

McLean Community Center
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
February 28, 2007
1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, VA 22101

Members Present: Sean Dunn, Chair; Katherine Armstrong, Jan Auerbach, Jennifer Bainbridge, Nyka Feldman, Charisse McElroy, Jessie Richardson, David Sanders, Ed Shahin

Members Absent: Edwina Rogers, Charisse McElroy, Hilary Sanders

Staff Present: Michael Cadwallader, Executive Director; Clare Kiley, Acting Deputy Director; Carol Pardon, Administrative Assistant

Guests Present: McLean Drama Company: Susan Baumel
McLean Planning Committee: Mary Baker, Doug Potts
MCC neighbors: Cheryl Patten, Terry Green, Beverly Manor Homeowners Association; Allison Yaltes

- Convened: 7:45 p.m.
- Agenda adopted. [Subsequently revised.]

Citizen Comment:

- **Susan Baumel** said the McLean Drama Company was very disappointed that their request for a waiver from Board policy [on attendance standards for community performing arts groups] did not get a full vote in the [Program] Committee [where the waiver was denied]. She said she will reserve judgment about doing anything further until the scheduling process for the Alden Theatre is finished at the end of March. She complained about a lack of clarity throughout the process.
- **Cheryl Patten** said her neighborhood has not been notified about the March 6 meeting the MCC Board is holding with the neighbors concerning facility expansion. Some received fliers but not all. Cadwallader said 50 fliers were distributed today [Feb. 28] to residents on Ingleside, Churchill, and Oak Ridge. Dunn said there is an unresolved issue about what area constitutes the neighborhood. Patten and **Terry Green** said the neighbors were not being notified in a timely manner. Patten said she was “absolutely floored” by the Board’s behavior in not bringing the subject to the attention of the neighbors earlier. Auerbach said the Capital Facilities Committee was not sure if the information would be ready to present at a meeting until about two weeks ago. Dunn said tonight was the first time the Board had gotten to the point of making even a preliminary decision. He, Auerbach, Sanders, and Feldman emphasized that the Board has not made any decisions yet and wanted to share information with the neighbors before the general public. In response to a question from Sanders, Green said the neighbors should have been given two weeks notice. The Board offered to move the meeting later, but was told that was still not enough time, and some neighbors have already received fliers. Patten said they were frustrated because the Library and the Park Authority had been making decisions that they didn’t share with the neighbors, and it appears like the MCC is doing the same thing. She said she also had issues with the public survey on expansion.

- Motion introduced by Bainbridge to change the agenda:
 - ***Move the Capital Facilities report forward.*** Approved by the Board.
- Minutes of January 24, 2007, approved by the Board.

Capital Facilities Committee: Report by Jan Auerbach, Chair

The Committee divided their analysis into two components, the Teen Center and the main MCC facility.

- **Teen Center:** The County's Recreation Department advised that teens will use a multi-use facility if they have a dedicated space within it, can design the space, and like the staff. Because the 9,000 sq. ft. Old Firehouse is underutilized, the Committee concluded that it made sense to use part of the facility for other purposes when the teens aren't there. The Committee rejected an option to consider taking a floor to use as a teen center in a new, privately-owned building that potentially could be constructed on the current Old Firehouse site. Another option the Committee considered is to renovate the existing Old Firehouse, converting approximately 3,000 sq. ft. into multi-use space, perhaps to use as a fitness studio. The cost would be about \$1M for design, build, and contingencies, including renting another space for teens while renovation was being done and the building upgraded to meet County codes. The Committee also considered rebuilding a one-story facility at the Old Firehouse site, at a cost of about \$4M.
- **Physical Recreation Space:** The Committee considered adding a physical recreation space to the main MCC facility. The original idea was to build a half-court with a high ceiling (20-25 sq. ft.) to allow for basketball and volleyball. However, the space would only be used about 10-15% of the time for those sports, whereas most of the time the space would accommodate other kinds of fitness activities that do not require the high ceiling. Therefore, the high ceiling was not considered to be cost-effective. The Committee considered putting the physical recreation space for fitness classes in the Old Firehouse Teen Center rather than in an addition to the MCC facility. The number of current parking spaces at the Old Firehouse would be sufficient to accommodate attendees at fitness classes, which would be held when the teens weren't there.
- **Art Studio:** The three meeting rooms downstairs in the main MCC facility are the most underutilized. The Committee considered converting all or part of the rooms for children's art classes, perhaps reserving some space for offices to help relieve the overcrowded office space on the first floor.
- **Café/Coffee Bar:** Although putting in a café/coffee bar scored high in the public survey, the Committee concluded that there would not be enough demand to attract a concessionaire. The recommendation is to purchase significantly upgraded vending machines, including coffee machines and a portable refreshment bar.
- **100-Seat Theatre and Dance Studio:** The Committee considered two options: adding on to the main MCC facility or adding a second floor to a building downtown at the current Old Firehouse site.
- **Meeting Space:** At times there is insufficient meeting space in the main MCC facility to meet the demand. The Committee recommended renovating the Community Hall for better noise abatement so that it could be more fully utilized.

