



North Springfield Civic Association

***Celebrating 60 Years of
Growth & Prosperity***

May 6, 2015

INTRODUCTION

2015 marks the 60th anniversary of our community while 2016 marks the 60th anniversary of the North Springfield Civic Association (NSCA). To begin our year-long celebration we are documenting the highlights of our community's growth over the past six decades, NSCA's role in that growth and our vision for the years ahead.

Communities form associations as an effective and efficient means to address their common interests of maintaining safety, preserving property values, ensuring services are provided, facilitating community events and keeping residents informed about important local issues. Newer communities have mandatory Homeowner Associations (HOA); older ones like North Springfield have voluntary Civic Associations (CA). They serve the same purpose but differ in one respect: who has the authority to enforce the covenants governing the community. In HOAs that authority resides with the Association. The Association can take legal action against a homeowner that does not comply and all homeowners must pay an annual fee. In CAs that authority resides with the individual homeowners. Only a homeowner can take legal action against another homeowner who does not comply and association dues are voluntary.

Given the distinction between the two forms of associations, NSCA addresses the common interests of our community by soliciting the voluntary cooperation of all residents. We educate residents on applicable rules and if necessary, ask authorities with enforcement powers to intervene. We also engage local government to ensure our community's interests are considered during their decision making process, and we facilitate community dialogue on important issues so that we can collectively find solutions that are in the community's best interest.

The quality of our community today is a testimonial to the success of NSCA's approach over the past six decades coupled with our residents' commitment to a quality neighborhood. The years ahead present formidable challenges. They include 1) addressing the issues associated with an aging neighborhood; 2) an increasing senior population; 3) our diversity; and 4) a growing number of home businesses. As demonstrated by our history, these and other challenges can be successfully met with the engagement and commitment of our residents.

OUR HERITAGE

North Springfield was forest and meadows when developer Edward R. Carr received the permits to create a community here. Construction started at the Leesville and Backlick entrance in 1954, and the first homes were occupied around July 1, 1955. The North Springfield Civic League (later renamed Association) was formed shortly thereafter with the first official meeting on January 25, 1956.

OPENING WEEK!!!
NORTH SPRINGFIELD
 Section Six

Spring will seem more beautiful when viewed in a setting like Edward R. Carr's desirable community at North Springfield. Opening this week in lovely new sections are 48 residential streets with its abundant trees, landscaping and wide, winding streets. In addition to the first homes being built are three more magnificent new homes planned to satisfy your family housing needs. An outstanding new feature is the complete, luxury built-in kitchens with several wall ovens and counter-top ranges... large patios, walk outers and wide porches. Examples of the luxury details of this quality-built new section include: Windows that bring the outdoors indoors, panel fixtures in the bathrooms, ample storage space, fireplaces and many more features you'll have to see to appreciate. Since its inception, North Springfield has been cited by The Urban Land Institute as one of the outstanding examples of community development. North Springfield offers churches, public and recreation centers, community swimming pool, established Little League, PTA, town groups and more shopping centers with plenty of free parking, set in a framework of flowering trees and shrubs. Streets are paved, street lights and signs are ready and waiting for you. **FINANCIAL PLANNING THROUGH SECTION SIX, SUBJECT TO VA APPROVAL. GI, FHA AND FHA CAREER SERVICE FINANCING AVAILABLE.**

the monticello
 Built one of the most popular homes ever built in the Monticello area with a terrace with mosaic water fountain. This large house features a full kitchen, dining room, living room, and a large front porch. The house is built on a large lot and is surrounded by trees and shrubs.

the rutledge
 This new section features a complete set of the best homes in the area. The houses are built on large lots and are surrounded by trees and shrubs. The houses are built with high quality materials and are finished with the best workmanship.

EDWARD R. CARR, Inc.
 1010 Vermont Ave. N.W., Washington, D. C. 20005
 3540 Back Lick Road Cl. 6-1212 North Springfield, Va.
 NA. 8-1805

DIRECTIONS: It's just twenty minutes to North Springfield from downtown D. C. Along the modern dual lane Shirley Highway reach our a traffic light after you leave D. C. Follow the highway on the left-hand side, turn right on Back Lick Road, then right on Back Lick one mile to North Springfield entrance on left.

Washington Post April 22, 1956 (Courtesy of the Robyn Carter)

Over the last 60 years, the Civic Association led the effort to protect the community from land development and zoning ordinances that would have been detrimental to property values and the quality of life in the community. We are one of the larger and more active communities in the county; our voice is strong and listened to by both state and county officials.

During the 1950's...

The focus was on safety, services and community development. Construction continued through the early 60's as the neighborhood was built out to its current footprint less the extension of Heming Avenue past the Lake Accotink Park entrance. The Civic Association worked closely with the builder and the Fairfax County government to minimize the impact on residents as new homes were built. Roads were paved, and street lights and signs were installed. NSCA was instrumental in the creation of the North Springfield Swim Club, a garden club, Saint John's United Methodist Church and North Springfield Elementary School. The elementary school opened in 1956 with 310 students in grades 1-7, and five homes along Axton Street served as classrooms as the school was being constructed. Administrative offices were located in a sixth home. NSCA also led fundraising efforts for the creation of the Richard Byrd Library and the University of Virginia's Northern Virginia campus (present-day George Mason University).

