

Franklin Knolls Civic Association (FKCA) Meeting Minutes

Date: February 6, 2023. Convened at 7:35. Dismissed at 9:30.

Location: Eastern Middle School

Franklin Knolls Civic Association (FKCA) Meeting Minutes

Opening

Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE)

Paul Ellis from Councilmember Kate Stewart's office

Trees

Bus Lanes

Purple Line

FKCA Business

Events

Board Vacancies

Financial Update

Communications

Open Business

Neighborhood Sign

Opening

President Chris Hulton gave a brief introduction and discussed how we are re-starting the Civic Association. Since we had two guest speakers, we let them go first. Regular business resumed [later](#).

Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE)

- Barb Coufal represents [Citizens Against Beltway Expansion \(CABE\)](#). CABE is dedicated to stopping toll lanes on the Beltway and I-270.
- Barb gave an update on the proposed toll lane expansion. Governor Hogan's plan was to create toll lanes around the entire Beltway. That is no longer being proposed.
- However, the new plan is to create two toll lanes between the American Legion bridge and the 270 spur, and the 270 spur and Gaithersburg. This new plan would eliminate 1,200 trees from national park service land and would reduce public land by 500 acres. It would discharge dirty stormwater into Montgomery County's local waterways, and, rather than fix the local issue, they would make up for it by cleaning up Frederick county waterways. It's also unclear whether it would be revenue neutral or whether it would reduce traffic or simply move the bottleneck closer to Silver Spring.
- Governor Moore is re-evaluating the proposal, and so Barb asked attendees to email the Montgomery County Council who met the following day.

- A discussion ensued about potential alternatives to the Belway expansion and other parts of the plan.
- Chris proposed writing an official letter from the FKCA to the County Council expressing opposition to the Beltway expansion. Seconded and approved by quick handraise vote.
- For more information please visit <https://www.cabe495.com/>

Paul Ellis from Councilmember Kate Stewart's office

- Next we heard from Paul Ellis, who is the deputy chief of staff for [County Councilmember Kate Stewart](#). Councilmember Stewart wanted to be at the meeting herself but was unable to after we had to reschedule. She was recently elected for District 4, which encompasses Franklin Knolls. She had previously been the elected mayor of Takoma Park since 2015. Has lived in TP for 30 years.
- Councilmember Stewart's priorities are public safety, multimodal transit, and mental health. She is against widening the Beltway or I-270. She opposes the latest version of the toll lanes and is concerned about equity of the toll lanes.

Trees

- There was a question about trees being recently cut down – particularly those on county land or on the median on Franklin Avenue. It's possible to get replacement trees planted, but it's not automatic. Suggested making the program opt-out rather than opt-in. Also expressed concern that the newly-planted trees are not being cared for.
- Paul said his office will look in to this. Said that there's a 5 year backlog for stump removal. But could put trees around the stumps.

Bus Lanes

- There was a question on dedicated bus lanes on University and Colesville/Rte 29.
- Paul answered that the prior council voted to install dedicated bus lanes on University and Colesville/Rte 29. Councilmember Stewart plans to continue work on that to respect prior council work.

Purple Line

- There were several comments about the Purple Line, its delays, and the frustration with the disruption stemming from its construction. Could the Council could encourage the Governor to speed up Purple Line construction?
- Paul echoes the concerns – the entire council has been disappointed about delays. Unfortunately the prior public-private partnership that Governor Hogan put together fell apart and is being re-started. The new contract has monetary penalties for any further delays. Some of the work has been laying groundwork – for example, the state has moved the utilities out of the train path to enable future maintenance (once the train is built).
- There was a question about why it's taking so long to fix University between Piney Branch and Carroll. The answer is that they are working to move water, gas, electric, and cable/fiber internet out of the train path.

- There was a comment about how the construction on University is affecting local businesses in Langley Park and our neighbors. Paul responded that the council is working to get additional funding for local businesses to support them during the construction, and that the council is strongly pressuring contractors to keep progress moving.

FKCA Business

Events

- The normal meeting re-started. Chris promised three events yearly when he got elected. Chris proposed dates for the events and members unanimously concurred.
 1. Yard Sale – set for April 22
 2. Neighborhood Cleanup – set for May 6
 3. Neighborhood Block Party – set for September 30
- Stay tuned to the [website](#) and sign up for emails from the [Google Groups](#) for details on these upcoming events.

Board Vacancies

- One position on the board is vacant:
 1. Vice President
- **Mohammad Ricks volunteered to be correspondence secretary.** He was elected by unanimous voice vote. Welcome to the FKCA Board, Mohammad!

Financial Update

- \$270 for promotional lawn signs
- \$182 for food and beverage for fall picnic
- \$1,369 left in account

Communications

- We have a new website: FranklinKnolls.com. It will be updated periodically. Please send in neighborhood news or photos to admin@franklinknolls.com.
- Join the [Franklin Knolls Community on Facebook](#). It's a Facebook Group and you will see updates in your Facebook feed.
- Join the [FKCA Google Group](#)! If you join, you will get periodic emails about upcoming events or other neighborhood news. Note – this is not like NextDoor and you won't get spam emails.

Open Business

- *Reminder: Call 311 for any complaints like downed trees, potholes, and issues like that.*

- Neighbors should definitely bring concerns to the board – for example, Chris is concerned that the trash cans for Eastern Middle School students are missing and that students are letting their trash blow into our neighborhood.
- Molly has complaints about the pool. She has on waitlist for years and now getting asked for \$50 to *stay* on the waitlist. She asked members who would like to help to get in touch with her.
- Solan asked about the possibility of getting playgrounds or parks installed in the open spaces in the neighborhood. FKCA has looked in to this but currently the County Parks Department owns the land and is averse to the liability. We will ask again, since there are no parks on the east side of University below the Beltway.

Neighborhood Sign

- On December 27, a driver from DC hit the our entryway sign on Franklin Avenue. Since MCPS does not have a reciprocity agreement with DC police, they were unable to get the insurance information from the car.
- We discussed next steps in getting the sign fixed:
 - Mohammad will help find a civil attorney to research our options.
 - One initial step may be to formally incorporate the board or become a non-profit. Then, we would rebuild the sign. Then, we would sue the driver for damages based on the actual expenses of rebuilding the sign.
 - Chris suggested appointing an ad-hoc Sign Committee to research options. Members unanimously agreed. Jonathan Daniels, Chris Castel, and Matt Spence volunteered to be on the committee.
 - In the meantime, Andy and Mike will gather the broken sign and bring it to Andy's house so that it doesn't get further damaged.
- However – that means we have to collect money to rebuild the sign before we are potentially reimbursed. Chris is willing to go door-to-door, but ideally he would like to be accompanied by people who live on particular blocks since they likely know their neighbors.
- **Action item:** we are looking for block captains. Andy (Curran Rd), Molly (Franklin Ave), Jonathan Daniels (Lawnsberry), Mei Lin (Greer). Will anyone else volunteer?
- Daniel suggested that we collect normal civic association dues at the same time as gathering donations for the sign.
- Chris suggested that donations above a certain amount could be made refundable *if* we are successful in our lawsuit against the driver.
- Other suggestions were made to hold bake sales and do raffles to raise money. Last time this happened, 160 homes donated \$6,000 to cover costs. It will likely cost more now.

Our next event is spring cleanup – April 22. Stay tuned for details and see you then!