



**Neighborhood
Residents
Council of BRANDERMILL**

A Committee of Brandermill Community Association Board of Directors

NRC Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, January 20, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
Brandermill Woods

1. Call Regular Monthly Meeting to Order
2. Member Voice 15 minutes
3. Chair’s Report 10 minutes
4. Motion to Approve Minutes 3 minutes
5. Committee Report
 - A. NRC Liaison to the BCA Board: Regina Knapp 3 minutes
 - B. BCA Liaison to NRC Committee: Dick Guthrie 3 minutes
 - C. Communications Committee: Mamie McNeal 3 minutes
6. Old Business 3 minutes
Appreciation Gift (Benches) for Brandermill Woods
7. Election of 2009 NRC Officers 5 minutes
8. New Business 60 minutes
Work Session for 2009 NRC Officers and Membership
9. Adjournment

Neighborhood Residents Council

January 20, 2009

OPEN MEMBER MEETING MINUTES

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by NRC Chair John Hughes on January 20, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room at Brandermill Woods, 14311 Brandermill Woods Trail, Midlothian, Virginia 23112.

MEMBERS PRESENT

There were 15 NRC representatives in attendance, exceeding the 15% quorum requirement to vote on any issues.

MEMBER VOICE

Richard Kury (Cove Ridge), on behalf of 78 Cove Ridge residents, thanked John Barnard and his staff for setting up the Neighborhood Watch signs in Cove Ridge.

Ed Applequist (Winterberry Ridge) asked for the status of the Brandermill road evaluation study. Communications Chair McNeal responded that evaluation of the study conducted by the NRC reps would be posted by neighborhood to the NRC web site within the next couple of weeks. Andrea Epps has sent our findings to VDOT.

Mark Smith (Cove Ridge) expressed his sincere appreciation to the outgoing NRC officers for all their hard work this year.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Hughes introduced Joel Bradner, President of the BCA Board, who was to present for Dick Guthrie, NRC Liaison to the BCA Board.

Chair Hughes reminded the audience that the NRC must also be represented at BCA Board meetings. He said that most of the time, if not all the times, the NRC was represented by at least two NRC reps and/or their officers. He noted that most of the attendees of the Board's last meeting were NRC people.

In recounting the highlights of the last year, Chair Hughes stated that the NRC normally held four meetings per year. This last year, the NRC held seven meetings and 3-4 officers meetings for topics that came up during the year. The meetings ranged from "Meet the Candidates" to the cell phone tower meeting where the NRC had about 100 people

attend. Chair Hughes said that the cell phone tower meeting was described as being “chaotic” by some, but the intent of the meeting represented what the NRC is chartered to do, i.e., the NRC sponsors meetings to get information out to the community and reports residents’ views back to the board. BCA Board members attended the cell phone tower meeting and listened to what residents had to say. In fact, in a subsequent meeting, the BCA Board voted to not participate in the cell phone tower/Brandermill country club venture.

He stated that the NRC has a good purpose and hopes that the new NRC officers will understand that. He emphasized that it was not about what officers personally wanted done but about being fiduciaries with responsibilities to the residents. For upcoming NRC officers, it will be about their responsibility to understand the documents and to run meetings accordingly. He thanked all the current officers and all the NRC reps who participated this past year.

Chair Hughes said that the NRC spent a great deal of time on the important issues of the ethics and charter documents. In reviewing and comparing the BCA Board’s ethics document to the NRC by-laws, he noted that everything was already there in the NRC documents. He felt that the NRC did its best this past year, abiding by the rules it was given. He also felt the NRC could have spent its time more productively than reviewing these BCA Board documents.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2008

MOTION: Regina Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2009 meeting.

MOTION SECONDED: Grant Miller.

MOTION CARRIED: Unanimous.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Liaison to the BCA Board: Secretary Hillman reported on behalf of the NRC liaison. She said that she attended the January 15, 2009 BCA Board meeting where designforum presented snippets of the master plan to the Board. She encouraged all residents to attend the designforum meeting on February 3 at the Brandermill Church from 6-9 p.m., where the firm will present the first draft of the master plan to the community.

