

Committee Report: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY 2022)

This is the February 2022 monthly committee report on the three major activities that the Communications Committee identified as its priorities for the balance of this term of the current FLCA's Board of Directors.

The Communications Committee has identified a number of steps that must be completed to hopefully develop a website that will inform the Fort Lincoln community **and** generate income sufficient to fund the activities of the FLCA in coming years.

More recently, one of the Committee members (Emma James) has volunteered to develop an updated logo for the FLCA, that would replace the logo that was adopted in 2013 when there were 13 and not 17 housing developments existing and participating in the FLCA. More on that below.

I.

FLCA Website Content & Design.

The first step the committee took on was deciding on and preparing content for a Fort Lincoln community website. The committee first identified Board members with whom to divide up the groundwork that will be necessary. The committee now has 9 Board members, and one community volunteer:

- **Roy Pearson, Pineview Court**
- **Emma James, Summit Court**
- **Dana Johnson, Wesley House**
- **Anita Jones, Washington Overlook**
- **Cynthia Cherry, Hillside**
- **Curtis Townsend, Maple View**
- **Natalie Carey, Dakota Crossing**
- **Mardjon Hedayati, Reserves at Dakota Crossing**
- **Felicia Brown, Jamison Apts. at Dakota Crossing (fundraising from political candidates)**
- **Ariel Stephens, Maple View (community volunteer)**

Another major step in the process is collecting photos and brief videos from the Board representatives for each of the apartment buildings and housing developments in Fort Lincoln. There can be no community website without community-wide participation in that process. We had hoped to complete the collection process in September. However, the apartment buildings in Fort Lincoln, in particular, were unable to rise to that challenge – not a lot of smartphones in senior housing. And so, it may be necessary to hire a photographer/videographer to complete this step at 5 or 6 Fort Lincoln housing developments.

The third major website-content step will be preparing the text for approximately 40 pages for the website. The current expectation is that 17 of those pages will be devoted to the 17

apartment buildings, housing clusters and single family homes in and contiguous to Fort Lincoln. The remaining 23-25 pages might address the following subjects:

- Home Page
- Community Calendar/Daily Weather Forecast
- Community Blog
- Maps of Fort Lincoln
- Links to Websites of Interest
- History of Fort Lincoln
- The FLCA's Business Sponsors
- The FLCA Board of Directors
- The FLCA Bylaws and Archive of Board Meetings
- The FLCA Committees:
 - Finance/Fundraising Committee
 - Planning & Zoning Committee
 - Communications Committee
 - Education Committee
 - Youth Committee
 - Roads, Grounds and Recreation Committee
 - Public Health Committee
 - Public Safety & Emergency Management Committee
 - Senior Affairs Committee
 - Social Committee
 - Redistricting Committee?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Public Safety Information
- Planned construction in Fort Lincoln
- Activities In Or Near Fort Lincoln
- Recurring Events
- Resources For Everyone

All Board members will be asked to contribute to the page for their respective apartment building, housing cluster, or the single family homes along 35th Street. Thought is also being given to featuring an interview, every six months, on their respective pages, of a spotlighted residents of each apartment building, housing cluster and the single family homes along 35th Street.

Similarly, the chairpersons of each FLCA committee will be asked to play a major role in designing and providing text about the purpose of their committee and a link to monthly committee reports on the priorities of their committee.

II.

FLCA Fundraising For, And Through, Website

A. Soliciting Government And Private Businesses For “Seed Money”

Even while the committee was planning content for the website, it was simultaneously soliciting funds from 7 entities with which to pay a custom website developer. One longtime supporter (Fort Myer Construction Company) came through with a donation of \$1,000.00 in July 2021. But by mid-November only two potential “seed money” possibilities remained: (1) **The Menkiti Group** and (2) **ANC 5C**. And only one came through – and that was with a \$4,000.00 grant that was accompanied by compromising conditions.

The Menkiti Group, The Communications committee kicked off its solicitation of The Menkiti Group, on August 29, 2021, by submitting a formal grant application to the charitable foundation for The Menkiti Group, the CPMG Foundation. The CPMG Foundation funds community activities (and has, in the past, supported the FLCA’s annual “Fort Lincoln Day”). We initially asked them for \$1,000.00. But we quickly upped our request to \$4,000.00. And as a sweetener we said a contribution in that amount would entitle them to permanent placement of their logo in a footer on the Home Page of the website (like other business supporters).

