

Carderock Springs Citizens' Association
May 31, 2020
Held via Web Meeting due to Covid-19
Annual Meeting Minutes

Board members present: Jack Orrick, Ashish Goel, Jenny Spreitzer, Petra Jacobs, Sue Eastman, Tom Deyo, Bill Draper; and new at-large members Firooz Gidfar and Gary Ratner

Participants: approximately 80 online (including board members, citizens, panelists and their staff)

Jack Orrick began the meeting at 7:02 pm

Agenda

- 1) Welcome and Highlights of the Past Year
- 2) Treasurer's Report
- 3) Election of Officers and Directors
- 4) Report on Status of Beltway Widening Plan
- 5) Questions and Answers with State and Local Legislators

1) Welcome and Highlights of the Past Year

- Completed migration to online database
- Printed New Directory
- Created Block Captain Teams to Deliver Welcoming Packets to New Residents
- Held a Fall Meeting featuring architectural historian Isabelle Gournay
- Hosted Newcomers' Reception at the Club
- Advocated on behalf of the Carderock Springs Community before State Highway Administration (SHA), Board of Public Works (BPW) and Montgomery County Council for Sound Barriers and Keeping Areas of Disturbance within existing Right-Of-Way (ROW) for Beltway widening project
- Pursued mitigation of sediment run-off in connection with Congressional County Club Golf Course regrading
- Replaced light fixtures at community entrances with energy saving LED lights.

2) Treasurer's Report

- 2019 Fiscal Recap: 325 paying member households with revenues of roughly \$16,000. Over \$9,000 in operating expenses and approximately \$3,700 in discretionary expenses; approximately \$3,500 in Contingency Fund.
- 2020 YTD Fiscal Recap: 303 households joined to date. Spending below same period last year. Total cash on hand is a little over \$90,000.
- Changes for 2020: lighting upgrades will reduce electricity bills by approximately \$400 per year; reduced costs for dues notice mailing; CDs earning more for contingency funds.

- Dues Reminder: please pay if you haven't

3) Election of Officers and Directors

Jack Orrick, President
Tom Deyo, Vice President
Jenny Spreitzer, Secretary
Ashish Goel, Treasurer
Bill Draper, Membership
Petra Jacobs, At Large
Sue Eastman, At Large
Firooz Gidfar: At Large Candidate
Gary Ratner: At Large Candidate

Jack Orrick asked current board members and candidates to introduce themselves. Proxy votes were reported (8) and then participants voted via acclamation. Everyone voted in favor of the slate of officers and directors. Firooz and Gary were then welcomed on to the board.

4) Report on Status of Beltway Widening Plan

Thank you to Katherine Stifel, a member of the Beltway Working Group, and Petra Jacobs, Chair of the Beltway Working Group, for presenting our community's position at the Annual Meeting. Katherine Stifel presented for the community regarding our concern about loss of property and trees along with increased noise and pollution; and expansion's impact on our National Register historic district and on our health. The presentation emphasized the two important community demands of the CSCA: 1) Keep project within existing right of way (ROW) and 2) provide effective sound barriers, at no cost to the community. [The presentation can be accessed here.](#)

5) Questions and Answers with State and Local Legislators

Panelists

- County Executive Marc Elrich
- County Councilmember Andrew Friedson
- State Senator Susan Lee
- State Delegate Marc Korman
- State Delegate Sara Love
- M-NCPPC Montgomery County Carol Rubin

Panelists were sent a list of 10 questions before the meeting and asked for their perspective on these and their assistance in achieving our goals.

Questions

- 1) Carderock has been promised sound barrier walls in past when the Beltway's right of way was expanded (promises given in 2001 & 2006 never materialized) - How can we ensure that the State will honor any new promises it makes to construct sound walls now?

- 2) In a public statement, County Executive Elrich explained BPW concurrence with SHA Beltway expansion plans in January 2020 as a success because SHA promised to “keep Beltway expansion within existing boundaries and the needs of local communities will be reflected in the design of this project”. How will the County accomplish this promise?
- 3) Given likely changes in workforce and commuting behavior due to the COVID-19 pandemic, how can traffic and sound studies conducted to date on Beltway be predictive of the future impacts? How can accurate sound measurements be conducted for the planned fly-over ramps?
- 4) Given the recent Purple Line contractor exit, what assurances do the County and State have that the P3 vendor will be able to successfully complete the project on time and on budget without looking for taxpayer subsidies? It is our understanding that of the potential bidders (Transurban) has a similar unfortunate history in Australia.
- 5) Related to question 4, what other impacts on County residents could occur? Since the pandemic decreases State tax receipts, will there be enough funds for a Beltway expansion? For example, WSSC has said that it might cost up to \$2 billion to relocate the water mains along I-270. Will this result in higher water and sewer bills to consumers? Seven members of the County Council sent a letter to MDOT saying that the builder of toll lanes should pay the entire cost of moving water and sewer pipes. All nine members of the Prince Georges County Council sent a similar letter. It is our understanding that Councilmember Friedson decided not to sign the County letter. Does he think that additional expenses such as these should be borne by taxpayers?
- 6) Given the delays in the issuance of the DEIS (which has continued to date), the public comment period needs to be extended commensurately. For a project of this magnitude, it is extremely important for the public to have the time that was originally planned (more than 3 months) to provide thorough feedback. Currently, SHA’s plan to allow only the legal minimum number of days(45) which is not sufficient.
- 7) What are the plans for public hearings on the DEIS if the limited social gathering requirements continue? It is our understanding that SHA is considering supplementing in-person hearings with virtual hearings. Would that allow full access to all residents (including those without remote work capabilities) a chance to testify?
- 8) It is our understanding that American Legion Bridge is due for a renovation. What are the current agreements between MoCo and MD or MD and VA regarding the Bridge? How will these agreements impact our community? Will there be any assurance of minimizing harmful effects in our area?
- 9) Regarding COVID-19 and any other future virus that may appear, it is not known how pandemics may affect our daily lives in the long term (traffic is down 50% now). It will probably result in fewer commutes and rapid development/increased use of remote

technologies to the point that highway expansion will not be needed. How is this going to be factored into the current SHA plans for Beltway expansion?