BCA Liaison to the NRC: BCA President Joel Bradner gave the BCA Liaison report for Dick Guthrie. He reported that the Board actually took seven months to review the committee charters, the new ethics policy, and the revised organizational structure, an effort was led by Director Friedel and at times involved other board members. Director Friedel has completed his modifications of the documents, but the board will not voting on

the ethics document at the upcoming BCA Board meeting. The board would take up the ethics policy at a later time.

He said that he was happy to report that it only took the BCA six months to get a response from VDOT about a request that he made regarding traffic control on Brandermill's major parkways. The request was sent to Dale Totten and copied to Art Warren, and dealt with signage, guardrails and general safety concerns. The BCA Board has just received the response earlier in the day.

The big concern of the BCA Board was the Old Hundred Road corridor study, as it had concerns about the Cheatham property which adjoins Market Square: how will it be developed, what is its impact on surrounding areas, and its impact on traffic conditions. At the board's request, Art Warren agreed to perform the study.

The study suggests two traffic circles along the length of the Old Hundred Road: one at Market Square Lane and another at the new high school on Brandermill Parkway. He expressed his deep concern for the traffic circle recommended at the new high school, as he was concerned about the number of inexperienced high school drivers. The BCA Board was told that that particular intersection did not meet State warrants for a traffic light.

The BCA Board has asked Dale Tottien and John McCracken for further statistical data on the safety of traffic circles versus intersections with traffic lights. He commented that there were more and more traffic circles being built throughout the state and urged residents to give feedback to the Board with regards to how they felt about traffic circles.

President Bradner noted that the plan proposed by designforum was really going to change the character of Brandermill. He encouraged residents to attend the upcoming designforum meeting. He commented that the firm had definitely done their homework and listened to the residents. A special meeting, after two larger community meetings, was held for families with small children. The opinions of those attendees did not vary greatly from those of the other community meetings.

President Bradner reminded people of the upcoming BCA Board election. He strongly encouraged people to come by the BCA office, pick up a packet, and "throw the dice". He remarked that Brandermill needed new blood, new ideas, new thoughts and processes to look proactively toward what we're going to do with this master plan. He agreed with Chair Hughes: "We really don't need people on the Board who are going to push personal agendas, professional agendas, or political agendas. We need people who are concerned about their neighbors. We need people who are going to cooperate, who are going to listen to committees – like the NRC, like the ARB, like the Environmental Committee, like all the volunteer committees in the community – and listen to the population of our community and then do their best to make that happen. We have had a dysfunctional board this year, and I state that as my opinion. I know it's an opinion shared by a lot of people, but I really do believe in all sincerity that we need some new blood on the board. I'm pleading with you to help me with that. Thank you very much."

Regina Knapp (Planter's Wood): As a former resident of New Jersey, I know New Jersey is taking out all their circles. They've already taken out ten. What kind of outside data did we get from places that have had circles and why do they think that this would be a good option?

President Bradner: Both the state and county have said that they have mainly anecdotal evidence that traffic circles were safer than stop lights when you look at equivalent intersections. The board has asked them for the statistical data. Frankly, I went so far as to say, "Show me where you've installed one of these next to high schools with new drivers." In Virginia, students are not presently being taught how to navigate traffic circles in driver's education. Dale Tottien is one of the most vocal proponents in favor of traffic circles, and he was using safety data to back his claim.

He commented that he didn't know if traffic circles were more expensive or less expensive than traffic lights. He assumed that it's more expensive to build and less expensive to maintain over time. He also observed that in many of the neighborhoods throughout the county, traffic circles seemed to be the new fad/new design/new attraction in neighborhoods.

Mary Richards: Traffic is increasing, but everything is coming down to two lanes. Are they talking about having four lanes down at Market Square?

President Bradner: The proposed traffic circle at that intersection is actually two lanes going around.