- Preferred Option: The Committee's preferred option is to build a new, two-story facility with underground parking on the current site of the Old Firehouse and to make internal modifications only to the MCC main facility. Ballpark cost estimate is \$7M or more.
 - Advantages: The MCC would have greater visibility downtown with more programs held in the new structure, including programs held in a 100-seat theatre. The initial response from the McLean Revitalization Corporation Board has been positive, since the new facility could add to the revitalization effort of the downtown McLean area. The need for additional parking at the MCC main facility would be eliminated (saving approximately \$400,000), as would the need to upgrade storm water management (\$1M estimate). The dance/rehearsal hall spaces would be in both facilities.
 - Disadvantages: In talking with Dranesville Supervisor Joan DuBois it was learned that the County requires several special exceptions for converting the current building into a multi-story facility with underground parking, and those exceptions are difficult to get. Another disadvantage is cost. The new facility would require going out to bond. At this time costs associated with providing underground parking are unknown. One estimate is \$40,000 per parking space, but that may be low, and it is not known at this time how many parking spaces would be needed, how many can be put on a floor of a building of that size, etc. Another problem: Although having a dance studio/rehearsal hall space at the Teen Center would be desirable, especially if the 100-seat theatre is there, it does not solve the problem of insufficient dance studio space at the main facility.

It may turn out that having a new facility downtown is not feasible, but there are so many advantages that the Committee recommends taking it to the public as the preferred option. The Supervisor has indicated she would support whatever is the consensus of the community.

- Backup Option: If the preferred option turns out not to be doable, the Committee's recommended alternative is to renovate the existing Old Firehouse internally to include the multi-use/fitness space. At the main MCC facility, add another dance studio, black box theatre, and 50 more parking spaces, and do the previously mentioned internal modifications. The ballpark cost estimate is \$4.5M or more.
 - Advantages: This option is feasible and could be accomplished with available funds. The use of the Old Firehouse is increased somewhat. All of the dance and theatre activities are kept together in the main MCC facility. The additional parking spaces reduce spill-over parking in the neighborhood.
 - Disadvantages: This option would add to the footprint of the current MCC main facility. There is a significant storm water management problem that will be costly to address. The additional parking spaces would reduce existing green space. The option would probably be less popular with MCC's neighbors.
- Recommendation: The Committee recommends taking both options to the public, indicating that the preferred option may not be feasible. Auerbach said that the McLean Revitalization Corporation Board had suggested to Dunn that the Governing Board talk with the County to determine the feasibility of the preferred option before holding public meetings. A staff person in the Supervisor's office made the same suggestion to Auerbach. On the other hand, Auerbach said, there is good reason to make sure that the community was behind the preferred option before taking it to the County. The Board needed to decide whether to hold the public meeting tentatively scheduled for March 14 or to wait.

Auerbach also pointed out that neither the preferred or the backup options respond to the community's desire as indicated on the public surveys to have a space for playing basketball/volleyball. The Committee will pursue finding alternative spaces in the community for these activities. Another suggestion was to put a bubble over the basketball courts in McLean Central Park.

