

The Village Way

October 2007

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VPIS Urges Inclusion of Public Amenities in City Center Plan

In December 2006, Atlantic Realty developers proposed a series of major projects for the designated City Center area south of West Broad Street. VPIS President Barry Buschow served as a member of the Design Review Team convened by the City to make recommendations on the initial project plans. The Design Review Team made extensive recommendations for project improvements. Atlantic Realty has indicated that they will resubmit the project application and that many of these recommendations will be included in the revised application.

VPIS intends to participate in the review of the new Atlantic Realty application and will press for the full implementation of the Design Review Team's recommendations. In addition, VPIS continues to advocate for resolution of concerns expressed in past comments on the project including:

- excessive overall height and mass of buildings;
- lack of significant public space or public square as called for in the Comprehensive Plan; and
- lack of firm commitment to "green building" standards

Concurrently, the City is currently considering significant amendments to the Comprehensive Plan elements addressing development in the city center area. VPIS did not object to the proposed amendments, but expressed concern that the revisions left unaddressed many of the critical issues related to the City Center including:

- location of a new transit HUB;
- guidelines for inclusion of public buildings; and
- a feasible path to the promised large public space/commons to be located north of Broad Street.

VPIS urged the City Council to either address these critical issues in the Comprehensive Plan revisions or separately describe how these issues will be resolved.



VPIS recommends that the Comprehensive Plan reinforces the "Streetworks" concept of significant public spaces both north and south of Broad and suggests steps in that direction (e.g. expansion of the new proposed "pathway" from South Maple toward the Falls Church).

As plans for the City Center area south of Broad are being considered, new attention is focused on the area north of Broad. Important public amenities, such as a large public space and a transit HUB, are increasingly expected to be located north of Broad Street. Unfortunately, any implementation of a City Center plan north of Broad faces major obstacles, such as the difficulty of consolidating separately owned parcels of land.

Some of the issues the City faces in making the City Center area north of Broad Street a reality include:

- defining the criteria for significant public investment to support public amenities not likely to be offered by private development;
- planning for inclusion of appropriate public buildings (e.g. post office) within the City Center; and
- establishing a public process that both preserves the confidentiality of private information while including public involvement prior to making key decisions.

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President's Message

You moved here for a reason!

I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer, our Concerts in the Park and the Farmers' Market. We had a wonderful July 4th Readings with our master of ceremonies Lou Olom celebrating his 90th birthday. We also dedicated the Sue Olom Memorial Garden at the entrance to the city between Koons Ford and Syms Clothing Store at Seven Corners. Our annual Arbor Day Ceremony and Attic Treasures Sale were also very successful. Thanks to all for supporting and volunteering at our many events. Our coffee booth at the Farmer's Market can always use your help, so stop by and let us know if you have some time to help sell "Coffee for Trees."

Our new website, www.VPIS.org, is providing up to date information, and our new email system is working, except for AOL users. If you have an AOL address, please put vpis@vpis.org in your contact list.

Fall Membership Meeting will be Sunday November 11th featuring our annual elections and Excellence in Design Awards. More information will be sent to you and on our website.

November begins our annual membership drive. Now that we are a 501(c)(3) I hope you will take advantage and renew your membership so we can continue to offer you :

- Summer Concerts in the Park
- Neighborhood Tree Program
- Arbor Day Celebrations
- Farmers' Market Coffee and Books
- Independence Day Readings
- Excellence in Design Awards
- Community Gardens
- Watch Night (New Year's Eve)

Hope to see you at the Farmers' Market and our Fall Membership Meeting.

Barry Buschow
President

Sue Olom Garden Welcomes All at Eastern Entrance to City

VPIS has been working with Lou Olom to create a memorial to his wife, Sue, who passed away several years ago. As many of you know, Sue worked tirelessly on projects in the City of Falls Church. For many years, Lou had also expressed an interest in the beautification of the traffic island at the entrance to the City on E. Broad Street at Seven Corners. These came together to create the Sue Olom Garden at that location.

City Arborist Jill-Anne Spence designed the garden and supervised the planting. With donations from VPIS and Lou Olom, together with funds from the City, the Sue Olom Garden has become a reality. A plaque will be placed nearby and a new City of Falls Church sign will be installed in the center of the island.

The dedication of the Sue Olom Garden coincided with Lou's 90th Birthday in early June, and a short dedication ceremony was held at his house where family and friends gathered to celebrate the two very special events. If you have not already done so, please drive past to view the Sue Olom Garden, a tribute to one of our City's leading activists.



VPIS members Barry Buschow, Gerry Pressman and Keith Thurston and City Councilman David Snyder joined Lou Olom at the dedication of the Sue Olom Garden.

A Letter from Lou

The gift you brought to celebrate and remember Sue's contributions to Falls Church, the city we loved from the moment we arrived in September, 1953, is a well deserved tribute and recognition to her memory and for her many civic contributions.

