

## **LHA BOARD MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 18, 2021, 8:30am (ZOOM MEETING)**

### **Directors Present (13):**

Mike Cantwell, Sandi Chesrown, Michele Cornwell Horwitz, Elaine Furlow, Pamela Gillen, Lauren Harris, Ralph Johnson, Tom Korn, Jim Lantelme, Richard Price, Matthew Weinstein, Michelle Winters, Tom Wolfe

**Director Nominated (1):** Emilia Frankel

**Directors Absent (1)** Laura London

**LHA Staff Present (2):** Ginger Brown, Maia Potok-Holmes

### **Welcome & Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Pamela Gillen, President, at 8:30am. Pamela welcomed Board Members and made a motion to accept the January 26 meeting minutes. Tom Wolfe seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **County Board Update**

Katie Cristol, Arlington County Board Member, joined the meeting and provided an update on renaming, funding, and the County's vaccination efforts. The County is looking into the costs of renaming and a potential renaming date. The bill that would allow Arlington to rename Lee Highway, introduced by Representative Rip Sullivan, has passed both the VA House and Senate and now awaits signature from Governor Northam. She continued by explaining that the County Board is aware of the importance of continuing full funding for LHA and are working on securing that funding for the coming years. The American Rescue Plan has been helpful in providing the County with funding that will help to continue ongoing COVID programs and vaccination sites. The County's vaccination effort is going well – more local pharmacies are getting involved – however, the number of doses the County receives has not increased despite continuing to forcefully advocate for more. They hope to move forward with vaccinating more of the general population very soon.

### **AED Liaison Report**

Susan Soroko, Director, Creative Economy, AED, thanked LHA staff for providing a great presentation to the budget work session last week. Emily Cassell, Team Leader for Arlington Convention and Visitor Services, had a great meeting this week with LHA and has set up monthly meetings with all County partnerships. These meetings will help the team prepare to bring attention to the corridor as visitors begin returning to Arlington. Susan added that AED has announced its ReLaunch program, a supplement to last year's grant program, and has a meeting scheduled for next week with LHA and other partnerships to discuss the various programs and see how they can benefit local businesses.

### **Plan Lee Highway Update**

Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, PLH Project Manager, shared that the PLH Working Group and LHA's Planning Committee is scheduled to meet next Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, to discuss the corridor analysis. However, because there is so much information to get through, the PLH team has decided to schedule a second meeting. Public meetings are scheduled to begin in April, educational walking tours are scheduled to begin in the coming months, and Civic Associations are being asked to help disseminate PLH information to their neighborhoods. The PLH team will be accepting feedback from the public through June 4.

### **Honoring Bob Duffy**

Pamela shared that Bob Duffy will be retiring. Sandi shared the following tribute:

LHA was born in February of 2013 with the start of our Presidents Breakfasts, and that is just a few months after Bob Duffy became Arlington's Planning Director. Although he had barely arrived in the County, he agreed to speak at our second Presidents Breakfast in April of 2013 and by May of 2014 we had developed a Partnership Strategy, which helped us to maneuver through the County's painful budget process. Bob always recognized the value of a grassroots effort and the importance of building community wide support as a critical element of successful change. In so many ways, Bob supported LHA – he helped us establish walking tours and five pre-planning community meetings, our first outreach on the future of the corridor. Those efforts, which involved a lot of staff time, helped LHA create our Guiding Principles. In 2015, Bob hired a summer intern who helped complete a Briefing Book on existing conditions, and then he helped us get funding for a Visioning Charrette. He also helped us obtain a VDOT Liaison, so critical to conversations on improving the design of the recently opened bicycle pedestrian bridge. We always appreciated that Bob was a 'Let's get it done' kind of guy. When we felt we needed a farmers' market to serve our communities, Bob was there not only to support the concept but to figure out how to change the zoning ordinance to legally allow it. In 2016, Bob was behind the scenes to help us push forward with Plan LH, establishing the scoping study and publishing the RFP to hire consultants. All thoughtful steps along the journey from a strong collaborative leader, focused on a positive result. In 2018, when PLH officially began, Bob became a Fellow of the AICP, the highest award a planner can achieve. Prior to joining Arlington County, Bob's career impressively spanned a broad spectrum of innovative planning work, much of which served to guide Plan LH. As Planning Director, Bob has applied this community driven, holistic planning approach, as the best route, although perhaps circuitous, to placemaking and improved quality of life – which is what our community needs. This is PLH vision – to 'Boldly Plan for People and Power of Place.' So, on behalf of LHA, let us thank Bob wholeheartedly, for all of his wisdom, guidance, integrity, and support over these many years. We wish he was staying through the end of Plan LH (but he probably says to himself who knows when that will be?) Joking aside, we know there are other challenges, architectural review boards, perhaps students, who will benefit from Bob's help. Let us pretend we have champagne. Lift your glass to Bob with gratitude, wishing him the best of luck in the future. Let us always stay in touch!

