

## **Committee Report: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (MAY 2022)**

This is the May 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. Only the first of those priorities (website content and design) will carry over into the term of the next FLCA Communications Committee. Fundraising will become the responsibility of the FLCA's Finance/Fundraising Committee. And funding from FLCA Housing Clusters was transferred to the FLCA's Finance/Fundraising Committee in February of 2022.

### **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 spade work that will be necessary. The committee now has 6 Board members, and one community volunteer:

- **Roy Pearson, Pineview Court**
- **Dana Johnson, Wesley House**
- **Anita Jones, Washington Overlook**
- **Cynthia Cherry, Hillside**
- **Natalie Carey, Dakota Crossing**
- **Mardjon Hedayati, Reserves at Dakota Crossing**
- **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.

The third major website-content step was preparing the text for approximately 40 pages for the website. 17 of those pages are devoted to the 17 apartment buildings, housing clusters and single family homes in and contiguous to Fort Lincoln. The remaining 23-25 pages address the following subjects:

- Home Page
- Daily Weather Forecast
- Link to Ft. Lincoln community Facebook page
- Maps of Fort Lincoln
- History of Fort Lincoln
- The FLCA's Organization Sponsor(ed)
- 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
- Resources For Everyone

All Board members were asked to contribute to the page for their respective apartment building, housing cluster, or the single family homes along 35<sup>th</sup> Street. The FLCA bylaws were used to provide text about the purpose of each FLCA committee. And there is a link to monthly committee reports for each committee.

The FLCA's Board approved contracting with northeast D.C. Brookland based website design company, Eyeth Studios. Eyeth Studios is a deaf-owned company. Initially, a launch date of March 31, 2022 was set. However, editing video content turned out to be a challenge for Eyeth Studios. The date was therefore pushed back to April 14, 2022 and then April 22, 2022. The complication proved to be utilizing the videos and photographs; particularly for the Home Page of the website. Eyeth Studios found that our video clips and photos required work beyond the scope of the services they provide. As a consequence, the Chair formally polled Committee members, and informally polling Board members, on whether to agree to a new ceiling of \$5,230.00 for the website – or to pull the plug on the website.

Committee members unanimously approved increasing the ceiling, and an informal poll of the entire Board approved it by a margin of 11-3. At the April 21, 2022 FLCA Board meeting the increase was ratified. The website launched on April 22, 2022. The final bill was \$5,315.00. In the week or two thereafter a number of tweaks were made, as each page was scrutinized. Additionally, the process of making the website viewable on mobile platforms is ongoing. We have a pledge that it will be 100% complete by May 18<sup>th</sup>. As of May 9<sup>th</sup> about 80% of the website is viewable by smartphone.

## **II.**

### **FLCA Fundraising**

#### **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. The Menkiti Group paid a \$1,000.00 advertising fee<sup>1</sup>. And the Tennis at Fort Lincoln organization and financial services professional, Jamain Chastain, paid to have their logos, with hyperlinks, on the FLCA Home Page. ANC 5C accepted the FLCA's grant application for \$2,500.00 for the website in the fall of 2021, but has not yet voted on it.

In an April 10, 2022 email to the new ANC 5c03 Commissioner, Tequia Hicks Delgado, the chair of the Communications committee requested that she urge that a vote on the FLCA's grant application be scheduled for the April 20, 2022 meeting of ANC 5C. That did not happen, but Ms Hicks Delgado has pledged to do so at ANC 5C's May 18, 2022 meeting.

**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 16<sup>th</sup> as the date for obtaining financial commitments from as many of the nine condominium and town-house Boards of Directors as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the CPMG Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of The Menkiti Group, offered the FLCA a grant of \$4,000.00 for the FLCA website. However, the Communications Committee recommended to the full Board decline the offer because of the many conditions that came with the grant. The full Board agreed and declined the grant at the FLCA Board meeting on February 17, 2022.

**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. 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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:

	BUSINESS NAME	CONTACT PERSON & CONTACT INFORMATION	CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION "ASK"	ACTUAL CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION	FLCA Outreach POC	Last Contacted	Notes
1							
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 about 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. Give me this message. " You can reach out to: Natasha Eriksen-Brottel <NErik-JWilliams@legumnorman.com>" I then wrote a letter to both persons, 4 addresses, requesting a tax-deductible charitable contribution or advertisement. Kincaid. Lee responded in a way that appeared to confirm that one or both 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, louisepi@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 advertisement. 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 to 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@anacostiartgallery.com	\$100.00		Cynthia Cherry		

## D. Soliciting Donations/Payments From Political Candidates

On November 27<sup>th</sup> 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). Form solicitation letters were emailed to the 36 citywide and Ward 5 political and ANC candidates that have announced their candidacies.

Only three candidates have responded – likely because their campaign budgets have already been set. One of the candidates appeared to commit, but has not followed up. The other two either requested an opportunity to address the Board, instead, or wrote just to confirm the contents of our solicitation letter. Consequently, our late start appears to have doomed this effort.

## E. The Fundraising Timeline

On November 29<sup>th</sup> the Committee began the process of dividing up the 100 businesses and organizations to email solicitation letters to. That four month process was largely unsuccessful. It is hoped that now that the website is launched, and provides a tremendous advertising boost for all of the stores at the Shops at Dakota Crossing, they will support the website financially. The website, itself, makes a strong pitch for their financial support and, in a chart, lists the amount being requested of each business.

This effort will become the responsibility of the Finance/Fundraising committee hereafter.

## 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 on February 6<sup>th</sup> and the two top vote getters were recommended to the Board for a final vote.

At the February 17, 2022 Board meeting the vote on the two logos resulted in a 4-4 tie, which sent the matter back to the committee with a request that Ms. James circulate all the logos that were considered to the full Board. Parraize Butler submitted additional potential logos. Natalie Carey volunteered to participate with Emma James in consulting with Eyeth Studios on a final logo. On March 1, 2022, the Committee chairperson came across a logo that was used by the FLCA to promote the “Fort Lincoln Home Tour” in May of 2013. He polled the committee regarding using it as the logo. There was no opposition to the suggestion and so Eyeth Studios will be using variations of it as at the FLCA’s logo.



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