10) Many legislators (Senator Lee, Delegate Korman and Delegate Love) introduced very important bills to protect our communities from State acquisition of residential property, State decisions ignoring County priorities etcetera. Unfortunately, these bills didn't proceed during the legislative session. Is there a plan to introduce them again and get wider support from other stakeholders for these bills to be successful? Questions 6-10 of 10 CSC

In addition to the 10 questions above, the legislators were asked to address 3 important questions during the presentation:

- What is your understanding of the situation?
- What is your position?
- How can you support our position?

Statements by Panelists

County Executive Marc Elrich: Executive Elrich agreed with our positions, saying that his goals are our goals. Elrich's staff member Chris Conklin is working with SHA: Chris will be there to advocate for these.

Council member Andrew Friedson: Council member Friedson agrees with our positions. He noted that he raised the sound barrier issue with SHA and passed on our concerns about remaining within the Right of Way (ROW). He worked with our community on Transportation Priorities letter and added language on our behalf. This was the first formal expression of not going out of Right of Way on western portion of spur. Question about WSSC letter: Friedson's position is that he is totally opposed to WSSC charging rate payers for any part of the work. He didn't sign the letter because he had current concerns with WSSC rate payer issues and believed that the letter distracted from those.

State Senator Susan Lee: Senator Lee supports our positions. She understands that the project is still moving forward but there are questions about bids given new traffic patterns. She was already opposed to the process. She believes that the state needs to pause and reassess given telework and Covid-19. New traffic patterns might not justify the costs. Private toll companies don't make a profit unless there's congestion. A lot of managed toll projects have gone bankrupt after several years. CBO have found that taxpayers on average pay 44% of costs for these projects. She wants us to continue to work together and believes that our neighborhood's input is critical. SB229 would have required state agencies to grant county approval for all counties in the state on infrastructure projects, but it did not pass. No bills regarding Beltway expansion have passed but we will continue pushing on them.

Delegate Marc Korman: Delegate Korman agrees with our positions. D16 sent a letter on our behalf and we got a very non-committal response back. We need to continue to watch them like hawks. The governor is in the driver's seat: state and county officials have no approval/disapproval vote. Have gotten every democrat in the house to vote for limits on the

administration, but haven't gotten any traction in the senate. Regarding the project, RFQs solicited. DEIS: goal is now mid-June. Final version in Spring of 2021. No acknowledgment that current events have impacted anything: both Covid-19 and Purple Line Project, which is in complete and utter disarray due to state/vendor issues. This MIGHT give vendors pause when submitting proposals.

Delegate Sarah Love: "ditto to everything already said" in terms of agreeing to our positions and working on our behalf. The "P3 Promises Bill" didn't go anywhere but is another mechanism of pressure. Bill to stop use of eminent domain also didn't go anywhere, but these are bargaining and pressure points to encourage more cooperation and listening from the governor/administration.

Carol Rubin, MNCPC: there's not a lot to report. DEIS will be released June 12 but that depends on whether they can make it available in public buildings (such as libraries, etc.) Still looking at public comment to close at the end of July. Park & Planning Commission received an incomplete advance copy at the time the report was released to cooperating agencies. It is thousands of pages long. Carol working on a presentation to present to the commission on June 17 re Staff Comments from MNCPC. This will be a public meeting that will give us an idea of their concerns. These are similar to concerns already expressed by MNCPC. Have to have a final EIS statement before the state can finalize a P3 deal. Looking for one agreement to cover the southern part of the project along with 270 North to Frederick. She recommended that the first thing we should do after the DEIS is released is to ask for an extension of the comment period (45 days), which is a disservice to the public. It took MNCPC 3 months and 15 staff to analyze the DEIS.

Discussion

Marc Korman: apply political pressure on the state comptroller (Franchot), who has every incentive to see that this project is done well since he hopes to be the next governor. Nancy Kopp, the 3rd person on the BPW, is the treasurer and she is against the project. Regarding 45 day time period, there will be a big advocacy push to apply pressure to extend this... that's all we can do. We can't mandate it.

Carol Rubin: keep in mind that the impacts discussed will be very preliminary. How far noise will extend based on DEIS. HOW these will be done will be decided later by the P3 vendor, who will have to figure out a way to reduce sound below allowable 66 decibels. There will be no construction details, so we will just need to testify that concessionaire be required to bring noise levels down.

Marc Korman's advice: Push Franchot and Kopp to NOT sign the P3 agreement unless our requirements regarding noise mitigation are included.

Carol Rubin: financial viability analysis: look at the Purple Line. How much will litigation and land acquisition impact the project? Toll roads in general have been given a negative outlook, so that might impact project as well.

After thanking our panelists and attendees, Jack Orrick adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.