



Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church Meeting
October 20, 2022
Meeting Minutes. -In Person

Members Present: Laura Hull, Mary Sellers, Elise Neil Bengtson, Maureen Budetti, Ron Anzalone, Ellen Gross, Nikki Graves Henderson (virtually), Ari Autor, Katharine Stewart

Liaisons: Keith Thurston, Letty Hardi, Reagan Davis, Jaqueline Connelly, Elise Bengtson

Guests: Emily Blazemore, CFC

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Laura Hull at 9:35 am.

Minutes: Minutes were approved for the September Meeting

Receipt of Public Comments:

- No public comments were received

Introductions: We welcomed Scarlett Williams, from Falls Church City Parks and Recreation who will serve as interim liaison for the Council, until a replacement for Corey Price can be hired.

Roundtable Discussion:

VPIS

- Ellen Gross shared that Tree Fest event benefiting non-profits will be held again this year at the 4 P's on the first or second weekend in December. Date to be finalized. VPIS has been involved in Strategic Planning process for the Library.

City Council Liaison

- Letty Reported that City will be announcing a 3 million dollar surplus. There will be City Council Work Sessions in November to discuss allocations for one time spending.
- Nov 28th will be annual Holiday Tree Lighting. Possibly at Founders Row.

CATCH Foundation

- Preparing for Watch Night. First time since COVID. CATCH grants are set to be reviewed at next Council meeting.

Creative Cauldron

- Laura Hull reported that CC's Production of "Ichabod: The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is going well and runs through Oct 30th. Complimentary Tickets are being offered for Sunday Evening.
- CC just received an Arts Access Grant from Arts Fairfax to do after school programs in Fairfax County Title One Schools serving largely Spanish-speaking students and families.

Friends of Cherry Hill

- Katharine Stewart reported the Children's "Holiday Shoppe" will be offered again this year December 4th at the Community Center. There will be Halloween Literary Evening partnering with Victorian Society.

Ari Autor, At Large Member

- Draft letter for support of a curator for public art projects has been completed and discussion will begin in the context of Corey's departure and overall support needs of AHCFC

Victorian Society

- Ron Anzalone reported that Friday, October 28 at 8:00 pm Halloween Literary Evening partnering with Friends of Cherry Hill, and held at the Farmhouse. Evening will feature material from Oscar Wilde, including "Canterville Ghost" and parts of "Picture of Dorian Gray."
- In homage to the centennial anniversary of the discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhemen they will do a reading of "Curse of the Mummy"
On Saturday, November 26th they will host a "Victorian Christmas" at the farmhouse from 10 am – 2pm

Falls Church City Schools

- Reagan Davis reported the band is going to Nashville to perform and are raising funds for the trip. Both H.S. and Middle school are preparing for fall productions. H.S production is "Pippin".
- Chorus is doing annual Disney sing along will be held Saturday, October 22nd.
- Henderson family is trying to incorporate more history into the K-12 curriculum, so students can understand more of Falls Church History.

Falls Church Arts

- Maureen Budetti reported the current Falls Church Arts show is "Scapes" and there will be a opening reception on October 8. The first since the pandemic. The Show is juried and a public favorite will be chosen by visitors to the gallery.
- Next show "Bits and Pieces" opens with a reception on November 19.
- Classes in a variety of mediums are being held with one going on almost every day in the gallery.
- Two Art Critique groups are meeting and a Student Art Academy for Children.
- Halloween painting around town. There was a discussion about having visual images of these and information about the artists/families creating on a joint Instagram page in the future.

Falls Church Chamber

- Elise Bengston reported Chamber November activities are Shop Local. Small Business Saturdays
- November 15 Non-Profit Forum will be held at Falls Church Episcopal at 11:30 am.

Presentation of Small Area Plan:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/2128/East-End-Small-Area-Plan>

Emily Blazemore walked Council through a very thorough presentation of the Small Area Plan for the East End located near Seven Corners and including the Eden Center.

- Map of the Area covered under the East End Small Area plan was reviewed showing the specific boundaries. Several Council Members had questions and needed for clarification of boundaries for the plan.
- Overview of History of the Area. American Indian History, Civil War, African American History, Construction of Route 50, Vietnamese American immigration in 1970s, etc. Development of Eden Center.
- Community Engagement Activities past and future were reviewed. These included: Community Kick Offs, Pop Ups at the Farmer’s Market. Work Sessions with City Council. Meetings with Key Stakeholders. Meeting with Boards and Commissions.
- Overview of Vision Statement and Goals for Area Plan.
- Key Elements for new Development: Green public spaces, Economic vitality, Residential and mixed use with Affordable Housing units, “Gateway” elements, public art and murals, Creative placemaking, Environmental sustainability (LEED standards), urban agriculture, multi-modal transportation, pedestrian friendly.

Comments from Council:

- Reagan Davis asked about existing businesses and land owners. Emily responded that this is a future vision and conceptual should private developers want to redevelop parcels, the plan would provide guidelines.
- Ari Autor asked about what happens to existing affordable housing units in area. Emily responded that this is something being prioritized by the Planning Department.
- Maureen Budetti questioned the information presented about impact of the development on Vehicle Trips and estimated reductions. Letty Hardy referenced a study that showed that vehicle transportation numbers have already decreased by over 9.3% from 2007 – 2019. If the East End Plan were redeveloped it would decrease the amount of vehicle trips from what would normally be projected in models for the area without development.
- Keith Thurston asked what the reasoning was for not including Oakwood Cemetery. Emily stated that they were following guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Maureen asked about the impact to nearby neighborhoods along Broad and Hillwood and wondered about shuttle bus transportation to metro and area.
- Ron Anzalone expressed concern that Fort Taylor Park was not included in the plan given its historical significance. It was preserved as part of the Civil War Trails during the Civil War Sesquicentennial, because it was on the edge of the site where the Thaddeus Lowe’s balloon went up. It is an undeveloped public park that currently isn’t viewed as a safe place. This is a missed opportunity.
- Nikki Graves Henderson expressed concern about encouraging jogging through Oakwood Cemetery out of respect, and also that Eden Center should be priority in the development.

Old Business -Art Walk

- Mary Sellars reported that she has developed a Public Art inventory that includes information about the property owner, the artist. Council suggested that she share this with members for input on accuracy and historical details.
- Letty presented logos that were developed for the Art Walk incorporating the Little City logo and members chose their favorite. It will be used on small metal plaques that will identify each public art installations/murals on the walk. Some members also suggested that decals be used rather than plaques. Mary said she would research efficacy and costs.
- Letty offered that EDA may provide funding for these.

Strategic Plan

- Laura reported back the Strategic Plan Committee recommended changes for the five goals, based on feedback from last Council meeting.
- It was agreed that the Committee would meet again to work on the action steps. Council members would review the action steps currently on the document, and provide feedback or suggestions for new action steps.
- There was a suggestion at the last Council meeting to fund a position that would serve as a curator of public art projects. Ari was tasked to write a letter of support. Laura expressed concern that with the departure of Corey Janicelli, we might want to re-evaluate this idea in the greater context of Council needs and our strategic goals. There was a discussion that there may be a greater need for a part time communications professional that could help with an update of the CATCH website, social media initiatives etc. There was consensus around this idea, and a suggestion that we should advocate for funds from the City Surplus to fund this position. The Strategic Planning Committee will tackle this and report back to members.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:42