## **President's Report**

Ginger and Pamela recently spoke (virtually) with the County Board to discuss the budget of LHA. They have written a follow up letter to send to the Board encouraging them to keep LHA's base budget of \$85,500 and remind them how important that funding is to the stability of the organization. Said letter was sent to LHA Board Members prior to today's meeting. Pamela asked if there are any comments or revisions, and there were none. She made a motion that the LHA Board accept and send the letter to the County Board requesting the budget be re-established and a base budget of 85,500. Elaine Furlow seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Maia Potok-Holmes provided an update on Communications. A big focus of LHA's has been supporting local businesses through COVID and growing LHA's online presence. Maia shared that over the last year, she has interviewed and written 10 feature articles about local businesses for newsletters, created and shared two holiday gift guides, and promoted the Loving Local event held on Shop Small Saturday. She has been in regular contact with local businesses via email, sending them information about new opportunities and business support programs. LHA has utilized their social media accounts to highlight Lee Highway businesses, promote events happening along the corridor, and share pertinent updates. Over the last year, Maia has grown LHA's Instagram from 243 to 481 followers and has posted about businesses 28 times so far. The newsletter has also grown to a total of 1,196 subscribers. Additionally, she has dedicated substantial time to build out LHA's website, updating about pages, "our history" and "our vision" pages, a renaming mini-site, and a "shop local" webpage dedicated to the current status of the businesses along the corridor and ways the community can support them.

Mike Cantwell announced that he is stepping down from the Board. He thanked Board Members for their dedication to Lee Highway and for enriching his life over the course of his tenure with LHA. The nomination committee announced that they met with Emilia Frankel, President of the Yorktown CA, to discuss the possibility of her joining the LHA board as a resident member. Matt Weinstein moved to nominate her to the board to replace Mike Cantwell with a term ending on Dec 31, 2021 (the end of Mike's term). Mike Cantwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Pamela nominated Jim Lantelme to the position of Vice President. Elaine motioned, Tom Korn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Pamela asked the board if there are any oppositions to changes in the bylaws to add two Board seats. These changes are being made to help increase diversity and inclusivity of people along the whole corridor. No one expressed concerns.

## **Finance Committee**

Michele Horwitz Cornwell, Treasurer, reported that LHA currently has \$44,000 in the bank and has received the second half of its County grant. The second payment of the Missing Middle grant will be received in early April which will help to get closer to budget vs. actual. The upcoming Vision 2050 event will increase LHA's expenses but is expected to bring in good revenue. She also thanked Maia for all her hard work.

### **Events Committee**

Tom Wolfe, Events Committee Chair, shared that Ginger will be sending out an invitation for a meeting of the Events Committee to be held next week. Vision 2050 is well under way with email invites having been sent out - sponsorships and tickets are already being purchased. Bike to Work Day will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup> and LHA is coordinating the corridor's first pit stop at Lyon Village Shopping Center from 3-6pm. Tom added that a fall event in celebration of the corridor's renaming will be taking place but is unplanned as of right now.

