Northwood News

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President's Message

by Mike Diegel

Hello and welcome back to another year of NFCCA newsletters and other doings. I hope you had as good a summer as I did, but that it was easier for you to get back into fall routines.

Our first meeting is an important one, not only because it's our annual meeting and election of officers (and I want to thank everyone who volunteered to serve), but also because it's the height of the political season.

In that spirit, we've invited the campaigns of Gov. Glendening, his challenger Ellen Sauerbrey, our U.S. Representative Connie Morella and her challenger Ralph Neas to address our association Oct. 14. We have asked them each to speak briefly to us about their bodies' respective roles in transit along the Route 29 corridor.

The state will have an active role in any proposals for improving intersections or—should it come to that—a busway, while the federal government would have to get involved if we're to have any hope of a light rail or similar system.

There will be time for questions, so come prepared to ask a few and make up your minds for November. See you at 7:30 P.M.. Oct. 14

Next Association Meeting

Wednesday, October 14, 1998

7:30 P.M.

Northwood-Four Corners Rec Center

Going the Extra Mile

Extending the Ride-On Bus 19 Route

By Jim Zepp

Sometimes it seems that the simple and direct solutions are the ones which elude government officials the most. Over the last ten years, if not more, our neighborhood has been threatened with various projects to relieve traffic congestion in the Four Corners intersection. The most recent has been the $40 million Route 29 Busway that would have required frontages from about 50 homes and businesses along its 3.5 mile path. Its primary benefit would have been to shorten the ride for up-county commuters by 12 minutes.

With this history in mind, it's ironic that the county government is resistant to a minor change that would encourage our residents to use the Route 19 Ride-On bus that currently

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serves the neighborhood. Several years ago, the Route 10 bus that went from Lockridge Drive to the Forest Glen Metro Station was consolidated into the Route 19. Unfortunately, this new route stops at Forest Glen Road and Dallas Avenue, about a mile away from the Metro Station.

This means that any commuters must ride the bus through the Four Corners intersection and Takoma Park to get to the Silver Spring Metro Station. The other alternative is to drive to the Forest Glen Station or not take mass transit at all. Many residents who formerly used mass transit now take their cars to work.

An obvious solution is to extend the existing the 19 bus route the one ore mile so that riders can use the Metro. The county Department of Public Works and Transportation holds a bimonthly meeting called the Silver Spring Action Group. Its purpose is for citizens for call attention to transportation and public works-related problems.

NFCCA Vice President Jim Zepp attended the April 17 meeting to raise concerns affecting our community. This included the suggestion to extend the Route 19 line so that its ridership might improve. The idea seemed reasonable and to cost so little relative to the possible benefits that the following response by the department was rather surprising.

"Route 19 currently operates directional service to Silver Spring in the a.m. peak hours and from Silver Spring in the P.M. peak hours. The additional cost to operate the service in both directions and to extend it to Forest Glen is about $75,000 per year. A two-directional Route 19 extended to Forest Glen would provide much better transit service to the community. We have added it to our long range plan. However, there is no funding available in the FY 99 operating budget, and it is not high on the list of priorities being requested for FY 00."

It seems that operating a bus line in a manner that's inconvenient for half its service area, and discourages ridership, is preferable to the department than making a change that would encourage its use and relieve traffic congestion in the area.

For those residents who would like to use the bus for commuting or getting to services along Forest Glen such as Holy Cross Hospital or the senior center, expressing your concern to county officials may help to bring some attention to this problem. Write a comment to the Montgomery County DPW&T, Transit Services Division, 110 N. Washington St., Rockville, Maryland 20850. Or mention this to some of our local officials who are campaigning for your vote this fall.

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Annual Meeting

The first NFCCA meeting of the year on Oct. 14 will be our annual meeting and election of officers.

The nominations are:

President, Mike Diegel, 10304 Eastwood Ave., 681-7346, email DiegelME@aol.com

Vice President, Jim Zepp, 10602 Lockridge Dr., 593-7863, jzepp@jrsa.org

Secretary, Colleen Doremus, 10205 Sutherland Rd., 593-0386, PDoremus@aol.com

Treasurer, Michele Frome, 10802 Lockridge Dr., 593-3554, mfrome@vais.net

At-Large, Dave Povtak, 108 Pinewood Ave. 593-3178; Charles Pritchard, 10612 Margate Rd., 593-1781; Leslie Boness, 10819 Margate Rd., 681-7814, email dboness@erols.com; and Alan Friedman, 126 Snowy Owl Dr., 681-9156, email afriedman@ftc.gov.

Nominations also will be taken from the floor.

Garden Planned for Intersection

Several months ago, a group of residents near the intersection of Sutherland, Lorain and Edgewood proposed tearing up the asphalt island in the middle of that intersection and replacing it with a garden, (which ought to give the cut-through traffic something to slow down and take a look at).

The Department of Public Works and Transportation agreed as part of the sidewalk installation process to remove the asphalt and install new curbs. That work is completed,

In the meantime, the residents prepared a plan under the guidelines of Keep Montgomery County Beautiful (KMCB) Task Force and the Department of Permitting Services. The plan was approved at the KMCB September meeting.

The association has been awarded a $250 grant for the project, which is the maximum allowed under the program.

The plan, which was prepared with the help of Behnke's Nursery and follows the county's approved list, calls for a Kwanzan cherry tree in the center surrounded by several blue star junipers, crimson pygmy dwarf barberries, black-eyed susans (rudbeckia), and several cotton asters. It provides a mix of evergreens and flowering plants so it should good during all four seasons.