On October 8th a member of their Board advised the chairman of the FLCA’s Communication committee that they had approved our request, *provided* the chairman of the Communications Committee appeared (virtually) before their Board of Directors with a Power Point presentation on matters that did not appear to be particularly relevant to our grant application. In any event, no one with the skills to prepare a Power Point presentation was available on the short notice provided, and after determining that was the case, on October 12th the Chairman of the Communications Committee offered to nonetheless participate in a videoconference to answer any question their Board members might have. On October 25th the Communications Chairman sent a follow up email inquiring if the Board still wished to meet with him, and if not, he inquired as to their decision timeline. On November 9th the Chairman sent another email with the same inquiry. On November 17th he wrote directly to the CEO of the Menkiti Group (who had originally referred us to the Foundation) and described the lack of communication.

The Foundation then said that it was polling its Board and would get back to us with their final decision. On November 30, 2021, in an email, they announced that a majority of their Board had voted to approve an immediate grant of \$4,000.00, PROVIDED the FLCA agreed to three conditions:

“The board would like to be connected with your web designer to ensure production of the site will begin immediately and with great quality & care. Have you selected your web designer yet?

The board is requesting to receive weekly updates regarding the progress of the website with visual snapshots of how it is coming along.

Per your conversation with Martin Weldon, the board is requiring that our Menkiti Group & CPMG Foundation logos are (hyperlinked directing visitors to our sites) placed in the footer of the website indicating that the website is powered by both entities. We can help provide the text to place on the footer.”

Members of the Communications Committee were polled regarding the conditions. Six members voted not to accept them. One voted yes, “but they should request monthly updates, not weekly ones. Also, we are not immediately ready so they should be told this.” And another was equivocal: “I’m pleased to receive the donation, however, maybe the terms can be negotiated.”

The chair wrote to the CPMG Foundation, on December 3, 2021, while the polling was underway and stated:

I am currently awaiting the results of an email poll that I sent out to members of the FLCA's Communication Committee after receiving CPMG's email.

The three months that passed after the FLCA submitted its grant application to CPMG, before we received your email, placed increasing pressure on the FLCA to consider other fundraising options. And so just days before receiving your email members of the FLCA's Communications Committee began an extensive charitable solicitation outreach that will likely take at least a few weeks to complete. If successful, it could result in funds for a community website without the conditions detailed in your email.

I anticipate that when I hear from all FLCA committee members there will be a majority vote to complete the already-underway process for soliciting condition-less funding, before accepting funding with the conditions CPMG proposes.

Because that process will likely take 3-4 weeks, and because the full FLCA Board would have to approve the conditions proposed by CPMG in any event thereafter, I anticipate being able to provide a definitive response to CPMG immediately following the FLCA's January 20, 2022 Board meeting.

Meanwhile, the FLCA has not been in a position to contract with a web designer and so no design work will be taking place in any event.

On December 5, 2021, the Chief of Staff for the Foundation replied: “Thank You for the update. We will await your response and standby.”

Because of the intervention of the holidays the chair of the Communications Committee wrote to the Chief of Staff for the Foundation to advise her that the FLCA Board of Directors would not be able to vote on whether to accept the conditions the CPMG Foundation was proposing until the FLCA Board's February 17, 2022 meeting. Meanwhile, the chair asked the CPMG Foundation to reconsider those conditions because there are already a number of levels of review the website has to clear, and it is impractical to add the CPMG Foundation to the already multi-level web design and review process.

The FLCA received no response to that request.

ANC 5C. The Communications Committee first submitted a grant application to ANC 5C before its June 2021 meeting; their final meeting before their summer recess. However, ANC 5C03 Commissioner Hines advised us that ANC 5C had not yet put procedures in place that June to consider grant applications under new criteria that had been enacted, but that those procedures would be in place by September. And so on September 6th we submitted (and then re-submitted on September 12th) a new grant application to ANC 5C, for \$5,000.00. At the September 15 meeting of ANC 5C our grant application was not on the Agenda, despite emails we sent to the Treasurer of ANC 5C the week before inquiring whether it would be. On September 22 and 30, and on October 14th, our chairman emailed ANC Commissioner Hines to ask if the FLCA's grant application would be placed on ANC 5C's October 20, 2021 Agenda. Commissioner Hines responded to the first two emails to advise he was looking into it.

