



NorthEast Civic Association

NECA meeting:

- Wednesday, 24 Jan '01

Mason Hall & Parking

The NorthEast Civic Association will meet at:
Charles Houston Recreation Center 901 Wythe St.
- 7:30 PM Wednesday, January 24th, 2001 -

Old Colony:

The proposed concept plan (which we have approved) for 60 unit condos is going before the Board of Architectural board of review (BAR) on February 7th at City Hall at 7:30 PM.

Old business:

Neighborhood Watch:

We will have report on our last walk and after the meeting people interested in doing the next one. See our web site for more.

Mason Hall and Parking:

New business:

For more than two years Parking on Bernard Street, Michigan Avenue and Devon Place has been a serious problem. One we have been working on, but so far been unable to solve. It is time to solve it. This is a complex multifaceted issue.

An abbreviated summary is:

The problem originated when Mason Hall lost some of its parking in front of the building when the City realized this parking failed to meet zoning requirements. To make up for lost parking, Mason Hall tore a hole in the fence facing Bernard Street and encouraged their residents to park on the streets in an area previously blocked by the fence. This area consists of small town houses with limited street parking and is known as the "Fagelson's Addition." This caused significant parking difficulties and safety concerns in this already constrained area. In an effort to resolve this situation, NECA encouraged the City of Alexandria to do two things;

1. Sell to Mason Hall for \$0, (vacation of property) a small strip of City land, in front of Mason Hall. This would restore lost parking to Mason Hall.

2. Have Mason Hall restore the fence facing Bernard Street.

The City Council went along with the plan, but problems prevented its application. In the deliberations, more issues were added. One involved Mason Hall having paved an area in the back of their building, and using it as a parking lot without having filed a site plan. The restoration of this land was added as a condition to the vacation ordinance. Mason Hall did not want to do this, so they sued the City and won, bringing the process to a halt.

Many residents have gone down to City Hall to argue for relief. The process has restarted but now City staff believe they are in a much weaker position. In negotiations with the City, Mason Hall has stipulated more conditions for closing the gate to Bernard Street. Some of these conditions involve approving additional parking areas (and destroying more open space) without the usual public hearings. Something we would not normally support. NECA will be formulating its position on this issue at this meeting, and it is therefore imperative that all concerned come to this meeting.

Parking part 2:

The Fire Department is concerned with the choke points that bigger wider cars and fire trucks are producing at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Bernard Street and the southern entrance to Michigan Avenue. They are requesting the removal of some parking at these spots to give fire trucks better access. As some of you know we have pushed this off, while looking for a better solution, but we have not found one and as this is a safety issue we can not wait any longer. We will have maps showing exact spots at meeting. (I have not counted yet but it will probably be 4 or 6 parking spaces).

Dixie Pig - What is next?

A restaurateur will give a presentation on a proposal for an Italian restaurant at this site. It will feature a full menu with entrees at around \$10.00. He intends on serving brunches and will be seeking a liquor license. Since this land is zoned for residential, all aspects of this proposal require a Special Use Permit. Accordingly we, the Civic Association must give our opinion to City Hall.

Braddock Street Metro:

There is a plan to amend the Small Area [zoning] Plan to allow a 50% increase of density for more development and to build a large building on the metro kiss and ride lot. We are concerned how this will effect our neighborhood.

Next meeting: 21 Feb 01

City Director of Transportation Rich Baier will talk about the future changes to Monroe Ave Bridge (US 1).

Remember the neighborhood (and property value) you save is your own.

For information on your Civic Association call Poul Hertel 684-5375 or Mariella Posey 549-5842
NECA Web page - For the latest & expanded info - http://www.his.com/tmw/alexandria_neca.html

To get the newsletter electronically send your e-mail address to tmw@his.com