During the 1960's...

The focus turned toward preserving the residential feel of the community as development of the surrounding area ensued. NSCA successfully led the effort to deny a zoning application that would have made Long Pine Drive a cut-through street leading to an apartment complex. The association also



Ferndale entrance, May 1957 (Courtesy of the Growing Up in North Springfield Facebook Page & Grace Genie McClellan Hobson)

worked with the State Highway Commission (present-day VDOT) to ensure minimal disruption to the community during the “Circumferential” (495 Beltway) construction.

Maintaining safety, services and community development also remained a priority. Deteriorating wooden street signs were replaced with metal ones. Defense against a Japanese Beetle infestation was facilitated. Street lights were installed. Stop signs and traffic lights were petitioned to increase safety at busy intersections. NSCA also facilitated the start of public bus service to the community.

During the 1970's...

The focus remained on preserving the residential feel of the community. Maintaining infrastructure also became an issue. Once again the Civic Association successfully led the effort to deny a zoning application, this time against a proposed high-rise office building immediately adjacent to and visible from the neighborhood. NSCA also worked with the county and developers to ensure there was a fence and wooded buffer area between the homes on Leesville and the Washington Post and Robinson Terminal buildings being built behind them on Wimsatt Road. NSCA also worked with the county on the extension of Heming Avenue past the Lake Accotink Park entrance. Development of homes in that area took place during the latter part of the decade.



1975 “Let’s Get Together” Day (NSCA Archives)

Maintaining safety and services also continued as a Civic Association priority. The community entrance signs were built. Street lights were upgraded to the latest technology. NSCA began to oversee the maintenance of the neighborhood’s common areas and coordinated with VDOT to repair damaged sidewalks, curbs and gutters. NSCA also coordinated with state and county officials to minimize the impact during the Leesville soundwall construction, the widening of Braddock Road and the widening of the 495 Beltway.

Community development was also enhanced during this period. The Civic Association began sponsoring the community’s Boy Scout Troop, local youth athletic leagues and the community fun day. The teen job list program started, and NSCA sponsored a Teenager of the Year award. One of the country’s first Neighborhood Watch programs also began in North Springfield during this time.

During the 1980's...

The focus continued on preserving the residential feel of the community and maintaining infrastructure. NSCA successfully led the effort to deny two major zoning application: a proposed multi-story apartment complex and additional office buildings near the Leesville/Backlick entrance to the community. Damaged trees and signs were also replaced where needed, and new homes continued to be built on the extended Heming Avenue.

Maintaining safety and services also continued to be an important focus. NSCA successfully defeated Metro's plan to discontinue bus service to the community, and we initiated the first community cleanup day. In terms of safety, the speed limit on Woodlawn Drive was reduced from 35mph to 25mph.

During the 1990's...

The neighborhood seemed to take care of itself. NSCA addressed two safety issues. The first was having lights installed under the now-widened 495 Beltway underpass on Heming Avenue. The second was getting the speed limit on Leesville lowered from 35mph to 25mph. Maintenance of the common areas and sponsoring various community organizations/events started in previous years continued.

During the 2000's...

The calm of the 90's was shattered. The major trash hauler in the community, BFI, sold its residential service to AAA. Following the acquisition, however, AAA was not prepared to handle the additional work load. The Civic Association worked closely with the county and AAA until the issue was successfully resolved. Traffic calming became a second major issue, and the Civic Association facilitated the community dialogue to help remedy it. The result was the installation of stop signs on Heming Avenue, Ravensworth Road and Ferndale Street. A fourth stop sign was installed on Leesville at the pool for pedestrian safety. The third issue that arose was the onset of housing rebuilds significantly larger than the property's original home and boarding houses in the community. This issue was a national trend for older communities during the housing bubble period that ended around 2008. NSCA worked closely with the county to resolve these issues and was one of the first to advocate for more code enforcement. The County Code Enforcement Strike Team was created as a result. Although this issue has lessened, it persists today and continues to be a priority for NSCA.



Example of a larger rebuilt home Day (Courtesy of Realtor.com)

Maintaining services and communication with residents was also addressed during this period. Trees were replaced along Leesville. NSCA successfully petitioned for a traffic light at Heming and Braddock and the paving of the shoulder at the intersection to effectively create a right turn lane leading out of the neighborhood. NSCA, in coordination with the PTA, made sure our voice was heard during the Annandale High School redistricting that transpired during this period. We coordinated with the Park Authority regarding the best option for dredging Lake Accotink without impacting the North Springfield community. NSCA also entered the Digital Age with a website and email communications.

During the 2010's...

