

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
January 4, 2023 at Gunston Hall**

Note: There was no meeting in December, January minutes taken by Annie

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka		Jim Martin
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	Scott Stroh
Secretary		Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer		Rick Hutson	

New Business:

- BLM and Caisson meeting January 5, 7pm @ Gunston Hall
 - Working with Noah out of Congressman Byers Office to coordinate the meeting, Noah will be leading the community discussion
 - Gunston hall available, as well as a zoom meeting
 - Agreement that MNCA would like to strengthen relationship and partnership with BLM and improve communication for this and future projects
 - Nancy to state overview of who we are and what we do as part of opening remarks □
- Nancy to work with Scott on promotional materials made for MNCA to hand out at future meetings, Eagle Fest, etc.
- South County updates:
 - Amtrak update by EOW for Lorton Road Graphic (meeting on January 10)
- Discussing 4 programs per year as a fundraiser for MNCA funding - need to brainstorm before next meeting

Motion to adjourn at 8pm

Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
February 1, 2023 at Cranford Methodist Church

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Arsenio Ayon	
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	
Secretary	Dick Kennedy	Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer		Rick Hutson	

President Nancy called the meeting to order at about 7:35 and the following were discussed:

Minutes from January (minutes done by Annie): Motion to approve passed. (Peter/Rick)

Treasurer Report: \$1687.62 on hand, but about \$1482 will go to reimbursing the Secretary for 2022 postcard mailings and other post office expenses (PO Box fee and Mailing Permit).

Membership Report: No

Donations Report: No, but Marvin suggested emailing everyone on our email list asking for donations, since our dues are now zero.

BLM: Extensive discussion about their Meadowood facility and MNCA's relationship with BLM people. Noted that Meadowood is close to DC, and is the only BLM facility east of the Mississippi, and that all their other properties focus on mineral rights, grazing rights, and wild horse roundups, but not recreation. Also the Board was disappointed by BLM's chosen location for the pavilion (aka, the "aircraft hanger") since we met with them last year and strongly supported a site farther back from Gunston Road. Nevertheless, we want to work with them cooperatively in the future, for example by facilitating meetings between BLM people and Mason Neck residents, which BLM has offered; Nancy will contact them. We expect that MNCA will be the prime intermediary between BLM and Neck residents, but will work in close collaboration with the South County Federation.

Other BLM-related:

- Their detailed plan for the future will be released mid-February.
- The caisson horses from Fort Belvoir will be coming to Meadowood in March.
- Marvin asked if we can get a map of BLM's future plans—Nancy will ask.
- Kite problem (broken-glass-covered tails of fighting kites falling on the Neck, including BLM; Marvin noted that Fairfax police can intervene on BLM property).

Eagle Festival on May 13: MNCA usually presents a "good citizens" award at the festival and the Board agreed that it should go to the two firefighters who risked their lives by rushing into a burning house on Harley Road to search for any trapped people. MNCA will have a booth.

Supervisor Dan Storck's annual environmental festival: Will be back this year! At Fort Hunt Park on April 22.

Tragic accident on Lee Chapel Rd that claimed the lives of two South County students: Noted that it is one of the few roads in Fairfax County that still has both numerous curves and hills.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, March 1, at 7:30 PM .

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:39 (Marvin/Dick)

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
March 1, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees in bold face:

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Arsenio Ayon	Jim Martin
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	Scott Stroh
Secretary	Dick Kennedy	Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Rick Hutson	

President Nancy called the meeting to order at about 7:35 and the following were discussed:

Minutes from January: Motion to approve passed. (Arsenio/Jim)

Signatories for MNCA’s account at Truist Bank: Motion passed saying that the MNCA President should be an authorized signer, in addition to the MNCA Treasurer. (Marvin/Annie)

MNCA Finances: \$1687.62 on hand, but about \$1482 will go to reimbursing the Secretary for 2022 postcard mailings and other post office expenses (PO Box fee and Mailing Permit). We will hand out a report about our finances at tehe General Membership meeting in June.

Donations: Marvin suggested emailing everyone on our email list asking for donations, since our dues are now zero, and we have no other source of income.

BLM-Meadowood Environmental Report: Released a week or so ago with a 45-day period for public comments; They will have an online public meeting next Tuesday, attendees must sign up to participate.

