devices, cell phones, etc.) out of sight.

CPT Bennett introduced LT Thompson who described his personal (also a native of the area; he and CPT Bennett attended the same HS) and his 25-year professional background with our County Police Dept in various assignments, and answered the following questions:

-What does the recent spate of license plate thefts indicate? There's no indication of a chop shop operation going on; often the thefts are motivated by personal issues, e.g., my registration's expired but here's a car just like mine with valid plates I can swipe; my registration's expired but my brother's isn't, so I'll swap plates for awhile; etc.

- Should we report expired plates? If the vehicle is parked on a street and it's not recently expired, yes, as it could have been stolen. You can report the ones on vehicles of fellow drivers, but it's unlikely that an officer will be in the area to respond effectively and it adds the risk of phoning while driving.

-Is cell phone use while driving illegal here? Not as a primary offense. Police can't pull that driver over unless there's some other valid reason (primary offense) to do so.

CLOSING and ADJOURNMENT: Bruce Waggoner thanked the police officers for their excellent presentation and adjourned the meeting o/a 9PM after asking Diane Boughton who obtained the door prizes to draw the names of the winners: Mary Ann P. for the \$15 Austin Grill gift certificate; Eleanor W. for Lorraine's Massage gift certificate; and Lee P. for Eddie Greenan's 14k topaz earrings.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Merrill, Secretary

Photos by Y. Riggs, Web Page Designer



SCA Pres.Hammond presiding.



Lake Accotink Manager