

Arlington Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
Courthouse Plaza, Dogwood & Cherry
2100 Clarendon Boulevard

Minutes (approved unanimously June 8, 2016)

Present: Dennis Jaffe, Chair; Pamela Van Hine, Vice Chair; John Armstrong; Eric Goldstein; David Goodman; Eric Goodman; Lauren Hassel; Christine Ng; David Patton; Collin Weber

Guests Larry Filler; Robert Sharpe

Items of Interest:

C. Ng updated the PAC on plans for the [Stratford School](#). Preliminary plans will be presented at a County Board meeting on Saturday, May 14. She noted that as many planning participants have [strongly supported pedestrian issues for the project](#), specific input from the PAC is not necessary at this point. The Stratford School project is item 33 on the [Board meeting agenda](#).

E. Goldstein reviewed [current plans](#) for [Central Place](#) in Rosslyn. The Board has approved the first step of the site plan, and more public input will be needed when the site is ready for use permits.

Invited Speaker: Robert Sharpe, Resident Ombudsman and Director of Constituent Services, Office of the County Manager

In his introductory comments, Mr. Sharpe noted that his position is not new, though he has held it only two months – and the ombudsman responsibilities are new to the position. He suggested that ideally, Arlingtonians with a problem would first contact the relevant County staff, and when the problem is not resolved to the citizen's satisfaction, contacting Mr. Sharpe may be appropriate.

Mr. Sharpe also mentioned some proposed Arlington plans for solving specific issues. For example, when the Metro is having significant delays, closures, and down time, encouraging telework by setting up telework locations, providing hotel space for stranded commuters, using school buses for extra transit options. He also promoted a new [traffic calming webpage](#) and noted that he has had complaints about traffic calming methods. He also mentioned that the County plans to post all FOIA requests online soon, with personal information redacted.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to discussing various issues of concern to PAC members. The first topic was administrative changes to sidewalk width guidelines – and how the process and communication could be improved to elicit comments from relevant advisory bodies. Mr. Sharpe reiterated Mr. Schwartz's recommendation that we meet with D. Leach and provide a list of topics. The Chair countered that providing a comprehensive list was not possible and that

the PAC charter makes clear what our broad areas of interest and responsibilities are. The Chair also emphasized that the “Arlington Way” was not followed. Staff should be reminded to think about how Arlington citizens might respond to their plans and include key constituents automatically. In the case of sidewalk widths, PAC members could suggest improvements to the policy and indicate what problems might arise with the implementation of the proposed policy changes. Again, the Chair recommended that the sidewalk width plan be revisited. E. Goldstein asked about any existing procedures for staff getting input on issues from the community and who is responsible for ensuring input. D. Goodman wondered what other factors prevent communication between staff and relevant parties.

Other topics discussed included pedestrian safety – and whether Arlington is still a leader in promoting pedestrian, cycling, and public transit use – or whether the needs of drivers trumps pedestrian and cycling needs and safety, especially in light of the two recent pedestrian crashes in Arlington. A discussion of traffic control in general, including “beg” buttons and perceived prioritization of needs for drivers vs. pedestrians followed.

D. Goodman raised followup on snow removal issues after “snowzilla”, and Mr. Sharpe briefly described some of the [recommendations](#) and noted that further discussion would be held post-budget.

PAC members were also interested in plans to improve [Report A Problem](#), and the Vice Chair recommended giving Arlingtonians access to the “reporting a near miss” option. Mr. Sharpe acknowledged the limitations of the current system and indicated that a meeting would be held this summer about RAP. He also mentioned that a new [My Arlington App](#) will be available that will include a GIS-enabled map.

Finally, Mr. Sharpe reiterated that the PAC should meet with D. Leach, that we should get involved with other staff and committees when relevant, and that we should actively participate in County budget hearings, including CIP, to advocate for funding for infrastructure maintenance and pedestrian needs. He also acknowledged that participating in the CIP process can be challenging.

Towards the end of the meeting and after a brief discussion, PAC members agreed that a few PAC members should meet with Dennis Leach in his office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 P.M. The next PAC meeting will be held Wednesday, June 8, at 7 P.M. in the Cherry & Dogwood Conference Rooms. The PAC will vote on approval of the draft April minutes and other postponed business at the June meeting.