On October 14th he advised us that the FLCA's grant application was not on the October 20 ANC 5C Agenda, and that he had earlier sent emails to both the Treasurer and Chairman of ANC 5C, inquiring into the procedures that would be followed for consideration of all grant application, but had received no response. President Pearson emailed Commissioner Hines, back, to ask whether Commissioner Hines could himself request/insist that the FLCA's grant application be placed on the Agenda for October 20th. He received no response, and so assumed it would not be. On October 28th, and again on November 5th, the chairman emailed Commissioner Hines seeking confirmation that the FLCA's grant application was not considered on October 20th, and requesting clarification on whether a process was now in place and whether the Commissioner would request that the FLCA's application be placed on ANC 5C's Agenda for its November 17th meeting.

That same day Commissioner Hines responded that he would make a motion, on November 10, to place the FLCA's application on ANC 5C's agenda for November 17, and would report back on whether he had been successful. He also advised that ANC 5C had set a limit of \$2,500.00 on grant funding. On November 7th the chairman for the Communications Committee submitted an Amended grant application, seeking \$2,500.00-\$5,000. Quoting the language of ANC 5C's website, he pointed out that the application was submitted for residents of both SMD 5C03 and SMD 5c04, and so the maximum grant should be \$2,500.00 x 2. On November 10th Commissioner Hines advised us that the application had been placed on ANC 5C's meeting Agenda for November 17th. [The Commission's foot-dragging is a reminder that the FLCA is opposing ANC 5C in a pending zoning case before the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment.]

At its November 17th meeting, ANC 5C came up with new information and requirements it wished the FLCA to satisfy, none of which were in the official grant application. And one of which (requiring that the full Communications Committee be present) contradicted what the Communications Committee had been told by Commissioner Hines (the only person who needed to be present was "the person leading the project"). The Commission deferred action on the FLCA's application, but declined to write up these new requests and conditions. Commissioner Hines, instead, asked Chairperson Pearson to do so, for his review. (Which would give the impression that the FLCA acquiesced in the additional, surprise requirements.)

That course of action suggested bad faith and contradicted the official Grant Agreement that ANCs are supposed to utilize. The Grant Agreement requires that, if action on a grant agreement is deferred, the ANC (and not the applicant) must specify the additional action it is requesting of the applicant. In a November 21, 2021 email, the FLCA President recited the history of the FLCA's efforts to submit a grant application, the contradictory guidance it had been given, and concluded:

So I am requesting that (as the Grant Agreement form requires) you and/or Commissioner Montague, on behalf of ANC 5C, complete and specify the additional documents and other requirements that the FLCA was advised of for the first time on November 18, 2021. That is the only way that the Office of ANCs (and through them, the D.C. Council) can provide oversight over how grant applications are being considered.

As of the date of this Report, ANC 5C has not responded. ANC 5C did not meet in December 2021 because of the holidays. On January 10, 2022, the chairperson of the Communications Committee wrote to all ANC 5C Commissioners to request that the FLCA's grant application be placed on ANC 5C's Agenda on January 19, 2022, for an up or down vote. We have heard nothing further, and the Minutes for ANC's 5C meeting have not been posted. It is fair to say that this option is no longer a viable one.

B. Ongoing Funding From Fort Lincoln Housing Clusters? [TRANSFERED TO FINANCE & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE]

A committee member suggested securing funding for not only the website, but the FLCA's operations generally, at least in part from those Fort Lincoln housing developments that can include a yearly contribution in their budgets. They would likely be: (1) The Reserves at Dakota Crossing, (2) The Village at Dakota Crossing, (3) Pineview Court (although not necessarily this year, because they are adversaries in zoning litigation with the FLCA), (4) Summit Court Condominiums, (5) Banneker Ridge, (6) Dakota Crossing, (7) Maple View Condos, (8) Hillside Condominiums and (9) Dakota Crossing.

The FLCA had not taken that approach, earlier, because the FLCA had asked each of those same housing clusters to hold either \$850.00 or \$500.00 in reserve in the event the FLCA has to retain an appellate attorney in its BZA zoning case. However, more than 1-1/2 years has passed since the July 2020 BZA hearing and the BZA has not been able to figure out a way around our legal arguments. And so, it would appear, that the FLCA should focus now on seeking annual funding from those housing developments that appreciate the value of collective action and can financially support it.

