



AHCA Holiday Social



Wednesday, December 12, 7–9 p.m.

***** Come Meet Your Neighbors *****

The Acadia at Metropolitan Park

575 12th Road S. 18th Floor Club Room

Limited garage parking in 2-Hour Retail spaces.

Garage entrance on Elm St. Lobby entrance on 12th Street

Aurora Highlands Civic Association Newsletter – December 2018

Out with the Old... It's hard to believe three years has gone by since I first took the proverbial gavel. It has been a busy time, and I hope that some of my efforts have had visible effects in the neighborhood. None of these could have happened without a lot of support from my fellow board members: Scott Miles, Maureen Quinn, Gail Fleming, Rob Sidman, Heather Spence, David Husband, and Galo Valarezo. Although the Boo Ha Ha could not be sustained after Cheryl Mendonsa's much-deserved retirement, we've had some new, fun community-building events, and I hope those will continue. Confronting traffic problems has seemed like a game of Whack-a-Mole, but we now at least have a more engaged Traffic staff working with us to find solutions. The County has paid special attention to planting trees in Aurora Highlands, a necessary and welcome effort at replacing our dwindling tree canopy. Kathy Landis and William Pott have worked hard with me to support that goal. With David Litman's steady leadership as Neighborhood Conservation rep, we've enjoyed completion of new sidewalks along Fern St., a project that began under Bruce Cameron's tenure. Next year, we'll see David's hard work as our liaison on Nelly Custis pay off with the park's renovation. Kari Klaus was instrumental in negotiations to get the fences around the softball fields removed so that we all can use the space. And finally, a special shout-out needs to go to Les Garrison, who has lived here almost as many years as I, for the rebirth of our newsletter and for his skill marshalling the distribution team.

I'm not going anywhere, and I look forward to helping Miriam as she takes the helm. Her clear vision, creativity, and energy are just what AHCA needs at this juncture. Please do what you can to help her leverage the power of the community as it faces many challenges and opportunities with Amazon's arrival.

—Natasha Atkins

...In with the New. I humbly agreed to take on the role of Aurora Highlands Civic Association President knowing that our community, and the region surrounding it, is going through massive change. The metamorphosis will undoubtedly change some things we would rather see stay the same, while enhancing some things that have long needed attention. If we approach the process optimistically as an opportunity to create a more balanced, enlightened and sustainable community, the prospect of change may be less worrisome.

For many years I have advocated for sustainability. What does sustainability mean? To me it means fostering balanced relationships on multiple levels. Some such relationships include nature and growth, value and investment, economics and basic human rights. We now have an incredible opportunity to assess our community as a "whole system," rather than through individual plans and proposals. Even a close-knit community like Aurora Highlands can seem fragmented by differing positions on specific issues. We feel this in discussions about growth vs. the environment, open space vs. ball fields, bikes vs. cars, owners vs. renters and the list goes on.

I come to this role with one goal in mind: increasing membership and getting more voices heard. Many in our community do not have children, but are asked to support schools. More and more people do not have cars, but are asked to protect parking. Just because I am not yet on a fixed income does not mean I should be oblivious to our seniors who struggle to afford to live here. We cannot afford to restrict our vision to only our own personal needs. We need a more holistic approach, the kind of approach that values small business as well as large. We need a vision that welcomes diversity and inclusion.

Education, recreation, transportation, housing, jobs and the environment are all going to be on everyone's mind in the coming year. Individually, we can raise concerns during one of the many public forums; however, it is my hope that we will pool our energy and resources by creating collaborative working groups within our established civic association. These groups can then reach out to the other civic associations in our area and share ideas. This is our community and we need to be at the helm shaping a combined vision for Arlington's future. That shared perspective cannot be constructed by a few volunteers, but rather by a cacophony of views as unique as every business, neighbor, family and child. I am many things, an environmentalist, a journalist, a real estate agent, an investor, a dog owner and a mom, but in my role as civic association president I deeply hope to be a motivator. If we can together motivate more citizens to join the association and encourage each of them to share their ideas and priorities, we will have a much better chance of protecting what we love about our home here in Aurora Highland, while embracing the exciting opportunities that change and growth can offer.

—Miriam Gennari

Amazon Rising. All residents of National Landing (yes, you, if you're reading this) are invited to partake in variety of forums, virtual and in the flesh, to get updates, ask questions, and find answers about what it will mean for Amazon to be settling into our midst. While it is true that the County Board still needs to vote to approve the deal, a wise person probably wouldn't bet against that. Here are the events upcoming in the next month:

- December 17, 7–9 p.m. Community Listening Session with County officials, in the Gunston Middle School cafeteria. Register at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/events/community-listening-session-amazon/>
- December 19, 6:30 p.m. Virtual Learning Session: Schools, Higher Education, and Workforce. Watch live on the County's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonVA>
- January 12, 9:30–11:30 a.m. Community Listening Session 2. Location to be determined. Register at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/events/community-listening-session-amazon-2/>

Free Trees. The Tree Canopy Fund is providing 7'–9' tall trees, planted free of charge next spring. Email Kathy Landis at landis59@gmail.com or Natasha Atkins at natashaatkins1@gmail.com. We are coordinating applications and can help you select a tree and a place for it in your yard. Applications are due on January 7. For more information visit <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/spring2019application/>



Vote for your favorite festive Aurora Highlands home. This year AHCA would like to give a shout out to the neighbors who go all out to make the winter season a festive one in our community! Get your votes in by December 21st and we'll post the winner on our neighborhood list-serve and give recognition in January's AHCA newsletter and at our community meeting. <http://aurorahighlands.org/festivehome2018>

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