

Tara-Leeway Heights Civic Association Minutes of the September 8, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Board Members in Attendance:

John Ford, President

Laura Stout, Vice President

Dave McGowan, Treasurer

Sima Nasr, Communications Chair

Mary Ann Frias, Secretary

Bill Braswell

Alyssa Cowden

Peter Erickson

Meredith Judy

Ray Keaney

John Richardson

Irene Szopo

John Vihstadt

Guests:

Aji Robinson, Arlington Public Schools

Lynne Kelley

Matt Dischner dischner@alumni.gwu.edu

Kendra Robins Ervin, V-P of Cardinal School PTA

Sabrina

Ian Westerman (ijwest323@yahoo.com)

David Goodman

Jay Kalner

Chris Zimmerman (czimmerman@stradley.com)

Kelly Smith (kgsmith@gmail.com)

Cardinal Elementary

Aji Robinson, Construction Liaison for Reed School Construction reported that the ACPD provides crossing guards. There's currently not enough staff and they're using data to try to fill approximately 12 positions. TLH residents including the TLHCA board want to have stop signs and/or a crossing guard at Patrick Henry and 18th Street for children walking to Cardinal Elementary School. Concerns are being forwarded to the Cardinal PTA who is working with the Department of Transportation and can tell what steps need to be taken and coordinate efforts. Aji will pass along/elevate our concerns to DOT and look into the possibility of getting a crossing guard at that intersection. The intersection is hazardous in general with a blind spot. John Richardson suggested we pursue parallel strategies such as requesting flashing lights or four-way stop signs. Aji shares our concerns but noted that the County has their process. He added that there are a lot of organizational changes at APS, including a COO named Dr. Mayo.

Sima Nasr read an email the board received from Greg Emanuel, Director of Environmental Services which was in reply to concerns about the intersection. Aji said some improvements had been done in response; however, Bill noted that not enough concrete was added to make a difference. The question was raised if stop signs were considered. Aji responded that he requested several options: flashing light, four-way stop sign, and a crossing guard.

Kendra, the Cardinal PTA V-P, advised that there are also crossing guard issues at other locations and we don't want to get ahead of ourselves if the issue is already being looked at. Aji believes that if the PTA and the TLHCA leadership teams join together to approach the county government and APS, this would be a good avenue to use to lead the charge and take up with the respective management teams.

Alyssa asked about whether the Cardinal property would be open after hours/in the evening. Aji replied that the outdoor lights which are bright right now will be switched out and the replacement lights will be dimmer hopefully discouraging people from being on the property after hours. He will try to find out if there are any restrictions on the property. He may be able to put up signs, but there's no guarantee that such signs will be obeyed.

John Richardson asked whether some of the funds the CA has in its Treasury could be used to come up with a petition about the crossing guard issue.

Meredith agreed that a petition is a good idea and that the more we continue to prioritize/be vocal about this the better.

Laura noted that there is sign near the intersection which asks drivers to slow down due to children walking to school.

Copied from the Chat:

David J Goodman to Everyone: (7:27 PM)

As a former DES employee, I can offer some guidance on how to word public requests and how to navigate the bureaucracy. Spoiler alert: Asking for a stop sign there will be a non-starter. Explaining your perceptions of the safety issues there is a better place to start. Greg's response was a blow off. There was nothing of substance there for you to work with. Grasping at solutions isn't going to move the bar. We can chat off line if you like.

From Sima Nasr to Everyone: (7:32 PM)

David Goodman, that is helpful intel. I'm sure everyone would welcome your tips. He did seem to lose interest when realizing that this intersection was just renovated.

From Kendra Ervin to Everyone: (7:49 PM)

There is also the CCPTA, which is the association of all PTAs. If the 13 crossing guards are spread across schools (presumably they are), that would be another avenue to explore.

From Alyssa Cowden to Everyone: (7:38 PM)

Two questions for our experts that are off the intersection topic but involve the school. 1) are there "closing and opening" times for school grounds? folks are there past midnight some nights. 2) has a date been decided to meet with residents on Lexington on the detention vault construction?

Administration

The minutes from the May 12, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next TLHCA meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 17, at 7:00 p.m., virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.