The garden that is evolving will be a joy for all to see upon entering or leaving the city. It will exemplify and dramatize in a most fitting manner to residents, neighbors, visitors and travelers, the historic little city of Falls Church and its reputation for its gardens and trees--"a city of trees" it has been called-- even on its major thoroughfare.

And kudos to all who helped design and review the design of the garden. Please convey these sentiments and my deep appreciation to VPIS board members and through them to members of the Society. For this is an immense contribution to the entrance of the city. I appreciate especially the work of Gerry Pressman, Keith Thurston and you who picked up this project and brought it to a successful conclusion. Yesterday I was helped to walk around the gardens plantings and trees --it looks great! The Society has contributed to and enhanced the attractiveness of the city's eastern entrance to the well kept, attractive residences on East Broad Street.

Sue was committed to the ways of life that historic Falls Church brought to its residents--once described as "By Fence and Fireside" by a former Falls Church author, as well as its gardens and trees. Should this "ethos" finally prevail and be preserved, it would be an additional tribute to her efforts as well as those who worked with equal dedication to these goals. I know that despite her reluctant efforts to stay out of the limelight, she would be honored for her assiduous efforts to help preserve and improve this city's physical attributes and character--its sense of place and of community.

She served on the Board of Zoning Appeals for eight years, was intensely active in the school system, helped with the July 4th Readings, VPIS events, and especially in the campaigns for women's rights. The Library now has the region's largest collection (about 200) of books on this subject.

Sue's concern for the potentials of women was a life-long dedication which also reflected the large role that women have played in this city of Falls Church. So thank you again for continuing to preserve the best and improve the rest in Falls Church. Sincerely, Lou Olom

April 21, 2007 Marks the 115th Anniversary of Arbor Day

A more perfect day could not have been imagined—bright sun with temperatures in the 70s. The happy participants, numbering more than 60, gathered in Frady Park to celebrate one of Falls Church's greatest assets—its trees.

Hosted by the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS), the program included a variety of speeches and presentations. Barry Buschow, president of VPIS spoke of the Society's initiation of Arbor Day in Falls Church and its interest in the environmental and aesthetic importance of such celebrations. His comments were followed by historic readings presented by the Victorian Society, elegant and well-turned-out as ever. Their spirited narration, conducted in full Victorian attire, relocated the entire group back to 1892, the date of the very first Falls Church Arbor Day, which was also the first such celebration in the Commonwealth. (Never mind that the helicopter that flew over the 1892 portion of 2007's Arbor Day suggested a bit of a time warp.)

The event took place in Frady Park, named in honor of Donald Frady, Director of Public Works for the City of Falls Church for 23 years. Mr. Frady's daughter, Edna Frady, was kind enough to be "interviewed" by Barbara Cram, filling everyone in on the remarkable changes that have taken place over the past two generations in our city. David Chojnacky, Commissioner, City of Falls Church Tree Commission, then announced Falls Church's "Tree of the Year," the Scarlet Oak, many of which will be planted this year throughout the city.

Seth Heminway, volunteer chair of the neighborhood Tree Program, continued the discussion of city trees by describing this program's tree planting parties and other events designed to ensure the vibrancy of Falls Church's tree canopy.

Kathy Allen, a City Environmental Specialist, and Jill-Ann Spence, City Arborist, explained the interrelatedness of many of the city's environmental and tree initiatives. Jill went on to present the Tree City USA award to Vice-Mayor Lindy Hockenberry. Jill was joined in the presentation by our Virginia State Forester, who informed everyone that becoming an official Tree City was no easy feat, that our own city had far exceeded the minimum requirements for acceptance into the program, and that, in fact, Falls Church has the longest continuous run of Tree City awards in the state.



Closing the festivities was the wonderful news of two significant financial donations, both of which will put the spirit and objectives of Arbor Day into practice.

The first was a check from VPIS given to Lois Berlin, Superintendent of Schools, for \$7500 for landscaping projects at the middle and high schools. Arborist, Jill-Ann Spence, will be supervising the effort. The second was the start-up funding for the Arbor Day Commons project, chaired by Barbara Cram. Initial contributors to this delightful plan were VPIS, The Victorian Society, and the Falls Church Women's Club.

Ellen Gross, hostess for the event, concluded the ceremony by thanking everyone for their participation and inviting one and all for sweets and lemonade generously provided by our Victorian ladies!

Continued from Page 1

VPIS will continue to participate in City deliberations on plans and projects related to City Center and will also support a series of two forums on City Center sponsored by the Center for Voter Deliberation of Northern Virginia.

The forums are scheduled for the evening of October 25th from 7:00 to 9:30 and the afternoon of Saturday, October 27th from 1:00 to 3:30 at the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School. Registration for these events is now open at www.dfccva.org.

SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11
3:00 – 5:00 PM
VPIS FALL MEETING

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS
AND DIRECTORS**
**EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN AWARDS
WINNERS**

Historically Speaking (5)

THE REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

by Ric Terman



In 1776, it is reported that similar to other important public announcements, the Declaration of Independence was read from the steps of

The Falls Church. Subsequently, the church building was used as a recruiting center for the Revolutionary War. Twelve veterans from our area survived the war and no casualties were identified as being from the area.

