

# Bluemont Citizens Association

## Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2022

E.E. Lake Store – Second Floor

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**In Attendance:** (15) Peter Weeks, John Constant, Dave Ewald, Kevin Hart, John & Laura Sullivan, Cynthia Morris, Tom & Marilyn Rust, Gail Kelly, Bill Bogard, Judy Anderson, Lauren Stevens, Scott & Lisa Seeberger

**Meeting called to order:** 7:06 PM, Peter Weeks – presiding

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**President's Remarks:** Due to winter hours, the wineries and breweries are now closing early. Because of this, we will be meeting at the Lake Store or community center until spring. Things have been very busy lately and we are still catching our breath from the fair and Bluemont Heritage picnic. We will review some of these areas tonight, with more things coming up soon.

**Treasurer's Report:** We have ~\$3K more in the bank than we did a year ago and ~\$9K less than last month with fair fees. The overall fair revenue was up a few thousand, but so were expenses. Around \$5-6K is still outstanding in fair disbursements. Other big expenditures in October were \$2K in scholarships and \$1.4K for Neighbors Helping Neighbors (removal of dead tree for resident). Income was ~\$1.2k from Bugle sponsorships. Our investment account did better this month and we are slowly getting back to where we were at the beginning of the year. Once the fair books are closed, 20% of revenue will be moved to investments.

### **Standing Committees:**

- **Bluemont Fair** – A large number of wristbands are leftover and, for accounting purposes, it is easier to order new bands each year. We will keep boxes that have been unopened, but will donate or discard the others. The fair did very well, even with increased prices across the board. Insurance was a major challenge, as it was a requirement for all vendors this year. Several vendors pulled out because of this, including the pony rides. A new pony ride provider was secured from Lovettsville.
- **Bluemont Heritage** – Loudoun Parks and Rec. is no longer providing tables, chairs or tents for non-profit group events. Tents purchased for the fair were used for the Heritage Picnic and a huge thank you to Julia Falke for loaning tables and chairs. Reminders have been mailed out for Bluemont Heritage membership renewals. Another mailing will go out for those interested in joining for the first time. Henry Plaster's son found a beautiful marker in the basement of Henry's home officially designating Bluemont as a historic village. Thank you to John Sullivan and Kevin Hart for installing the marker on the first floor of the Lake Store.

## Community Organizations/Events:

- **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** – This is more than just holiday giving, as in the recent help provided to remove a neighbor’s tree. There is also a list of designated charities we support who provide help to Bluemont residents. Grocery gift cards are given out during Thanksgiving and two schools (Round Hill and Banneker) are supported during Christmas. Thank you to Laura Sullivan and Lauren Stevens for volunteering to run the school program. Since COVID, only gift cards have been allowed for children at both schools and we would like to return to providing actual wrapped gifts. We will also look into including Clarke County Schools and possibly receiving support from Toys for Tots.
- **Snickersville Turnpike Association** – Two signs are being installed to designate the turnpike as listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One sign will be located near Henry Plaster’s home. The plan is to incorporate Henry’s name into the plaque in some way to honor him. The other sign will be placed near Aldie, possibly by the Civil War sign pull-off. Another project underway is educating the public on the historical significance of the turnpike’s stone walls. Aside from their historic value, the walls protect the turnpike, as the road cannot be widened without demolishing them. Peter Weeks recently wrote an article on the turnpike for Wander magazine that mentions the old stone walls. We want to get ahead of the push for development and create an appreciation for the walls and the stories they tell. A new member to the association, Drew Bishop (owner of the Philomont General Store), also recently wrote an article for Wander magazine that references the turnpike. Drew is part of our effort to stem the potential creation of a huge fire station in Philomont. Loudoun has passed an ordinance stating that new county facilities must receive services (i.e., water and septic). This opens the door for developers to tag onto these lines.

## Old Business:

- **Farmers Market** – The farmers market will continue on Sundays, as long as the weather cooperates. It has been doing well with weekend traffic and hours have been extended.

## New Business:

- **Bluemont Heritage Annual Meeting** – December 01, 2022
- **Craft Show** – The show had a two-year hiatus with COVID, but is returning to the community center Saturday, November 26, 2022 from 10 AM - 4 PM.
- **Bluemont Planning Committee** – We have been asked by Loudoun County to create boundaries and ordinances within the village of Bluemont. The committee is comprised of seven people, half of whom are professional planners. Peter Weeks and Bill Bogard will co-chair. The committee will not be rushing this process, as the county will be endorsing plans in 2024. There will also be full disclosure, so everyone knows what is being decided. The whole idea is to maintain the rustic and historic nature of Bluemont. The committee’s first meeting will take place on November 09, 2022.

- **Arbor Day Committee** – We have a new volunteer, Luke. He has joined our arborist, landscaper, and Peter Weeks on the committee. We also have an anonymous donor with visions of a tree lined Bluemont village. We will be taking advantage of this with sugar maples, dogwoods, etc., planted along Snickersville Tnpk. If the area is in a right-of-way, we can go through VDOT, but will still ask homeowners for permission. Today, emails were sent out to residents along the turnpike. A suggestion was put forth to sell personalized bricks to help fund the project and possibly commemorate property owners where the trees are planted.
- **Blue Ridge Advocacy Committee** – Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Blueridge Conservation Alliance, Blue Ridge Mountain Civic Association, Piedmont Environmental Council and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy have formed a group to help protect the mountains. On Nov. 10, 2022, *Loudoun Now* will publish an article written by Friends on the value of the mountains. We are timing this with a letter to the editor. Our hope is that the Loudoun County Planning Commission and BOS (the people writing the new ordinances) will see these articles and realize this is an area that cannot be neglected. It is amazing what a person can do by-right on the mountain. This is our opportunity to create protections.

Thank you from Judy Anderson for all who helped move wood for a local a resident. They were very pleased and appreciative.

If you have information about happenings in our community or pertinent photos, please reach out to Lauren Stevens for our social media.

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**Adjournment:** 8:05 PM – *Happy Thanksgiving!*

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 7, 2022 @ 7:00 PM (Let's plan a little Christmas party!)

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**Notes by:** Lisa Seeberger