- Discussion: Dunn said there is a time issue. The Old Firehouse Teen Center is leased from the County and the County could make other plans for the building. Last year, the Board was under the impression that the Teen Center would have to be moved, and the Board was approached by Clark Construction to move it behind the main MCC building. It is possible that eventually the MCC would be left with no choice but to move the Teen Center here. Patten said she was on the Board when the Old Firehouse became available for the Teen Center and that she cut the ribbon at the opening. She said the Board fought long and hard for the building and succeeded because that was what the community wanted. She said she had heard the McLean Revitalization Corporation wanted to put a sidewalk in where the Old Firehouse was. Auerbach responded that there has been a misunderstanding. The McLean Revitalization Corporation, the McLean Citizens Association, and the McLean Planning Committee are cosponsoring the March 14 public meeting. She said if those organizations, (which represent other organizations in the community), and members of the general public indicate they support an MCC facility downtown, this can be taken to the Supervisor as the consensus of the community. Auerbach said postponing the March 14 meeting might not allow enough time for additional meetings in April to reach consensus, so that the current Board can take a final vote at its April 25 meeting.

Auerbach said the Committee was asking the Board to vote on taking the preferred option and the backup option for expansion to the public. Shahin said he was at the Capital Facilities Committee meeting and he did not recall organizing the two options as a preferred and a backup. He was uncomfortable with the language and was concerned about the potential roadblocks to implementing the first option. He wanted to have more information from the Supervisor first. Auerbach said they did have information on the County's exceptions and although they are lengthy, they do not appear to present impossible hurdles. She said the Supervisor has been informed about the two options, and that she and Dunn plan to meet again with her tomorrow. Sanders said detailed information should be obtained from the County as to what is physically and legally possible to do before going to the public. Dunn responded everything is theoretically possible if the community supports it. Feldman said even if consensus isn't obtained at the March 14 meeting, at least the Board will get more feedback, and the more the better.

Doug Potts from the McLean Planning Committee explained the Main Street concept for downtown McLean. He said the Old Firehouse is the only publicly-owned building there and is located right in the middle. The proposed new building could become a fabulous addition to the life of the area, he said, and encouraged the Board to "reach for the stars." He said that getting approval for the Palladium was a long and difficult process as well. He added that there was some public parking at the Palladium, but he wasn't sure how many spaces. Jim Peoples would know, he said.

Richardson said she thought the teens would like the preferred option; it's something new and cool. She was for taking it to the public even if there would be questions that couldn't be answered this early in the process. Both Bainbridge and Auerbach emphasized making it clear at the meeting that this is the beginning of the conceptual process and the public is

being brought in early. Auerbach said it is not just an informational meeting because the Board wants to know what the public prefers. Armstrong said she was sad about the misstep in communicating with the immediate neighbors. She said she likes the idea of a larger facility downtown, particularly including a black box theatre that would allow for simultaneous programming with the Alden Theatre. She added that it is important to have a good space for the teens. She favored going forward with the public meetings because the Board will learn a lot, and that will help in getting a more informed and supported decision.

Bainbridge asked about building ground parking rather than underground parking at a new downtown facility. Auerbach said that ground parking probably would not be esthetically pleasing, but the idea has not been completely discarded. Bainbridge asked why dance/fitness activities are being considered for multiuse space in the Teen Center rather than children's programming which would expose families to the Teen Center facility early. She also was concerned about having dance/fitness classes simultaneously in two separate facilities and the impact this would have on the instructors. Auerbach said the teens would continue to have their dedicated space in the building, leaving 3,000 sq. ft. for multi-use, but only before and after the teens were there. The thinking was that dance/fitness activities best matched hours of availability and the limited parking, but this could change. Different programming options would be considered if a new, two-story facility were built.

Sanders asked if it was possible to get more detailed information from the County before the March 14 meeting. Auerbach said she was planning to do that. Sanders said that he supported having a conceptual meeting with the public as long as the Board had as much information that could be gathered at this time in terms of what the issues are and what can be done in the space. He said the Board should be thinking about doing as much as is realistically possible to have a signature space downtown, with an eye toward fifty years from now. It goes beyond the original concept for the MCC and the Teen Center and opens up a whole new range of possibilities, he said. Armstrong wanted to get more information about available parking for the public at the Palladium.