That would free the FLCA from having to respond to the priorities of groups outside of Fort Lincoln, that are sometimes even hostile to certain FLCA's goals and objectives. The FLCA's President has shifted responsibility for coordinating this effort to the Finance/Fundraising Committee, and requested that Natalie Carey be the point person on that committee in pursuing this funding option.

This, then, could be an alternative or supplemental source of funding for the FLCA’s website. To that end, the Finance & Fundraising Committee was asked to target February 16th as the date for obtaining financial commitments from as many of the nine condominium and town-house Boards of Directors as possible.

C. Soliciting Annual Donations/Advertising Payments From Businesses

The final pre-launching step we anticipated in this process was identifying the decision-makers, and obtaining their email addresses, for: (1) stores at The Shops at Dakota Crossing, (2) businesses that depend on Fort Lincoln residents, (3) select businesses along Bladensburg Road, (3) select businesses along New York Avenue and (4) a handful of stores on Rhode Island Avenue and H Street.

The process of collecting email addresses and emailing solicitation letters is currently underway, with a goal of sending out all letters and placing one follow up phone call by February 16, 2022. The emailed letters will seek tax-deductible charitable contributions or advertising payments. And the businesses sponsors will be recognized on the Home Page of the FLCA website with their logo, which when clicked on, will take you to the website of their business or organization. As justification for their charitable contribution or advertising payment, for the 26 stores at The Shops, the Committee will be able to point to the FLCA’s sustained efforts (aided by the D.C. Federation of Civic Associations) to have the D.C. Council approve approximately \$2 million dollars for a third exit from The Shops, made even more likely by the infrastructure bill the U.S. Congress recently passed.

For the 36 targeted businesses along Bladensburg Road and New York Avenue the committee can point to the FLCA’s efforts, on their behalf, to have a fire station placed on the northeast corner of Bladensburg Road & V Street, N.E. and how that will lower the fire insurance premiums for their businesses. And for another 20 or so businesses, the committee can at least emphasize that, because the FLCA is a 501(c)(3) organization, their business can deduct their contribution to the FLCA directly from the adjusted gross income they report to the IRS, which will reduce their overall tax bill. Or claim it as a deductible advertising expense.

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To keep track of over 100 solicitation letters, committee member Natalie Carey suggested using a Google [spread] Sheet form. That would give us a real-time snapshot of what solicitation letters have been sent out, and with what result. On November 3rd, Ms. Carey prepared the Google sheet. And that same day chairman Pearson sent a link to it to all committee members. Presently the alphabetically organized Google Sheet looks, in part, like this:

1	BUSINESS NAME	CONTACT PERSON & CONTACT INFORMATION	CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION "ASK"	ACTUAL CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION	FLCA Outreach POC	Last Contacted	Notes
2	Legum & Norman (manages Banneker Ridge and The Village at Dakota Crossing)	Amber Pendergrass, 3130 Fairview Park Dr, Suite 200, Falls Church, VA 22042, (703) 600-6000 (703) 970-8817, (703) 378-8810, apendergrass@legumnorman.com	\$200.00		Roy Pearson	Dec. 3, 2021; Dec. 10, 2021; Dec. 14, 2021	Emailed solicitation letter to Ms. Pendergrass on December 3, 2021, but listed as their "community manager." And in a December 1 text message was also the community manager for Banneker Ridge. (However, her Lin says she works as an independent realtor for Samson Properties in Virgil Village at Dakota Crossing that Ms. Pendergrass has not been with Legum replaced by someone else who he did not identify (we were emailing abo Lymar Curry, of Banneker Ridge, advising him of what Lee had said. I ask Banneker Ridge as well. Lymar texted me back on December 9th to say their HOA Board. On December 10 at 10:10 am I called the number I had reached a voicemail that asked me to spell the name of the person I was the name of "Amber Pendergrass." I then called the number I had for her unattended mailbox. I did not leave a message. If I do not hear back from who their new community manager is, and his/her contact information. C me this message. " You can reach out to: Natasha Eriksen-Brotlett <NErik-JWilliams@legumnorman.com>" I then wrote a letter to both persons, 4 addresses, requesting a tax-deductible charitable contribution or advertis Kincaid. Lee responded in a way that appeared to confirm that one or bc at Dakota Crossing.
3	(????)manages Maple View)-ask Curtis Townsend		\$200.00		Curtis Townsend		
4	Active Aces Super Seniors Tennis Club	Alice P Lee, President, 511 Shady Glen Drive, Capitol Hgts, MD 20743, (301) 336-3878, louseeapi@aol.com	\$100.00		Roy Pearson	Dec. 3, 2021; Dec. 10, 2021	Emailed solicitation letter to Ms. Lee on December 3, 2021. On December recording said the line was busy. I, therefore, emailed her this message: follow up the Fort Lincoln Civic Association's email-letter of last week, an Seniors Tennis Club might have about the FLCA's new website advertising some detail. I reached a recording that said your telephone line was busy. So I thought I would follow up by email. Instead, I am happy to answer at December 3rd was explanation enough, it requests a logo for the Active on the Home Page of our website (that when clicked on will take visitors Club), to recognize your payment of \$100.00 for the coming year." I will n \$100.00 per year.
5	Anacostia Art Gallery & Botique	Juanita Brittan, 119 Raleigh Street S.E., Washington, DC 20032, (202) 550-7060, BusyBee@anacostiaartgallery.com	\$100.00		Cynthia Cherry		