The Board had an extensive discussion about the report and we have two main concerns:

- 1. Proposed moving of the pollinator garden to a location near Hidden Pond:** BLM says this was suggested by the public but we see no mention of that in the report. We think the current location, near the new pavilion, is much better—gets full sun and, unlike Hidden Pond, is easily accessible by the public and the volunteers who care for the garden.
- 2. Proposed construction of a two-acre asphalt-covered parking lot:** We think a parking lot with a **permeable** surface is far better on environmental grounds

At Marvin’s suggestion the Board will draft a resolution making these points.

Info about the plans for hosting Fort Belvoir’s caisson unit horses on the BLM property: (From Noah, in Don Beyers office) : There are about 96 horses, 14 acres will be reserved for them for a period of five years, and the horses could start arriving a soon as April. Beyond five years, Congress has Fort Belvoir to find a permanent location for the horses, not necessarily on the BLM property but it should be about 50 acres in size and come with a fifty year lease.

Planned new fire station on Gunston Road (replacing the existing station): Still in the design phase but will be much bigger, not known where the crosswalk will be located.

Update on the South County Federation, by Peter:

- Kathy Tran had a town hall meeting on the recent tragic accident on Lee Chapel Rd.
- The BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) planners haven’t gotten to our part of Route 1 yet.
- The Fairfax County Parkway will be widened.
- Supervisor McKay has proposed making HOT lanes permanent, i.e., not switch directions

WAC planning session: Hillary attended, subject was lowering the speed limit on Rt. 123.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 5, at 7:30 PM .

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:40 (Annie/Arsenio)

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
April 4, 2023 at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees in bold face:

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	<u>Arsenio Ayon</u>	Rick Hutson
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	<u>Rob Kolb</u>
Secretary	Dick Kennedy	<u>Annie Collins</u>	Scott Stroh
Treasurer	Bruce Scott		Peter Weyland

President Nancy called the meeting to order at 7:34 and the following were discussed:

Minutes from March: Approval postponed so Dick can incorporate suggestions from Hillary

Treasurers Report: No report but Dick said he had \$2490 in donation checks picked up from our PO box, plus \$100 in cash from another donor, to be deposited in MNCA's checking account.

Date for June General Membership Meeting and Board Election: June 6 or 13 look like the best dates, Scott will check the availability of Gunston Hall. Topics could be the "wetlands" issue (see below) or the pending arrival at BLM of Fort Belvoir's caisson horses

BLM Meadowood's Plans to Build a Two-Acre Asphalt Parking Lot Near the Pavilion and Move the Pollinator Garden to a Far More Distant Location (Near Hidden Pond): The Board appreciates that BLM seeks our input and Jim has drafted a letter to send to BLM expressing our concerns about two main issues:

- **Parking Lot:** We strongly encourage BLM to use a permeable surface for all, or at least most, of the parking area, mainly on environmental grounds but also for aesthetic reasons. Our understanding is that a permeable surface is more expensive to install, but has lower maintenance costs over time. Scott noted that Gunston Hall is installing a parking lot with permeable surface, and already has walking paths with a permeable surface. (Also noted that the County has rules on parking lots but they don't apply on federal property.)
- **Pollinator Garden:** We believe the more distant Hidden Pond location would make the garden much less accessible for both the volunteers who maintain it and the general public who visit. Also the garden would get less sunlight in that location, and the milkweed in the garden might pose a health risk for the horses at BLM. We therefore urge BLM to keep the pollinator garden near its current location. (It was also noted that moving the garden might not be practicable so a new one would have to be started.)

Wetlands Issue: Peter raised the issue of the County's new rules on "living shorelines", which promote "living shorelines" instead of seawalls, and said there is a local resident who had begun replacing a failing seawall and was told by the County to stop. Also mentioned that Delegate Tran had introduced a bill grandfathering existing seawalls but it didn't pass.

Changing MNCA's Name? Nancy suggested that "citizens association" sounds like a homeowners group and maybe something like "civic alliance" would better convey what we actually do, and the Board will consider this.

MNCA Citizen of the Year Award: The Board agreed that it should go to the two firefighter who entered a burning house on Belmont Blvd. to search for trapped people but none were found. As usual, the plaques will be given to the honorees at the Eagle Festival in May, and we will invite Supervisor to attend.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, May 3 at 7:30 PM.