### **Transportation Committee**

Richard Price, Chair, reported that the Committee sent a letter outlining "hot spots" on Lee Highway in response to the County's Vision Zero Phase 2 report. They heard back on March 2<sup>nd</sup> with a five-page detailed response in which the County indicated their commitment to Vision Zero and asked for recommendations to improve their initial suggestions. He participated in a productive meeting with VDOT recently where they discussed lower speed limits on Lee Highway, transit, intersection improvements, increasing green space, wider sidewalks, and the Five Points Intersection. VDOT proposed two options for Five Point, the first making it one continuous road and the second a roundabout. Neither of the options were favorites of the attendees of the meeting and VDOT is going to consider other options for that intersection. Natasha added that this intersection is a part of the PLH study and will be presented at the second meeting of the PLH WG and LHA PC. Richard concluded by sharing that the bridge in East Falls Church on the W&OD trail is officially open and he can't wait to bike on it!

### **Housing Committee**

Michelle Winters, Chair, informed the Board that the Missing Middle team has produced its first video, an animated, informational video. They are conducting a lot of outreach and hope Civic Associations will be interesting in holding informational sessions with their neighborhoods. A webinar is scheduled for March 25<sup>th</sup> with speakers from AARP to discuss how Missing Middle can benefit seniors. Links to that webinar are on the Missing Middle website. She added that the Affordable Housing Master Plan is undergoing a review and the first committee meeting is today. They will be discussing goals and the number of rental and single-family homes are being produced. Future meetings on senior housing, fair housing, and everything in between will be held in the near future.

### **Renaming Update**

Matthew Weinstein, Working Group Chair, shared that Representative Rip Sullivan's bill has passed through both the VA House and Senate but has not yet been signed into law. Governor Northam has until the 30<sup>th</sup>, however, and Matt doesn't have any reason to suspect he won't sign it. Once signed, the bill will go into effect on July 1, 2021. The County Board is planning for a timeline and process for the renaming and more information will be available in the coming weeks.

### **Planning Committee Update**

Co-Chairs Chris Gordon and Chris Forinash shared that the Committee's main role over the last few months has been to participate in the VDOT briefing that Richard discussed in his updates

to the board. A subcommittee of the Planning Committee will be participating in the meeting with the PLH Working Group next Tuesday. The Planning Committee currently has 15 members but Chris and Chris are looking to grow membership and reinvigorate and diversify the group – hoping to add more women, renters, and people of different ethnicities and races. They asked the LHA Board to keep their eyes and ears open for potential members.

### **Housing Arlington Update**

Richard Tucker, Housing Arlington Coordinator, discussed the ongoing work of Housing Arlington. The organization was created two years ago with the intent of increasing housing supply and affordable housing within Arlington County. They currently have a number of planning studies underway, including Missing Middle, the Affordable Housing Master Plan, and the Multifamily Reinvestment Study. Their work with Missing Middle will look at housing types that are in between single-family detached homes and high-rise developments - duplexes, triplexes, etc. Their focus is on the form and size of the housing and not affordability. They are also hosting community conversations in which they plan to ask what housing types they should study. The goal is to reach the point where they can look into where in the community these housing types can be located and how they should be regulated. The Affordable Housing Master Plan is undertaking a review - it had to be pushed from last year because of COVID-19. The review will chronicle how well the County has done in meeting the goals of the original plan and outline what needs to be tweaked. Hopefully by June/July they'll have a draft for the County to review. Richard explained that Housing Arlington is also currently examining the existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities that are a part of the Multifamily Reinvestment Study. A staff report on the topic will be presented to the County Board on Saturday. Ginger added that a Housing Committee meeting will be held in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15am

**Next meeting:** May 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am