The total budget for the project is about $500, including plants and mulch. A resident who prefers to remain anonymous has offered to contribute to the balance not covered by the county grant.

Future Meeting Dates

Here's the schedule for the 1998-99 NFCCA meetings. Each meeting is held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 P.M.. in the Rec Center at Northwood/Four Corners Park.

The meetings are:

Oct. 14
Dec. 9
Feb. 10
April 14
June 9

Board meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at the president's house.

Speed Humps

With all the recent attention on the primary elections and those running for local office, not much attention has been paid to an issue on the November ballot that has implications for our neighborhood.

An ad hoc civic organization called Save Our Streets has mobilized and created a successful petition drive to put the question of speed humps in Montgomery County on the November ballot. However, a county court has, for now, ruled against the group's attempt to place this measure on the ballot.

This measure, if it passes, will amend the county charter (the foundation If the county government) and will prohibit the county from spending any funds to construct new speed humps. In addition, it would require that the county remove all existing speed humps unless the County Council votes to approve a specific hump's location and use.

This neighborhood has found speed humps to be an effective deterrent to speeders on those streets that have them, and other residents have indicated a desire to get them installed on their streets.

If Save Our Streets is successful, it would mean that not only would those streets be denied humps, but those who already have them would have to convince the council to keep each one on an individual basis.

A court challenge to the amendment has been filed. A similar challenge to an amendment filed by tax gadfly Robin Ficker was declared unconstitutional on the grounds that the charter is not the place to conduct what is legislative business.

So far, we've found no organized opposition to the SOS measure, but we will have an update at the October meeting.

Decision on Residential Parking Permit System Needed

We closed out our June meeting by tabling until the fall the resolution on whether to seek a residential parking permit system.

So far, there does not seem to be a problem from the opening of Blair High School. It's a closed campus with considerable security an students are not free to roam the neighborhoods at will. By the October meeting, we should have a clearer idea whether or not we have a problem. The board urges anyone who lives in the area most likely to be affected (Timberwood, Lorain, Sutherland and similar streets) to come to the October meeting and share your experience.

The Woodmoor/Pinecrest Civic Association now has its parking restrictions in place. At last word, South Four Corners had not pursued these restrictions

To review the situation: If our association chooses to seek this designation, we must pay $250 to cover the cost of advertising the public hearing and doing parking surveys. The hearing examiner takes testimony and makes a recommendation to the county executive, with whom the final decision rests. The entire process takes eight to 10 months.

This designation would allow for residents of each block in the neighborhood to petition the county for certain parking restrictions prohibiting nonresidents from parking on the streets. Acceptance into the program does **not** mean that every street would get restrictions. **Only those blocks whose residents choose to petition for the restrictions could get them**. Each household gets one vote, and two-thirds of the residents on each block must sign the petition in favor of the restrictions.

Upon petitioning the county, traffic officials conducts a survey of the usable street spaces. to qualify for restrictions, **at least half** of those spaces must be occupied, and **at least half** of the cars occupying the spaces must be from out of the neighborhood.

•The costs associated with individual residents' permits are these:

•$20 per vehicle, good for two years.

•Every vehicle must have a permit.

•One permanent visitor may be purchased per household for $20, good for two years.

•Temporary guest permits good for 30 days are FREE.

•Guest permits good beyond 30 days (up to six months) are $5.

This is a self-supporting program that uses no tax funds for its enforcement. Instead, the fees you pay fund separate parking enforcement officers with the power to ticket and tow offending vehicles.

The restrictions usually prohibit parking between the hours of 9 A.M. and 5 P.M., but other restrictions may be put in place. This neighborhood's

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immediate concern would be the potential problem of Blair students, or visitors to school events, choosing to park in our neighborhood and walking over to the new high school, so restrictions likely would be at other times as well, should a street elect to put them in place.

Based on the results of a survey taken last spring, the board offered a resolution for a vote at the June meeting, but the action was tabled. A similar resolution for consideration in October is:

The Northwood/Four Corners Civic Association wishes to apply for a Residential Permit Parking Area designation.

The board suggests that we either vote this up or down, or table the matter indefinitely so we don't revisit it at each meeting.

Traffic Restrictions Process

The long-standing request for turn restrictions on Southwood and Lorain avenues continues to move through the process.

In March of 1998, we asked the county's traffic division to place permanent restrictions on right turns onto those two roads from Colesville during the morning rush hour, and ban right turns on red onto Southwood 24 hours a day.

The county in May completed traffic counts at Lorain and Colesville, Lorain and University, Southwood and Colesville, and Dennis and University. Those counts demonstrated that the neighborhood qualified for consideration under the terms of this program.

At least half of the traffic must be from out of the neighborhood to qualify for restrictions. Over the summer, volunteers took a license tag survey which must be submitted to the county. After some delay due to the county employee responsible for this phase being on maternity leave, those surveys have been submitted and we await the results.

We anticipate that the neighborhood will leap this hurdle as well. At that point, we will face a public hearing on the proposed restrictions.

One note: the request for a "No Turn on Red" sign on southbound Colesville at Southwood must be granted by the State Highway Administration; the county has no jurisdiction in that matter. We are working with the county and the state to get that in place.

NFCCA Dues

Dues for the 1998-99 year are now due and payable. The cost is $5 per person. Make checks payable to the Northwood/Four Corners Civic Association. You may pay your dues at the association meetings or send them to our treasurer, Michele Frome, 10802 Lockridge Dr., Silver Spring, 20901.

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