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:27

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
May 3, 2023 at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees in bold face: (note that three attendees had to leave before the meeting was over)

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Arsenio Ayon	Jim Martin
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	Scott Stroh
Secretary	Dick Kennedy	Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Rick Hutson	

President Nancy called the meeting to order at 7:34 and the following were discussed:

Minutes from March and April: Motion to approve passed Incorporating emendations from Hillary (March) and Jim (April), subject to Dick checking the number of Ft. Belvoir caisson horses coming to BLM.

Secretary Position: Dick had said that, after 12-plus years as Secretary, it's time for a change so Nancy asked for suggestions. Arsenio nominated Jim for the position and Scott seconded, so Jim will be the candidate for secretary on the ballot at the Board election at the June 6 General Membership Meeting and Dick will be a candidate for Director. All the other Board members will run for re-election to their current position.

Treasurer Report: Bruce reported via email that our bank balance is \$4277.33, including \$2590 received in checks or cash in response to our request for donations, but not including about \$800 donated via PayPal. But Secretary Dick is owed about \$1600 for postcard printing and mailings in 2022 and 2023 (each printing and mailing is about \$400) plus some PO fees (for our PO box and our mailing permit).

- Marvin requested reimbursement for the \$237 spent for the two plaques that will be presented to MNCA's Citizens of the Year at the Eagle Festival on May 13

BLM-Meadowood: After much Board discussion, and solicitation of comments from MNCA members, we posted on BLM's docket a statement strongly supporting: 1) a permeable surface, rather than asphalt, for the planned parking lot, and 2) keeping the pollinator garden somewhere its current location, instead of moving it to a more distant and less accessible site.

- We are hopeful that BLM, as federal agency that is concerned with the environment, will "do the right thing", but we will turn to our representatives in Congress for support if necessary.

Eagle Festival on May 13 at Mason Neck State Park: MNCA will have a booth at the event and will present our annual **Citizen of the Year** award:

- Two recipients this year: the brave firefighters who rushed into a burning house on Belmont Blvd to search for people who might be trapped inside.

June General Membership Meeting: Date will be June 6 at Gunston Hall. The speaker will be the commanding General at Fort Belvoir (or a stand-in) talking about the possible transfer of the fort's caisson horses to BLM (about 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for Q&A).

- Nancy will speak briefly about what's going on with MNCA.
- Candidates who are on the ballot for June 20 primary election will be invited to attend.
- The first 30 minutes will be a social half-hour for people to chat with their Mason Neck neighbors and any of the other attendees.
- This is will also be our annual Board election meeting but that should go quickly.
- A postcard about the meeting will be sent to the 1100 or so Mason Neck households

Future General Membership Meetings: As usual we will have **Candidates Night** in the fall and everyone who is on the ballot for the November election will be invited to speak.

- We also plan at some point to have a meeting on the “wetlands” issue, specifically Fairfax County’s emphasis on “living shorelines” and its very restrictive approach to building or replacing seawalls. (We noted that Delegate Tran introduced a bill to grandfather existing seawalls but it didn’t pass.)

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 7, at 7:30 PM .

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:49

Mason Neck Citizens Association General Membership Meeting Gunston Hall, Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 7-8:30 PM

Introduction and Election of MNCA Officers for 2023-2024

Following a 30-minute social gathering, [Mason Neck Citizen Association \(MNCA\)](#) President Nancy Wilochka called the meeting to order at 7:30 with seven members of the MNCA Board and approximately 120 community members in attendance. She mentioned the MNCA's history and record of achievement in protecting and improving the quality of life on Mason Neck. She also expressed the Board's appreciation for the 14 years of service of outgoing Secretary Dick Kennedy, who will continue to serve on the Board. She presented the MNCA's proposed slate of officers for 2023-2024; in the absence of any nominations from the floor, the slate was considered accepted.

Army Caisson Horses

President Wilochka then introduced Joint Task Force-National Capitol Region and the U.S. Army Military District of Washington's Commanding General, Major General Trevor Breidenkamp. General Breidenkamp and his assistant Col. Lewis then gave a presentation on the Army's proposal to permanently house the Army's herd of caisson horses (who pull the caissons carrying coffins of soldiers to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery) on 50 acres of the [Bureau of Land Management's Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area \(SRMA\)](#) on Mason Neck – specifically, the “Mustang Loop” part of the SRMA that stretches along Gunston Rd. (Figure 1) This proposal was first laid out in an April 2023 required Report to Congress on the Army's long-term plan to remediate poor conditions for the caisson horse platoon.