Committee recommendation as further wordsmithed with two amendments:

- ***Take the preferred option and an alternate option [for expansion] to the March 14 public meeting, indicating the possibility that the preferred option may not be feasible.*** Approved by the Board.
- There was further discussion about the March 6 meeting (7:30 p.m.) with the neighbors. Patten said she and Terry Green were comfortable with just attending the March 14 meeting (7:30 p.m.). Allison Yaltes said she thought it was a good idea to proceed with the neighbors' meeting. Also, some of the neighbors have already received notices. Patten said she loves the central downtown idea. Having the Teen Center there, a black box theatre, and programs for adults as well as for teens would make the County one of the prime movers and shakers in creating a central cultural center in downtown McLean. It could be fabulous, and she said she would actively support it. She said she understood that the Board would like a supportive group at the March 14 meeting. Auerbach said someone from Joan DuBois' office would be there.
- Ingleside Traffic: Patten asked for the Board's help in getting traffic counters on Ingleside, preparatory to petitioning for traffic calming devices. They need two counters. Dunn said speed and number of cars traveling on the street are the criteria for getting traffic calming devices. Sanders introduced the following motion:

➤ *The Governing Board supports the efforts of the Beverly Manor residents to get two traffic counters on Ingleside Avenue.* Approved by the Board.

- In response to a request from Yaltes, Dunn tasked the Capital Facilities Committee to support the efforts of the neighbors to get increased signage on Oak Ridge to notify people who attend MCC events that there is no parking in the residential area behind the MCC.
- Cadwallader was asked to distribute copies of the Public Survey results to the Board.

Chair's Report:

- McLean Revitalization: Dunn reported that he met with the McLean Revitalization Corporation (MRC) Board last week and gave them an overview of the expansion discussions so far. He explained that their board is comprised of two representatives appointed by Fairfax County, two representatives from the McLean Citizens Association, two representatives from the McLean Planning Committee and two representatives of McLean landowners. The MRC provides advice to the County on how to revitalize downtown McLean and on the Main Street concept. Dunn will provide his notes for the Board folders next month. He said Dan DuVal, who chaired the meeting, asked all the people in the room for their opinions, and everyone was in favor of the downtown facility. Three people wanted something even bigger. DuVal took the information to the McLean Planning Committee.

Executive Directors Report:

- Cadwallader's written report was in the Board folders. He mentioned sending out postcards to encourage people to sign up for on-line registration, with chances to win gift cards from Starbucks. He said e-mail registrations may be linked directly to the on-line registration site. Camp registration starts tomorrow (March 1), and there has been a push to get people to register on-line.
- Feldman mentioned that several Girl Scout troop mothers told her that the cookie distribution yesterday (Feb. 27) went well. Yaltes asked why it was done from the Oak Ridge entrance to the MCC. Cadwallader said it was to be close to Community Hall for loading and unloading the cookies. Yaltes said there was a safety issue with the children walking across the street in the dark with their cookies to cars parked near the Library. (Cookie distribution was held from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)
- Armstrong thanked Cadwallader for informing Board members about the closings due to the weather. In response to a question from Sanders, Cadwallader said a DSL line is being put in for TicketMaster; after that, another line will put in to create a wireless environment for the MCC. If TicketMaster needs two lines, the MCC will put in a third for the building. Richardson asked why the Taste of McLean had to be cancelled, Cadwallader responded it was because only three vendors agreed to do it.

Executive Committee:

- The Strategic Planning session will be held on Saturday, March 3, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Stedman. Feldman will be late and Sanders and Armstrong will have to leave early. Edwina Rogers will be out of town. Dunn's asked Board members if there was anything to add to the agenda for the session. Sanders suggested a discussion on expanding McLean Day and/or adding other large, community-wide events. Feldman asked that performance metrics be

included on the agenda. Auerbach said there have been several snafus regarding publicity. Whether this is a Board or a staff issue, it needs to be resolved because it keeps being a problem. Dunn suggested that there be an e-mail list for anyone who wants to register to learn about Board meetings, get minutes, etc. Dunn said he is meeting tomorrow afternoon (March 1) with facilitator John Riordan. Shahin said he wanted the facilitator to explain the difference between a strategic plan and a long-range plan.