In 1780, a log-cabin school house was erected next to The Falls Church. It was 1783 when the Revolutionary War officially ended, and in 1784 the Virginia General Assembly officially severed the connection between the state and the Anglican Church. In 1785 The Falls Church joined the new Protestant Episcopal Church. However community support diminished and by 1800 the church vestry had disbanded. The congregation of the wooden Methodist Chapel, built in 1779 and located at the site of the current Oakwood cemetery, slowly expanded.

With the birth of a new nation, the search was on for a constitutionally mandated 100 square-mile site for a federal district to serve as the nation's capital. In 1790, Congress officially chose the Potomac River site, and in 1791 President Washington selected the south point of a ten-mile square to be at Jones Point in Alexandria. Forty one-foot square sandstone markers were erected in 1791-92 at one-mile intervals to mark the district boundary. Two of these stones still mark that old boundary in Falls Church: the West Cornerstone (on the National Register of Historic Places) is in Andrew Ellicott Park, named after the chief surveyor, and Southwest # 9 (a National Historic Landmark) is in Benjamin Banneker Park, named for the black astronomer who assisted with the survey.

By 1800, as Congress moved into the new Capitol six miles away, the Falls Church area was characterized by a scattering of farmhouses along the Leesburg - Alexandria rolling road. Of some note was Wren's Tavern, located in the 400 block of East Broad Street

and possibly also the home of James Wren, which was visited by President-elect Thomas Jefferson in 1801.

By 1803, the building now known as Big Chimneys had expanded into an 18 x 40 foot tavern. The original large land patents were being broken up by multiple heirs and partial sales. Most farmers still owned slaves; the 1810 population of Fairfax County was 13,654 with 51% black (of which 543 were free). Farms were smaller, much of the soil was exhausted, and crops were more varied, emphasizing corn and wheat rather than tobacco.



We invite you to visit the
VPIS booth at the
Saturday Morning
Farmer's Market to
support the
Neighborhood Tree
Program with your
coffee purchases.
The booth also features
VPIS products for sale
and will be open from
8 am to noon
each Saturday
throughout the Winter.



Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society
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**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FALLS CHURCH, VA
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*Don't Forget October 20!
Deadline for Excellence in Design Award Applications*



Excellence in Design Award Winner 2003



Excellence in Design Award Winner 2003



Excellence in Design Award Winner 2003

Maintaining the Quality of the Neighborhoods



The Village Society stands for protecting and improving the quality our community environment including maintaining the contexts of neighborhoods and preserving period structures as sustainable reminders of our heritage. It is in built environment that we see the character of our community that provides a sense of place for us, and the sense of quality perceived by visitors.

At times we all may have wanted to complain about new or renovated houses or commercial buildings, and their lack of context to the city. The positive way to make our sense of community character known is to publicly recognize those homeowners, developers and architects that are producing beautiful additions to the City that are sensitive to the character of the community. The Excellence in Design Awards provides that recognition in a lasting way with a plaque to be placed on the structure.

Anyone can nominate a structure, landscape or garden for a design awards. In some cases, neighbors submit a house because they are so pleased with new home construction or renovation. They are also nominated by the homeowners, architects and other professional involved. But, you do not have to be associated with the development to nominate it.

After the nominations are received, a Village Society committee supported by architects that do not practice in the city visit each nomination location and consider the quality of design and execution; design context; expression of local characteristics; style and period; sensitivity to the neighborhood; the compatibility of structural improvements to provide an overall design that works as a single whole; the demonstration of design value to the people that inhabit or use the building; sustainability environmental responsibility; and over all site development including landscaping (if present) that is compatible with the overall period and style of the structure. Landscapes and gardens may be nominated separately without regard to the structure.

Since there is no official “ugly house” contest in the City of Falls Church (that we are aware of), this is the positive opportunity to let your preferences be known. A nomination form follows on the next page.

EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Nominations for the 2007 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society are encouraged from residents and businesses. The Society wishes to recognize good design solutions which contribute to and enhance the visual character of the City of Fall Church. New or renovated residential and commercial buildings finished within the past 5 years, and gardens and landscaping are eligible for consideration. All entered projects must be located in the City of Falls Church. This Official Entry form must be received by Oct. 20, 2007, with the judging taking place in late October. The awards will be presented at the VPIS Annual Meeting, on Sunday November 11, 2007.

Please provide the following information:

Entry Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Submitter's Name _____ Phone _____

Entry Category (Check One)

Residential Commercial Landscape/Gardens

Please describe entry using additional sheets if needed. Please indicate if a renovation is for the entire building or just a particular portion of the building. No project is too modest for consideration. Each entry will be judged on its own merits. You are encouraged to provide drawings or photographs if necessary to fully describe the project.

Submit entry to
VPIS Excellence in Design Awards Committee,
P. O. Box 6824, Falls Church, VA 22040.