Our focus has been on preserving the integrity of our neighborhood and safety. The Civic Association worked closely with the county, VDOT and their partners to minimize the impact of the 95 and 495

Express Lanes projects. Soundwall heights were increased to reduce noise near the school and on Jervis Street. We ensured that the development on Heming Hill was done safely and that the aesthetic beauty of the area was preserved. We secured grants to replant along the Leesville soundwall, to install a watering station near the landscaped areas along the Leesville soundwall and to upgrade our entrance signs. We worked with the county and VDOT to have bus stop shelters and sidewalks installed on Braddock at Heming and on Leesville at Appomattox Court. We have coordinated with VDOT regarding repaving our streets and other safety concerns such as a left turn signal for westbound Braddock traffic turning left onto Ravensworth. We also were major leaders behind a county-wide effort to keep funding for the enforcement of the county's grass ordinance.

Concerns about neighborhood speeding resurfaced and the Civic Association is facilitating a community dialogue regarding how best to address it. An ad-hoc traffic calming committee has been formed to consider the options available. We also joined the county-wide effort to defeat the proposal to permit Residential Studio Units (micro-apartments) in low-density neighborhoods. Along with the county, we negotiated with U-Haul to ensure that the proposed backlit signs for their new facility on Port Royal Road would not impact nearby residents in the Ravensworth Farm and North Springfield communities. We coordinated with the PTA and school to resolve safety concerns associated with a new crossing guard policy.

Community development continues as we have added a community Facebook page as well as the ability to pay association dues via credit card and online. We partnered with the North Springfield Swim Club to host a community day when the pool opens each May and a National Night Out celebration in August. We also started a holiday toy drive in December benefiting needy families throughout Fairfax County.



2014 Holiday Toy Drive (NSCA Archives)



2014 National Night Out (Courtesy Gary Black, III)

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Our vision is to preserve North Springfield as a quality residential neighborhood where young families want to come to raise their children and where senior residents want to stay to enjoy the fruits of their life. To realize that vision, we must successfully address a number of challenges over the years ahead. The major among them include:

The issues associated with an aging neighborhood...

Older homes, typically smaller by today's standards, are being renovated or replaced, resulting in both more modern and larger homes. Concurrent with the larger homes, a changing economy and shifting demographics are increasing the number of residents living in our community. While this transition is normal, it is important to ensure it is done in a responsible way that does not adversely impact the desirability of homes and property values in the neighborhood. We must be certain that infrastructure and services keep pace with these changes. Roads, sidewalks, storm drains, street lights, water, sewer, electric and cable infrastructure are also aging, and the demand for them increases with this population growth. The number of vehicles is increasing, creating both traffic and parking issues in the community. The Civic Association will play a key role in coordinating with government and residents to express our needs and see that appropriate resources are applied during our community's transition in the years ahead. We will continue to maintain the aesthetic beauty of the neighborhood, making repairs and upgrades as needed to common areas throughout the community.

The issues associated with an increasing senior population...

With people living longer, most seniors want to stay in their homes as long as possible. The need for cost effective ways to provide seniors the services and the safety they deserve continue to rise. NSCA will play a key role in facilitating a community dialogue on the issues, educating residents on available resources and options, and ensuring North Springfield's senior residents can access those resources.

The issues associated with diversity...

In addition to our senior population, younger families continue to move into the neighborhood. At the same time the cultural and ethnic diversity in our neighborhood is increasing. It is important that we stay responsive to these changes. NSCA will play a key role in developing relevant, family-friendly programs that appeal to, benefit and engage all of our residents. Embracing our diversity and providing everyone an opportunity to work together to address the challenges we face is the proven way to sustain a quality community.

The issues associated with a growing number of home businesses...

More people are self-employed, running small businesses from home and telecommuting. There is a balance to be maintained between providing residents' the ability to support themselves with meaningful employment and preserving the residential look and feel of our neighborhood. North Springfield's desirability and ability to sustain/grow property values is based on its reputation as a safe, clean and quiet residential community. NSCA will play a key role in sustaining an appropriate balance that accommodates an increasing number of home businesses without adversely impacting the safety, look and feel of the neighborhood.

CONTINUING SUCCESS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

How successful we are in meeting the challenges and fulfilling our vision is dependent on our residents' willingness to engage with the Civic Association. Residents can choose to be reactive, going about their daily lives not worrying about what is happening around them until they are directly impacted, or they can choose to be proactive, going about their daily lives and contributing a little of their time and talents to ensure their community stays on track. In the long run, the proactive choice has proven to be a more cost effective and less stressful model. Everyone can play a role in continuing success through engagement. Volunteering and supporting the North Springfield Civic Association strengthens our community. When neighbors work together, it leads to better communication, problem resolution and a safer community.

We have expanded some of our current events and added a few new ones to celebrate our community's 60th anniversary over the coming year. Details for these events can be found on the NSCA website. With the community's support, we can make these regular annual events and can add new ones in the years to come. Suggested programs include:

- Adding live entertainment and more youth activities (preschoolers through high school) to the Community Day each May and National Night Out each August
- Adding a summer outdoor movie night for residents of all ages
- Adding an International Night to celebrate our diversity
- Adding joint events with North Springfield Elementary School, the Swim Club, and the Ravensworth Farm community
- Instituting the neighborhood Welcome Wagon program
- Instituting a spring Easter egg hunt
- Reviving a community volunteer recognition program
- Enhancing the annual yard sale
- Providing refreshments and raffles at general members meetings of the Civic Association

Come join us as we celebrate 60 years of growth & prosperity!