General Breidenkamp noted the Army's existing effort in the SRMA, which would rotate caisson horses through a ten-acre pasture off Belmont Rd. He said that 27 horses out of the total number of around 50 are currently in various locations away from their main location at Fort Myer as part of the effort to improve their conditions. The Army is also trying to build up its expertise on caring for horses. General Breidenkamp then introduced Col. Lewis to provide more details on the “permanent” proposal.

Col. Lewis noted that the Army currently has 48 caisson horses, and the industry standard is one acre of grazing land per horse, hence the requires for 50 acres. He presented a schematic of the proposed facility (Figure 1), showing an indoor arena/stable, several paddocks, a parking lot, a dry lot, and outdoor arena, and a hay barn. The Army had looked at private properties in the area, but they were not suitable for various reasons, including the high cost of real estate.

There were numerous questions/comments from the audience, including:

Why not Fort Belvoir? Several audience members noted the much larger land area of the Fort, existing security protocols, on-site staff, and currently unused spaces. Col. Lewis and other Army representatives said that Fort Belvoir was not ideal for horses, noting uneven topography, stumps, proximity to Potomac, lack of existing pastures, and difficult-to rehabilitate former firing range spaces. Meadowood has existing pastures suitable for horse grazing, which could save the Army two years of time in implementing its plan, and its proximity to Washington will keep travel times down for personnel.

What about other possible Locations? Multiple people person mentioned the former Woodlawn stables property, a national Trust site on Route 1 that has existing stables and land. The General admitted he was unaware whether such non-Belvoir options had been considered but would look into it.

What infrastructure will be needed at Meadowood? Col. Lewis noted that water, electricity and wastewater facilities would need to be provided. **Personnel?** No barracks would be required. No mention was made in the presentation or Q&A of personnel numbers or related non-barracks building requirements for staff.

What about the BLM Pavilion/wild horse sales, etc.? BLM activities would continue but might need to be moved to another location.

Will access to existing Meadowood trails be preserved? Some access routes might need to be moved away closer to existing roads to accommodate the Army's plan, which would include fencing. BLM noted that the 50 acres identified in the Report to Congress constitute only 6% of Meadowood acreage. However, several audience members commented that the Mustang Loop is one of the most heavily used public areas in Meadowood. In addition to the trails in the woods, several walking/equestrian trails crisscross the Mustang Loop itself, and the Army's plan would eliminate them.

Access from Gunston Road to planned facility? Through the existing dirt road near the Enchanted Pond (not clear whether upgrades would be required).

Encroachment on existing stables/facility? The Army does not seek to take over the "Simple Changes" stables. (Note: Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center has moved to its own facility on Belmont Road. The question, presumably, was meant to ask about the Stables at Meadowood, which is currently under a 10-year lease by a contractor who also was in attendance). The Army originally asked about using the stables but was told by BLM it was not possible given this ten-year lease.

Army's poor record with caisson horses: One participant noted that the Army's past attempts to place some caisson horses temporarily at the existing Meadowood Stables or other locations on Mason Neck had been marred by poor treatment/neglect of those horses, such that horse experts did not want to be involved in them. The General was unaware of that particular instance and admitted that the Army's personnel rotation system made it hard to keep personnel with equine expertise in place, and they were looking into ways to improve that, including via non-uniformed personnel.

Failure to keep community engaged/informed: Multiple people expressed concern that the plan seemed not fully thought through and the Mason Neck Community had not been consulted.

What is required to move forward? A) Because existing law reserves Meadowood for recreation purposes, new legislation would be required to transfer the land from BLM to the Army. The Army wants to include the transfer in the Fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), currently being considered by the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. B) If approved in the NDAA, the Army would need to undertake an environmental needs assessment and then seek funding through the annual Appropriations process before it could break ground on the new facility.

Closing Remarks

Congressman Beyer Chief of Staff Noah Simon: Stated that it is clear from the meeting that there is considerable community concern about the proposal. Congressman Beyer's office will be in touch with the office of Sen. Kaine, who sits on the Senate Armed Services Committee. More questions were raised tonight than answered. This will not happen overnight.