Richards: How would you get across to get into Brandermill?

President Bradner: As you're going toward the intersection, drivers would have to go three-quarters around the circle. There are certain sections of Old Hundred Road that they're proposing additional wide-turn lanes, for example, going into some of the neighborhoods. One in particular is located at Hunts Bridge. They're looking to widening it there and at several other places, such as at the school and churches. It's not believed that they've plotted it out as a full four-lane facility, but I think they have given the turn lanes some thought.

Richard Kury (Cove Ridge): While I was up at MIT and at Harvard, there were several rotaries in the area, namely in Harvard Square that are no longer there. They've been removed because there are more proper alternatives. I think it's now becoming more "in vogue" for small or less-traveled communities because of the cost to do traffic studies. With the county not teaching how to maneuver rotaries in driver's education and having it feed into a brand new high school, I don't think it makes any sense.

Forrest Clapp (Shallowford Trace): Speaking of older drivers, I drove roundabouts in England, and I don't think it's worth it. No way is it worth it.

Chair Hughes: Could we get this information on our web site?

President Bradner: The file they provided is an enormous file; it's about 70 mb. Yes, we can get it to you, but who would want to download that much information? Maybe we can produce a couple more copies of it; we'd be happy to share it around with you guys. We are going to have other meetings on this topic; this is not a done-deal by any stretch. There are also other changes, such as turn lanes, about which we have disagreements.

Chair Hughes: Where is the funding for any other alternatives? Do they say we have funding for traffic circles? Is there any funding to do anything?

President Bradner: The board does not have an answer to that. We're waiting for VDOT to send us something.

Meeting Attendee 1: I lived in England for a while, and once I learned to stay on my side of the road, I was delighted with it. It took about a week to get used to it. They're located in many of the major cities. When I got used to it, I ended the week with the same number of tires and same amount of paint, and I'm just an average driver. If they don't do roundabouts, there are times of the day that if you start at one end of Old Hundred and drive straight through, you could get home by bedtime ... but, try just coming out of Market Square or cross Millridge for mail pick-up. I think something's got to be done. Millridge is growing, and Market Square is improving so traffic there is picking up.

Secretary Hillman: I thought the roundabout was at the second entrance at Market Square, where the Cheatham would come out of Market Square.

President Bradner: There are four or five different configurations for that area, some that involve traffic circles and some that involve dual "chicken lanes", as I called it.

Secretary Hillman: I'm not sure where I read it, but I can't imagine a roundabout at the first entrance. With that light, you'd never be able to get in or out of a roundabout at that first entrance because of traffic flow.

President Bradner: Yes, I think you're right. The one that is preferred and recommended is the one at the second entrance.

Meeting Attendee 2: In *The Village Mill*, there is a link on the County's web site where you can get the report and the technical data for that report.

Doug Wayne (Rockport Landing): My question deals with committee charters. What is the status of that? There was something about how the charter changes would affect the NRC. Has that been dropped or what?

President Bradner: All the committee charters are reviewed annually, and the NRC is a committee, just like the Environmental Committee and ARB. The goal was to align the committees according to the goals of the strategic plan. Bottom line is: The committees we had were performing those tasks; they just needed to adopt more formalized documents. So general guidelines were how we thought we would do that. It's the charter themselves that

will be reviewed tomorrow night. The sticky thing is that all the charters refer to an ethics document. It's the ethics document that has been tossed around and debated back and forth, inside and out. So, that's been the contentious point. Many folks would say we just don't need an ethics document; we've never had it.