D. Soliciting Donations/Payments From Political Candidates

On November 27th the Committee chairman proposed an additional source of funding for the FLCA website – political candidates. The FLCA could charge political candidates \$500.00, each, to place their campaign logos on the Home Page of the FLCA website (for most of them, from March-June 2022, when the primary elections will take place). Felicia Smith has volunteered to email form solicitation letters to the 25-35 citywide and Ward 5 political and ANC candidates that have announced their candidacies.

If successful, it could result in raising as much as \$17,000.00. But even raising \$5,000.00 would make it worth our time.

E. The Fundraising Timeline

On November 29th the Committee began the process of dividing up the 100 businesses and organizations to email solicitation letters to. Felicia Brown will handle all of the political candidates. And Natalie Carey, Cynthia Cherry, Curtis Townsend, Emma James, Lymar Curry, Parraize Butler and Mardijon Hedayati will contact the Board of Directors for the 8 condominium and townhome developments. On January 10, 2022, a time line was circulated, with the goal of launching the FLCA website by March 31, 2021:

February 16, 2022: Must have contacted, and received financial commitments, from: **(1)** the 85 businesses (contacted by the 9 persons on the Communications Committee), **(2)** 22 political candidates (contacted by Felicia Brown) and **(3)** 8 townhomes and condominiums in Fort Lincoln (coordinated by Natalie Carey), if at all possible. There should be *at least* an initial letter **and** a follow up phone call to each businesses and political candidates and a verbal commitment to a specific donation or advertising payment. That will enable the Communications Committee, by February 16th, to determine: **(a)** how much money is available to enter into a contract with a website designer, **(b)** whether to recommend to the FLCA Board of Directors that we accept the three crippling conditions imposed

by the CPMG Foundation in order to receive \$4,000.00 from them, and (c) vote on a website design company to design and maintain the FLCA website.

February 17, 2022: Vote by the FLCA Board of Directors on whether to accept the three crippling conditions imposed by the CPMG Foundation in order to receive \$4,000.00 from them.

February 18, 2022: Sign a contract with a web designer and begin sending them rough layouts for the 40+ pages of the website. Each Board member will be responsible for working with their tenant association or Condo or HOA Board to design and to ensure there is no objection to their individual page on the proposed website

March 17, 2022: Vote by the Communications Committee on a website that it will recommend to the full FLCA Board of Directors. (All funds for logos by businesses and political candidates who have donated or paid, and all of their logos, must have been received by this date. All donations from the 8 condo and HOA Boards must also be received by this date.)

March 24, 2022: Vote by the full FLCA Board of Directors on whether to approve the website recommended by the Communications Committee, or whether changes must be made before the website is launched on March 31, 2022

March 31, 2022: FLCA website must be finalized and launched!!

III.

Updating The Logo For The FLCA.

One of the Committee members (Emma James) has volunteered to develop an updated logo for the FLCA, that would replace the logo that was adopted in 2013 when there were only 13 and not 17 housing developments existing and participating in the FLCA.

Below is an example of an updated logo, with all 17 housing complexes shown:



Emma proposes to prepare a wide range of potential logos, with various kinds of cannons and scenes of Fort Lincoln shown. The chair asked that they be presented, first, to the Communications Committee for a vote. In that way, they could be winnowed down and the Committee could recommend the top two (or at most three) vote-getters to the full Board at the Board's February 17, 2022 meeting for a final vote. Ms. James emailed them to members of the Communications Committee by January 26th.

Voting on the logos by committee members is underway..