

**Membership Meeting Minutes**  
**Aurora Highlands Civic Association**  
**July 10, 2024, at Aurora Hills Center and via Zoom**

**Opening of Meeting**

President Rachel Hicks opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. with a welcome to the membership and an overview of the agenda. She also thanked the participants for bringing snacks to share at the meeting.

**Minutes Approval**

The draft minutes for the June 2024 regular meeting were approved.

**President's Updates**

- **ANP Project** – Our representative to the Arlington Neighborhood Program, David Litman, was scheduled to present on a proposed traffic calming project in conjunction with ARCA on upper Grant Street. Unfortunately, David was unable to attend, we'll try to cover it at the September meeting.
- **Route 1** – AHCA joined a Livability22202 letter to VDOT reiterating our concern about pedestrian/ cyclist safety if the Route 1 overpasses are eliminated and potential gridlock on Route 1 and neighborhood streets if the lowering of the speed limit to 25 MPH is not implemented properly.
- **Water Balloon Activity** – AHCA will sponsor an afternoon of fun with water balloons in Ives Park on Saturday, July 27 from 2-3:30 p.m. Several members volunteered to help with the fun.
- **National Night Out** – As advertised in the July newsletter, Melwood will sponsor National Night out on August 6 from 5-8 p.m. and are looking for volunteers to help.
- **Highlands Urban Garden (HUG)** – There will be various family activities at the HUG in Virginia Highlands Park on Saturday, July 27 from 9-noon.
- **Schools Letter** – AHCA joined in a letter with Livability22202 to the school department expressing concern with overcrowding and noting the absurdity of their claim that Oakridge Elementary is not overcrowded because students are accommodated in trailers.
- **Volo** – The temporary commercial volleyball courts are open at 23rd Street and Crystal Drive, pickle ball will be added in the spring of 2025.
- **Dominion Substation** – Rachel received an inquiry from a neighbor about the status of the ongoing construction at 18th and Fern Streets. We inquired with the County Board but still do not have a response.
- **Metro East Entrance** – Construction barriers are up and the official groundbreaking is on Friday, July 12 at 11:00 a.m.
- **Art Entries for Newsletter** – We got a lot of interest in pets, keep you artwork coming!
- **Melwood Update** – The Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board decided at its [hearing on June 20](#) that the Nelly Custis School met the criteria to move forward with a study to consider the proposed local historic district designation. Following last month's meeting, Melwood responded to a number of written questions we had received from the neighborhood, read the Q&A at: <https://aurorahighlands.org/wp-content/uploads/Applicant-Responses-to-Aurora-Highlands-Civic-Association-Questions-A1239727.pdf>.

- **Code Enforcement** – Teairra Nowkin from the code enforcement team was expected to present at the meeting but did not attend.

### **Melwood Presentation**

Cathy Puskar from Walsh Colucci led the presentation and was joined by Larysa Kautz from Melwood, architect Doug Carter from [DCS Design](#), a representative from Wesley, and several members of the technical team. Melwood has filed their 4.1 application with the County and are requesting a building that has 154,300 square feet of gross floor area, with 105 units for tenants with 60% AMI qualification and a preference for 30% of the units for developmentally disabled tenants. The breakdown will be 20 1 bedroom units, 63 2 bedroom units, and 22 3 bedroom units. On the program side, the anticipation is that there will be 13 staff onsite supporting 80 clients, up from the current 10 staff, 50 clients today.

Parking access will be from 23rd Street South and loading for material and trash will be through South Grant Street. There will be a total of 95 below grade parking spaces. The parking requirement for the residential part of the building is 119 spaces (1.125/unit) and the applicant is requesting 75 (.71/unit). The parking requirement for the program portion of the building is 20 and the applicant is planning 20 spaces. The applicant says that per fire regulations, there will be no parking on the west side of South Grant Street. On bicycle parking, the plan is for 47 spaces total. The current parking arrangements with neighbors (churches, urgent care) will be discontinued and the letter from Melwood from a couple of years ago saying the arrangement would continue has been nullified. However, Melwood will have discussions with the churches about the possibility of using the 20 program spaces during off hours.

The project architect described the design of the building, which is clad in brick to be evocative of the former Nelly Custis School which Melwood plans to demolish to make way for the project. The building has a maximum height of 60 feet, with various step backs to break up the massing. The goal of the project, which is an all-electric building, is to achieve LEED silver status from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The presentation is available at:

<https://thelandlawyers.sharefile.com/share/view/sce08689a861047f1a91d3e3f96e14de0>.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Nicholas J. Giacobbe, Jr.  
Recording Secretary