Having had a hand in writing the NRC by-laws, I agree with Chair Hughes, that the ethics document is restrictive with regards to the NRC, and the concern lies with the NRC by-laws. The new policy from the BCA would supersede the NRC by-laws as they're written presently. That's not to say that the by-laws don't apply – and I suggest that you continue to follow those – but in my review of the proposed NRC charter for tomorrow night, I have spotted several areas in the charter as it's written now that are in conflict with the by-laws. Those are going to be topics for discussion. I will run the meeting in a forum that after someone moves to approve the charter and there's a second, there will be discussion. That's where we resolve such issues as those conflicts with the existing by-laws. I'm going to bring up some of the things that I know about, but I'm going to charge you folks to be there and if you spot things that are conflict with the by-laws, to bring up those things too. The NRC is the only committee that has its own by-laws. I think they're good; I think they're working well. Frankly, I think they work better than the charter, but that remains to be seen.

Wayne: As I recall, even the process of electing officers is entirely different from what we're going to do tonight. It's just surprising the BCA Board's election of officers is so different in the charter than our by-laws. It's very confusing.

President Bradner: I agree and that's one of the key points of discussion. I would just encourage you to be there tomorrow night for the discussion.

Chair Hughes: Normally at meetings, we're not allowed to talk so it's hard to support your voice. We have certainly over the last few months stated our position in our minutes and in the documents to the board. The Community Association Institute is an industry-based entity to which the BCA and other property associations are associated, and they have a document about new board members dealing with what they should and shouldn't do and what you need to watch out for them to do. And you know what? The first thing it says is new board members like to come in and change the rules. Even though they have never been to a meeting, they like to come in and because they know better, they want to change policies. It's the most unbelievable cardinal rule within the association industry. It's too obvious; it's insane. So, take that back to your fellow board members. But it is a cardinal rule about what a new board member is going to do: he's going to change the policies, whether he knows what he's doing or not.

President Bradner: There were two committees of concern; one was the NRC who had a board of officers with no neighborhood members. Hopefully, you'll continue to build membership.

Chair Hughes: We've maintained the roughly the same amount of members throughout the year: 38-40. Hopefully the new board will gain more.

President Bradner: Hopefully, you'll continue to add members. The other committee was the Crime Prevention Committee, where you had a core committee of 5-8 people creating Neighborhood Watch programs requiring neighborhood block captains.

Communications Committee: Committee Chair McNeal discussed three possible new web pages that she would like to add to the NRC web site: (1) 2008 Brandermill road evaluations, (2) archive of NRC minutes, and (3) a contact listing of NRC officers and representatives. She requested feedback from NRC representatives regarding how much information (e-mail and/or phone numbers) they would like to divulge on this latter web page.

OLD BUSINESS

The NRC has purchased two benches as appreciation gifts to Brandermill Woods. Brass plats for the benches are being engraved with "Donated with appreciation, Brandermill Neighborhood Residents Council, 2008". Brandermill Woods should be receiving the benches within two weeks. One of the benches will be located near this meeting location, and the other will be located at the Assisted Living section. Chair Hughes stated that Brandermill Woods was unbelievably appreciative of our efforts and recognition.

ELECTION OF 2009 NRC OFFICERS

Chair Hughes thanked the NRC Nominating Committee (headed by Doug Wayne) for their work on a slate of officers. He asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none.

MOTION: Richard Kury moved to approve the following slate of officers: Frances Hillman, Chair; Robert Strickland, First Vice Chair; Kevin Healy, Second Vice Chair; Sam Chiocca, Secretary; and Mary Jane Zander, Treasurer.

MOTION SECONDED: Joel Bradner.

MOTION CARRIED: Unanimous.

Hughes congratulated the new officers and asked that Chair Hillman conduct the Work Session of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

WORK SESSION FOR 2009 NRC OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

The 2009 NRC officers agreed to schedule the following quarterly meetings: March 24 ("Meet the Candidates"), April 21 (Old Hundred Road Corridor Study), June 16 (New Developments and Neighbors), and September 15 (program to be determined).

Chair Hillman appointed Mamie McNeal as chair of the NRC Communications Committee and Beverly Bell as chair of the NRC Membership Committee. Bob Strickland and Mary Jane Zander will also serve on the Membership Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Zander, Acting Secretary
Neighborhood Residents Council

Frances Hillman, Chair
Neighborhood Residents Council