MNCA President Wilochka: Thank you to both the Army and BLM for presentations. Mason Neck residents are concerned about the prospect of an Army outpost in an area that is currently predominantly composed of protected areas. The MNCA Board informed the community of this issue as soon as we heard of it. Our community wants to be a good neighbor and loves horses, but there may be better options for the caisson horses – like Fort Belvoir. MNCA is prepared to hold more meetings on this issue if necessary.

BLM: Issue first raised by Army in April 2022 when discussing original temporary proposal. BLM want to help caisson horses, but only Congress can authorize change in Meadowood's purpose. If Congress approves, the public will still have the opportunity to weigh in on environmental assessment.

General Breidenkamp: Will look into issues raised in meeting, ready to have additional meetings/discussions if needed.

Meeting concluded at approximately 8:45 PM



Figure 1: The Army's Conceptual Plan of the 50 acres at the Mustang Loop off of Harley Road (photo courtesy of US Army)

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
July 5, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees in bold face: (note that three attendees had to leave before the meeting was over)

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Arsenio Ayon	Dick Kennedy
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	Scott Stroh
Secretary	Jim Martin	Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Rick Hutson	

President Nancy called the meeting to order at 7:33 and the following were discussed:

Minutes from May and June: May minutes not yet ready, so deferred to August meeting.
June Annual Meeting minutes already have been disseminated so are considered approved.

President’s Report/Agenda: Nancy suggested, and attendees agreed that the Board set aside some agenda items to focus on the caisson horses issue.

Treasurer Report: Bruce reported that there was \$4,177.52 in the MNCA bank account, with another \$1,700 received via PayPal but not yet in the bank account, for a total of \$5,877. Jim gave Bruce the cash/check donations made in person at the General Membership Meeting.

- Nancy already has received reimbursement for funds spent on MNCA’s EagleFest booth.
- Hillary will submit a receipt for the cost of refreshments she bought for the annual meeting.

Caisson Horses: Nancy noted that since the annual meeting at which the community discussed this issue with General Bredenkamp, MNCA has issued a resolution on the caisson horses and has been successful in ensuring that the House version of the FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) does not have the Army’s desired language on transferring BLM land to the Army for the horses. The Senate bill had draft language concerning a required report to Congress on the horses, but we have not seen the final version as reported from the Armed Forces Committee and will not know what it is until the Senate reconvenes on July 11. We have had multiple discussions with different groups that have different approaches. People in the community are concerned that they do not know what is going on and that the army may just “put the horses there.” We need to educate both the community and the Army. Using a GIS overlay of the Army’s 52 acres over Meadowood shows that it would essentially take over the entire pasture areas you can see from Gunston Rd. With two federal agencies – the Army and BLM – this is a different type of situation than some of our past efforts to fight developers, and we need a different approach.

Marvin argued that we need to mobilize our members of Congress and other interest groups, such as the South County Federation and the Audubon Society. He will file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the 2017 Corps of Engineers Plan for more space for the horses at Fort Belvoir. Fairfax County has had some discussion with the Army about possible use of the current Laurel Hills equestrian facility. He suggested MNCA send an e-mail to the community updating the situation and post it on our website. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck is also considering introducing a resolution to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors supporting our position. Congress set aside Meadowood for public recreation. Bruce noted that fed-to-fed land transfer are easy and will be hard to stop. We will need to rely on our officials, particularly Senate Armed Forces Committee Member Tim Kaine, to ensure the Army comes to a decision that preserves Meadowood. Bruce, Jim, and Nancy all stressed the importance of using diplomatic approaches rather than the more inflammatory language some in the community have favored. Nancy urged the importance of continuing to work with our elected officials – both local and federal. Rick agreed that “we need to be in the room where it happens.” Peter will look into setting up a website page about the caisson horses, but his former website developer is retired and the MNCA website is not in the ideal HTML format. Nancy will provide input for the “Mount Vernon on the Move” article about the horses. Marvin has drafted a resolution, which the South County Federation has endorses, calling on the Army to slow down the process and review all

options to find a solution that is in the best interests of the horses, the Army, and the local community. Marvin argued for additional e-mails keeping the community informed of what is happening. Jim agreed information is important, but argued for fewer and more focused e-mails that report new developments. Annie urged for solution-oriented actions.

