

# BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## DRAFT Community Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2023

**Note:** To accommodate our guest speaker, Supervisor Lusk, all BBHCA business was deferred until after his presentation and Q&A. BBHCA member Julio Gonzalez video recorded the entire meeting for BBHCA. Special thanks to Julio for volunteering his time and expertise to provide this service and benefit for our community. The video\* is available at <https://vimeo.com/789687710/902cd1850f> (Length 1:48). This link is also provided on the BBHCA website at <https://www.bbhca.net/>.

\*The transcript for the video is automatically generated by Vimeo and is not edited, therefore, it does not accurately represent the audio. Please direct any requests for clarification of statements made by Supervisor Lusk to his office at [Franconia@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Franconia@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-971-6262.

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The meeting started at 7:30pm. Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk began by speaking for about 15 minutes highlighting several development projects in the district:

### INOVA Hospital (intersection of Beulah Street and Franconia-Springfield Parkway)

- Franconia District does not currently have any hospitals. The INOVA Healthplex on Walker Lane is for outpatient services (stays of less than 24 hours) only.
- This will be a 144-bed hospital for inpatient services. It will consist of three buildings (750,000 sq. ft total) and a parking garage. The first building is anticipated to open by 2027.

### Springfield Town Center hotel and housing project

- This was originally envisioned as part of the 2005 plan for the Town Center, but was delayed. It will include 460 multi-family housing units, the first multi-family housing built in the district in 20+ years.
- Supv. Lusk requested a market study for the Springfield area (including the Springfield Plaza where Trader Joe's is, the Franconia-Springfield metro, and the future hospital site) for office, retail, and hotel.
- The FBI is still considering the former GSA warehouse site on Loisdale Rd. for its future headquarters. TSA headquarters is already there. This would drive more business to the Springfield Town Center and Kingstowne.

### Rose Hill Shopping Plaza redevelopment proposal

- No decisions have been made yet by the County.
- Redevelopment is driven by questions about the future of retail. Amazon and other online shopping outlets were putting pressure on physical stores even before the pandemic. County and developer need to think about the future now to prepare for changes.

# BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## Workforce Innovation & Skills Hub, located in the Hybla Valley Community Center

- Focused on training and skills to help area residents attain jobs at Amazon, INOVA, Dominion Energy, and in construction of related sites.

## Bush Hill Sidewalks

- Supv. Lusk secured county funding for more sidewalks, with an emphasis on connecting to schools.

Supv. Lusk noted there are 8 projects in the current Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) review, but some may extend past the current review period based on VDOT and County decisions. He concluded his formal remarks and then took questions from the group, summarized below.

## Q&A

The first question was about how the SSPA process works. Supv. Lusk explained that each SSPA is reviewed by the County Department of Planning and Development (these are professional staff). They look at the impact to schools, emergency management services, water management, etc. based on the uses proposed in the SSPA. Development is a two-step process; after SSPA review/approval, the second step is Zoning, which is reviewed by the County and VDOT. The citizen-led Franconia District Land Use Committee also reviews both SSPA and Zoning requests. Many of these committee members have decades of experience and institutional memory.

Most questions focused on the Rose Hill Shopping Center (RHSC). BBHCA members generally want to work with the owner, Combined Properties (CP), to improve RHSC because they like having walkable access to a grocery store and other shops and acknowledge RHSC is dated and the space (including the large parking lot) is underutilized. However, members are extremely concerned about CP's proposal because of the impact of additional residences on traffic, school capacity, and pedestrian/bike safety—all of which are already overburdened—and the potential loss of the current type of stores. One attendee noted these are mainly small businesses that are service-oriented and therefore unlikely to be replaced by online alternatives (which CP and Supv. Lusk both cited as one of the drivers for the redevelopment) and current or similar businesses may not be able to afford rent in the redeveloped center.

Several members expressed frustration that County plans and processes to respond to new development lags behind their implementation because County needs are identified concurrent with SSPA/Zoning processes but then have to wait for funding from the County or via bond initiatives. BBHCA and surrounding areas are already experiencing school crowding and heavy traffic; new development would exacerbate both, but County mitigation efforts will be trying to catch up rather than preempt worsened conditions. BBHCA Land Use Committee Chair Carol Alim suggested the County review related SSPA proposals in aggregate rather than individually to better consider their impact on a larger area of the County and/or adjacent jurisdictions, not just the immediate surroundings affected. Supv. Lusk said he was receptive to this suggestion.

## **BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

These member concerns are amplified by two additional factors: First, elements of CP's SSPA proposal disregard some of the objections that residents raised during "listening tour" it held with BBHCA and other community groups in spring 2022, including further reducing the square footage for retail from what CP described in May and also retaining the 6-story proposed structure/parking garage. This has created a perception that CP will not be receptive to further feedback as the SSPA process proceeds. Second, there is a general impression that the SSPA process is complicated and not transparent to the average person and it skews in favor of developers and the County over homeowner concerns. This impression was reinforced by Supv. Lusk's comment about how these disputes are sometimes resolved—Virginia is a commonwealth and judicial rulings tend to favor property owners. If an owner believes that the conditions imposed by the review process are too onerous and prevent him from developing the property, the owner could go to court to challenge the conditions. If the court finds in favor of the owner, all conditions, not just the ones preventing development, would be thrown out.

Supv. Lusk concluded the Q&A session and encouraged residents to contact his office staff with further questions or concerns and to stay engaged as the SSPA process moves ahead.

### **Business Meeting**

Meeting attendees then voted to approve the minutes of the 15 November BBHCA meeting. Due to the length of the meeting, no board or committee reports were given. Further updates will be provided on the BBHCA website, Facebook page, and via email. The meeting adjourned around 9:15pm.