

# Cardinal Glen of Loudoun Homeowners' Associations Community Newsletter September 2003

## The Bahá'í Center

As all of you know, the Bahá'ís are planning on building a worship center at the entrance to Cardinal Glen. The Boards of Directors of your respective Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) have been following the progress of the impending construction, and have uncovered a certain development of which you should be made aware. While we are not opposed to the Bahá'ís building a worship center in that location and believe that they would make satisfactory neighbors, we have serious concerns about their proposed site plan.

The 2.23 acres of land in question are covenanted strictly for religious purposes. That means that the only thing that can be built on that land is a building intended for religious use. This is a perpetual covenant that is attached to the land, and not to either of the HOAs. In 1989, the Bahá'ís purchased the land from the Presbyterian church, and submitted a site plan to Loudoun County for approval. In November 1989, the Board of Zoning Appeals approved a Special Exception (meaning a non-residential building can be built in an area zoned for residential buildings) subject to the conditions listed in a Staff Report.

The Special Exception was slated to expire in June 2003. In May 2003, before the deadline expired, the Bahá'ís requested an extension of the Special Exception. However, as the Boards of Directors of Cardinal Glen's two HOAs have discovered, there are major differences between the current site plan proposed by the Bahá'ís for the extension and the original site plan filed, assessed and approved in 1989. These differences are detailed below:

- **The Building:** The original plan was for a 9,000 square foot building with a single floor above ground and a basement. The new proposal is for an 18,000 square foot building with two 9,000 square foot floors above ground and a basement. Also note that the original plan

called for the building to be 22.5 feet high. The new plan submitted for approval calls for the building to be 35 feet high.

- **Traffic Access:** At the time the Special Exception was approved, there were plans for a second entrance into and out of Cardinal Glen. Since that time, local development has eliminated the possibility of that second entrance/egress, leaving Cardinal Glen with only one route and one poorly-timed traffic light to support not only residential traffic, but also the worship center's traffic.
- **Number of People:** The original plan indicated that the structure (and associated traffic) was intended to support a congregation of up to 200 individuals, whereas the current plan is intended to support a congregation of 400 to 500 individuals and their associated traffic.
- **Site Utility:** Both plans (original and new) show a building located immediately beside the entrance road on the site. This will present a negative visual effect to our entrance. Since a different traffic access will force some rethinking about siting of the building on the lot, let's lobby for a more central siting to minimize the visual impact.

The Boards of Directors of both HOAs in Cardinal Glen are inviting homeowners to email ALL of the members of Loudoun County's Board of Supervisors, informing them of our concerns and requesting that the Board NOT APPROVE the revised site plan. We are concerned about a building of the proposed size overshadowing the surrounding neighborhood and devaluing homes, and we are concerned about the severe impact the drastically increased traffic flow will have on the rights of residents to the enjoyment of their property. Please ask the Board of Supervisors to require the Bahá'ís to re-submit their original site plan for approval, since that is the plan for which

the County performed extensive assessment, resulting in the aforementioned Staff Report and its associated conditions. Please also ask the Board of Supervisors to require that the site plan be re-assessed for traffic impact given the changed nature of the local road situation and current traffic patterns.

We expect the County Board of Zoning Appeals and the County Board of Supervisors to be meeting sometime soon about this issue. We ask each of you to seriously consider attending these meetings. Please ask in your emails to your Board members to be informed of upcoming meetings about this issue. We also request that you to come to those meetings prepared to speak to the Boards about your concerns. Bear in mind that speakers at these meetings are only allotted a few minutes to share their concerns, so please keep your comments brief and to the point. You might consider preparing a 3x5 index card of your comments to remind you of relevant points you wish to make in your allotted time. The more speakers we have at these meetings – and the more of a presence we can bring to these meetings in general – the more powerful will be our message to the Boards.

This is an election year, and the Board of Supervisors is very sensitive to voter issues. Local residents are local voters; the Bahá'ís, with some exceptions, are not local voters. We must make our voice heard; we must make our concerns clear. We must make the Board of Supervisors understand that the Bahá'í's new site plan is not in the best interest of local residents and of Loudoun County. Please help us in this effort.

For your information, a view of the proposed building (colors notwithstanding; the Bahá'ís have indicated that color is negotiable) can be seen at the web site: <http://www.novabahaicenter.org/>

The names and email addresses of each of the members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors follows:

Email addresses of Board of Supervisors

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**Playing in the Street**

We've all done it – swerved our automobile's steering wheel to avoid hitting a basketball or a child or adult chasing one. After receiving a few complaints, the Board of Directors contacted the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, and received the following information:

1. There is a section of the Virginia Code that prohibits playing in the street.
2. If the Sheriff's Office receives a call about playing in the street, they will respond.
3. The Sheriff's Office will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Transportation to have hoop equipment removed from public property, including the street and curb.
4. Complaints should be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office non-emergency number: 703-777-1021.

We would all appreciate cooperation about this. Parents, please instruct your children not to play in the street, and when bicycling, skateboarding, skating, or scootering, please observe all traffic laws and exercise extra care. Stay to the side of the road rather than riding down the middle of the street. Thank you.

**Water Main Insurance**

We have been advised that water mains have been breaking all over Cardinal Glen. This past spring, Dominion Virginia Power distributed letters advising us that insurance is now available to cover the breakage of a water main. This insurance costs about \$3.25 a month, and we have been alerted that, in Cardinal Glen, it is not a matter of "if" your water main will break, but rather "WHEN". So consider yourselves forewarned, and forewarned is forearmed. The telephone number for Dominion Virginia Power is on your electric bill, and the insurance can be set up with a single, quick telephone call.