Next Steps:

- 1) Need language to share with community about how we intend to work with the Army on both the about short-term and long-term efforts
- 2) Keep tracking status of NDAA in Congress
- 3) Get SCF letter supporting our position approved and out
- 4) Check on status of Army-Fairfax County discussions about Laurel Hills
- 5) Check with Supervisor Storck on possible Board of Supervisors resolution
- 6) Flesh out information on website (a local donor has agreed to provide funding if needed); consider also sending out information via local ListServes, Facebook, Twitter
- 7) Reach out to other interested/influential individuals, such as former Congressman Jim Moran and former Mount Vernon Supervisor Jerry Hyland
- 8) Seek a PhD equine nutritionist who can speak to the issue of how much pasture land/horse is needed for situations similar to the caisson horses

Potential New MNCA Board Members: Annie noted that some people from Harbor View had expressed interest in joining the Board. After some discussion, the Board agreed it did not need more members at this time but would welcome involvement at the non-Board level. Board meetings are open to all Mason neck residents. The Board also will consider reaching out to the Harbor View Board to help it feel more a part of Mason Neck.

Resource Protection Areas (RPAs): Nancy noted that she had been approached by someone in HarborView asking about RPA issues and tree cutting. Fairfax County officials sometimes assume areas are subject to RPA restrictions when they are not. Fairfax County's new zoning website ZMOD (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod>) provides very good information on what areas are affected.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, August 2, at 7:30 PM

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 9:07

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
August 2, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Peter Weyland	
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	
Secretary	Jim Martin	Rick Hutson	
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Scott Stroh	

President Nancy Wilochka called the meeting to order at 7:33 and presented the agenda. The following were discussed:

Minutes from July Meeting: July minutes having been already circulated, they were approved with minor changes.

President's Report:

Treasurer Report: Bruce reported that after receiving \$1777 in PayPal donations and \$128 in cash donations at the annual meeting, and reimbursing Dick Kennedy \$1874 for the postcard mailing for the annual meeting, MNCA now has \$4126 in its account, with reimbursement to Marvin pending on a \$237 receipt for the MNCA Citizen of the Year Award. Hillary confirmed that her expenses for Annual Meeting refreshments were a donation. At the meeting Bruce provided Jim Martin with a check for \$188 to pay for the MNCA post office box at Lorton P.O.

Caisson Horses: Nancy reported that we are in a good place on the Caisson Horses issue. In an e-mail exchange, General Breidenkamp had told her things are on track for his vision of siting the entire Caisson herd at Fort Belvoir, and he is briefing the idea up his chain of command. He expects a five-year contract for Caisson Horse rehabilitation at a facility in Northern Virginia to be signed soon. The Army may still use the 14 acres off Belmont Blvd that BLM has temporarily allotted to them during this five-year period. The General is also hoping to establish an informal committee of horse experts to help advise him on the horses. The language regarding the Caisson Horses in the versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed by the House and Senate is the same as earlier versions, which we support. Both versions require regular briefings on the situation, starting 60 days after bill passage; the Senate version also requires a report on the long-term plan, due March 2024, which requires, inter alia, information on options considered will impact local community access to recreation. Marvin said Senator Kaine's office expects the NDAA to pass by December. Hillary noted that the Northern Virginia Audubon Society will support MNCA on the Caisson Horses issue. Peter has put relevant documents on this issue on a google drive and is working on a possible "Friends of the Caisson Horses" page for the MNCA website.

BLM/Meadowood Parking Lot: Nancy said she had not heard the results of the BLM public comment process on the parking lot and will check again. Marvin noted that runoff from the proposed hard-surfaced parking lot could end up in the Potomac and suggested he might talk to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality rep in Woodbridge about it; the same argument would hold if the Army put the Caisson Horses at Meadowood. Nancy noted that Stephanie Carman, head of BLM's Eastern States Division (who briefed on the last BLM meeting about the parking lot) has left BLM.

MNCA Internal Audit: Nancy reminded that this was still something she wanted the Board to do, but that would be a topic for a future meeting.

August 8 Presentation on **Environmental Issues in Belmont Bay:** Marvin suggested that MNCA members might wish to attend the presentation as a way of building additional ties with this community on the Prince William County side of Belmont Bay.