- Auerbach Commended: Shahin commended Auerbach on all her work on the expansion issue and for keeping the Board informed every step of the way. The Board gave her a round of applause. Armstrong added that Auerbach did a great job explaining the process at the joint MCC/McLean Project for the Arts Board meeting.
- Cadwallader Performance Review: Dunn said there would be discussions in closed sessions at the March Board and April Board meeting regarding Cadwallader's performance review. Goals for the remainder of his first year and goals for the coming year will be included.

Communications/Elections Committees:

- Bainbridge gave the report for McElroy, who was absent. McElroy has contacted the League of Women Voters and got some pricing and general information. It was the consensus of the Committee to ask the League to prepare a proposal to bring to the Board on how to help with the Board elections. They are handling the Board elections of the Reston Community Center. The Committee also recommended having at least one alternative voting site. Dunn asked Pardon if there was enough time to act on a proposal for this year's election. Pardon said probably not because of all the details that need to be worked out, but she won't know until she sees the proposal. She recommended proceeding as if it can be done this year so that even if it can't, things will be in place for next year's election. Nothing would be lost by pursuing it further with the League even if it's too late for this year.
 - Bainbridge and Armstrong, whose terms on the Board are up and may run again, are on the Communications Committee. They said they would not be comfortable working on the election. Dunn said they would not be involved in the election process itself, and that McElroy will get others to do that.
 - Pardon announced that the candidate petition packages were available as of Monday, Feb. 26. Dunn said it was time for Board members to ask their neighbors friends, and students to run. Richardson said one year an announcement was put in her school newspaper.
- *The Board voted to pursue involving the League of Women Voters.* [Not a formal motion.]

Program Committee: Nyka Feldman, Chair

- Feldman reported that the Committee considered the McLean Drama Company's request for a waiver from Board policy on attendance standards for local performing arts groups. A motion to grant the waiver failed. The Committee also reviewed a proposal from Cadwallader for new Teen Center programs. The Committee is waiting for more data from Cadwallader and still has more work to do.

Finance Committee: David Sanders, Chair. No report. Did not meet.

Liaison to Friends: Katherine Armstrong. No report.

Continuing Business: None.

New Business:

- Upcoming Meetings:
 - March 5, 7:30 p.m.: Executive Committee
(Cadwallader with check with Libraries Director Sam Clay first to make sure he will attend. He also will tell Clay about the March 6 meeting.)
 - March 6, 6:30 p.m.: Joint Finance/Program Committees to meet on fee differentials
 - March 6, 7:30 p.m.: Public meeting with the neighbors on facility expansion
 - March 14, 7:30 p.m.: Public meeting on facility expansion
 - March 26, 7:30 p.m.: Capital Facilities meeting
 - March 28, 7:30 p.m.: Public Hearing on Programs chaired by the Program Committee, followed by regular monthly Governing Board meeting
(Staff attends the Public Hearing.)
- Bainbridge will notify McElroy that she needs to schedule a Communications Committee meeting before March 19. Dunn requested that McElroy let the other Board members know the date and provide an agenda.
- Feldman said the Program Committee will need to meet again to resolve the issue of scheduling events on religious holidays. Auerbach said space utilization for art still needs resolution and the staff needs to provide further information on policies and procedures.
- Kiley said there were members of the community who use and/or volunteer at the Alden Theatre who attended the focus groups and want to hear about and weigh in on the expansion issue. She said she will advise them to attend the March 14 meeting.
- Auerbach said that at the focus groups there was a sign-up list for people who wanted to be involved in the expansion planning process. They should be sent invitations to the March 14 meeting. Dunn added that everyone who was invited to the stakeholders meetings and focus group meetings should be sent invitations.
- Dunn reiterated that Auerbach has done a fantastic job in getting us to the point where we actually have an approved report that lists comprehensively what it is we should do and what our backup plan would be.

Adjourned: 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nyka Feldman
Secretary