Sen. Scott Surovell Efforts on railroad bridge/Giles Rd. bridge: Nancy and Marvin noted that Surovell wrote to Secretary of Transportation Buttigieg supporting a DOT grant to evaluate potential improvements to ease these transportation bottlenecks. A motion for an MNCA Board resolution thanking Surovell was made, seconded, and approved.

Lorton Visioning Survey and Parks Survey: Nancy encouraged MNCA Board members to take these two surveys and spread the word about them to other Mason Neck residents:

- **Lorton Visioning Survey (comment period closes August 21):**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9R672WD>
- **FCPA Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Access (PROSA) Strategy (closes August 8):**
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/planning/prosa>

Candidates Night: The Board discussed dates and invitations for the candidates night in advance of the November 2023 elections. Potential date is either October 3 or October 10; Scott Stroh will check on Gunston Hall availability.

Next Steps:

- Draft MNCA Board resolution (Marvin) and Cover Letter (Jim) thanking State Senator Surovell for his effort seeking funding for rehabilitation of the railroad overpass on Furnace Rd and Giles Rd. bridge
- Draft letters (Jim) to Congressman Beyer and Senator Kaine thanking them for their support on the Caisson Horses issue
- Small group will meet August 3 to discuss substance of an update to the Mason Neck community on the Caisson Horses.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 6, at 7:30 PM

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:17

Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
September 6, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church

Attendees in bold face:

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Arsenio Ayon	Jim Martin
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	Scott Stroh
Secretary	Dick Kennedy	Annie Collins	Peter Weyland
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Rick Hutson	

Vice President Marvin Miller called the meeting to order at 7:32 and the following were discussed:

It was noted that thank you letters were mailed in August to Senator Tim Kaine, Representative Don Beyer and State Senator Scott Surovell for their help in solving our issues with a potential Army Takeover of Meadowood for housing the Caisson horses.

Candidates Nite Discussion:

- Candidates were contacted and a number had confirmed attendance at the Oct 10th Candidates Nite Meeting. Delegate Rozia Henson, Mateo Dunne (School Board), Scott Surovell, Mark Springman, Christopher Morgan have confirmed.

Richard Hayden, Stori Zimmerman were still questionable.

Length of time for the candidates was discussed and it was decided a total of 10 minutes per candidate, 5 for speech/5 for questions.

It was asked if the Democratic party could put out a table with information beyond the candidates themselves and it was decided, No they cannot.

Marvin and Hillary edited the postcard to be sent to the postal route.

An Audit needs to be done, preferably before Oct 1. Hillary and Annie will contact Bruce.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 1, at 7:30 PM .

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:04.

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
October 4, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Peter Weyland	
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	
Secretary	Jim Martin	Rick Hutson	
Treasurer	(absent)	Dick Kennedy	

President Nancy Wilochka called the meeting to order at 7:32 and presented the agenda. The following were discussed:

Minutes from September Meeting: A motion to approve the September minutes was made, seconded, and passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Nothing to report. Bruce out of town.

President’s Report: Nancy presented the agenda. The following items were discussed:

Candidates’ Night: Nancy noted that Postcards are out, banners are up, and Board members should take signs to put up in their neighborhoods. The Board discussed using Facebook, neighborhood ListServes and NextDoor (all as appropriate) to spread the word about the event. Marvin will be moderator. He reported he successfully had reached out to most candidates but was still trying to reach Richard Hayden (Republican candidate for Mount Vernon Supervisor). Challenges will go first, incumbents second. Each candidate will have 5 minutes to speak, then 5 minutes Q&A. Candidates will be asked to speak to their positions on the issues, NOT attacks on their opponents. Schedule will be arrival at 7 for informal mingling; with formal program to begin at 7:30. Board members should arrive at 6:15 to help set up. There will be a refreshments table, check-in table, and candidate materials table. We also will show the “MNCA Accomplishments” PowerPoint.

Traffic at Gunston Elementary School: Members reported that back-ups on Gunston Road during afternoon pick-up is still a problem, but it’s difficult to find ways to ameliorate it, given the limited space in the school parking lot and on shoulders. It appears they cannot use the adjacent Meadowood parking lot. Perhaps additional signage will help. Nancy will reach out to the Principal to discuss.

Caisson Horses Update: Nancy reported that the contract for equine rehabilitation at the facility in Aldie, VA has been signed. General Breidenkamp told her he wants to put the permanent facility for the horses somewhere in that same area (Virginia horse country NW of Washington). Meadowood is off the table as a permanent facility; Laurel Hills may not be *completely* off the table.

Meadowood Pavilion/Parking Lot: Nancy noted that we still had not heard any decision from BLM on the proposed parking lot and relocation of the pollinator garden. She will reach out to the BLM Acting District Manager to get an update.

Mason Neck Multi-Use Trail: Nancy reported that, as agreed in e-mail discussions before the meeting, she had sent a letter to the Transportation Department supporting Fairfax County’s request for funds to help build the section of the trail between Route 1 and the Pohick Bay golf course. Jim noted that mention of the trail had sparked opposition from some in his neighborhood who felt bicyclists were irresponsible and do not use it, but also some support for the trail. He noted extension of the trail might help at least a little with congestion at Gunston E.S.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 1st 7:30 PM at Cranston United Methodist Church

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:40.

**Mason Neck Citizens Association Monthly Board Meeting
November 1, 2023, at Cranford Methodist Church**

Attendees

<i>MNCA Officers</i>		<i>Other Members of the Board of Directors</i>	
President	Nancy Wilochka	Peter Weyland	Dick Kennedy
Vice President	Marvin Miller	Hillary Clawson	
Secretary	Jim Martin	Rick Hutson	
Treasurer	Bruce Scott	Arsenio Ayon	

President Nancy Wilochka called the meeting to order at 7:31 and presented the agenda. The following were discussed:

Minutes from October Meeting: Jim reported that October Minutes are delayed. They will be presented for approval at the December meeting.

President's Report: Nancy presented the agenda. She reported that there had been a good turnout at the Candidates Night, with around 70 attendees. All but two of the invited candidates appeared in person and there were no major disruptions.

Treasurer Report: Bruce reported that after receiving \$155 in donations at Candidates Night, MNCA has \$3601.65 in its account. Hillary provided receipts for refreshments and Jim presented receipts totaling \$364.02 for printing and mailing of postcards, both for Candidates Night.

BLM/Meadowood Parking Lot: Nancy said she had finally received the decision record on Meadowood from the BLM Acting District Manager. BLM plans to proceed with its plans for a two-acre, asphalt-paved parking lot. The pollinator garden will remain in the Mustang Loop instead of being moved to Hidden Pond, as in the previous plan, but it is not clear from the decision document *where* in the Mustang Loop. Per a previous e-mail discussion, Marvin has drafted and sent to BLM an appeal of the decision, in particular noting that the BLM plan was not coordinated with Fairfax County and did not clearly address the potential damage to the watershed. Marvin recommended elevating the appeal to the Secretary of the Interior, an avowed environmentalist. [Marvin had to leave early]. The Board discussed whether it should join an appeal to the Interior Secretary. Concern was expressed about MNCA being ignored on the one hand, but also about spending additional time for no change in the outcome on the other. A motion was made and seconded to let the current appeal run its course and not appeal to the Secretary of the Interior. The motion carried.

Living Shorelines: Nancy noted past discussions and concerns of Mason Neck residents on this issue. Bruce and Hillary mentioned major erosion problems that took a long time to address because of the complicated Fairfax County process; Arsenio said his process was relatively painless. Nancy suggested that MNCA ask the County Wetlands Board to do a presentation like the one it recently did for the Mount Vernon Citizens Association. Peter offered to get the PowerPoint presentation used for the Mount Vernon meeting for the MNCA Board to review. Nancy suggested MNCA could address this issue in a Zoom meeting with its members.

Traffic at Gunston Elementary School: Dick noted that it is still a problem, The Board agreed to keep bringing this problem to the attention of school and local officials.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Post minutes and letters to officials to Google Drive.** Action: Jim
- **Update "Brag Sheet" of MNCA Accomplishments.** Action: Hillary will research
- **Research 501(c) (3) status: What does MNCA need to do to qualify.** Action: Nancy to reach out to Annie to do research.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 6 at 6 PM at the Harbour Grill in Woodbridge (holiday dinner, spouses invited)

Motion to adjourn: Passed at 8:15.

There was no formal MNCA Board Meeting in December 2023.