



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

It's **PRIMARY SEASON** here in Arlington. **Incumbent Matt De Ferranti is being challenged by democrats James DeVita and Julie Farnam.** Early voting is ongoing until **August 1 and election day is August 4.** Get out and vote and make your voice heard!

Of note: Virginia is an open primary state meaning that voters do not register by political party. Any registered voter is eligible to vote in any primary election. If both the Democratic and Republican parties hold primaries on the same day, voters choose which party ballot they wish to vote.

More info: <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Elections>



The primary is "ranked choice," for more info: <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Elections/Ranked-Choice-Voting>

Nellie Custis Local Historic District: The County Board, led by Chair **Matt De Ferranti, who is up for election,** voted to deny the LHD 4-0-1 with Susan Cunningham abstaining, because they *felt* Nellie Custis is "*not historic enough,*" refusing to rely on evidence or the recommendation of HALRB. County Board candidate **Julie Farnam** attended the June 18, County Board meeting **in support of the Nellie Custis Local Historic District and the Aurora Highlands Civic Association.** Both **Julie Farnam and James DeVita** supported AHCA and Nellie Custis School Local Historic District. More inside.

Faith in Housing: Lyon Village Neighbors are following this closely and provided an update on interpretation of the legislation.

4D-A22202: Several development notices were sent out in June on 4D-A22202 - see bottom right corner to make sure you are on this listserv.

July Meeting: Joshua Dansby from the Arlington County Community Oversight Board will introduce their Board, who provides "civilian oversight of grievances against the Arlington County Police Dept."

AHCA Development Survey After exploring the survey idea, the Board decided not to proceed at this time. We can discuss at the July civic association meeting.

Happy 250 x 4th of July y'all! Stay cool!

Stacy Meyer



Next Regular Meeting:

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

At: Aurora Hills Community Center

735 18th St S, Arlington, VA | 7:00-9:00 pm

AGENDA

- 6:30 pm** Doors open - social
- 7:00 pm** Visitor Introductions
- 7:05 pm** Announcements
- 7:10 pm** Joshua Dansby, Arlington Co. Community Oversight Board
- 7:45 pm** AHCA Business
- 9:00pm** Adjourn (latest)

Optional: Register via Zoom
<https://bit.ly/2026AHCA>

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- (703) 594-1344
- P.O. Box 25201 Arlington, VA 22202
- Local Listserve: 4D-A
<https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>



Development Updates

Amazon Temp Use We are still collecting comments / ideas for the Amazon temp use at the Pen Place site as was discussed at the June meeting.

Please email president@aurorahighlands.org

Westpost Grocery Store We received notice from the county that the grocery store requirement will be retained.

Development Notices These were sent via the 4D-A22202 Listserv regarding the following:

- ***Subdivision request at 2721 S. Grant Street
- ***A new mechanical penthouse at 1201 S. Eads Street
- ***Metro Market Square Survey
- ***Participation in a review process for changes at Arlington National Cemetery (we need a volunteer to represent the civic association - if you are interested email: president@aurorahighland.org)
- ***If you have concerns, please attend the July meeting and / or email president@aurorahighlands.org

National Landing BID Strategic Plan Survey

The National Landing Business BID recently launched a strategic planning process to guide the organization over the next five years.

Your responses will shape the BID's strategic priorities and help inform how the BID invests in programs, services, and resources going forward. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey by Friday, July 17.

As a thank you for sharing your input, 10 randomly-selected survey respondents will receive a \$100 Open Rewards cash reward!

LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NLBID>



601/701 12th Street (TSA Site) will be heard by the Planning Commission July 6. AHCA heard the presentation from the developer in June and generally supports the proposal. Comments received in June were forwarded to the County.

Altitude Wine Bar Opens in Crystal City 2011 Crystal Dr. Altitude has a bar modeled after an airplane wing & a vinyl record listening room. Serving Italian with an on-site sommelier. Open M - S, 4 - 9 pm.

Faith In Housing Lyon Village Neighbors are following this issue closely and provided the following update:

Although SB388 passed both houses of the General Assembly, the Governor took the exceptional step of amending the provision governing building heights. Based on discussions with legal counsel, our understanding is that the Governor's amendment prevents nonprofit developments from relying on the height of nearby buildings that received additional height through a special exception approval.

In Aurora Highlands this means the density and 60-ft height Melwood obtained through the County's special zoning approval process cannot be relied on to provide density and height for other non-profits on 23rd St. This reduces the development potential for these non-profit sites to 20 units per acre from what would have been 58 units per acre. What was originally a potential of 500 units, is now closer to 150 units. What was 60 ft height is now 45 ft (or 35 ft if the Aurora Highlands Historic District is a consideration.)

The potential for parking overflow, however remains an issue, as the county requirement for parking appears to be only 1/2 space per unit in this location which is just within 3/4 miles from Metro.



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Nellie Custis LHD Outtake

Thank you to the community that wrote and came out to speak up for Nellie Custis School June 17. We were extremely effective in delivering the message that we care about this historic school and do not agree with the Melwood design that seeks to demolish it. If you missed the meeting and want to see the video, it's available at: Arlington County Board Recessed Meeting | June 17, 2026 -on YouTube

What we accomplished: By pursuing the Local Historic District, County Board members were forced to take a clear position about demolition. By putting together solid arguments filled with facts, any vote to oppose was based solely on their personal opinion.

JD Spain made the motion to overrule the recommendation of HALRB, and to demolish the building. **Maureen Coffey** seconded. Both felt that the 102-year-old Nellie Custis School just wasn't historic enough. **Takis Karantonis** said he needed more than it just being the first school that was built after Alexandria County became Arlington County, suggesting civic places aren't important enough - aligning with Spain and Coffey.

Chair **Matt de Ferranti** aligned himself with Spain, Coffey and Karantonis in support of demolition of Nellie Custis School, and with all those in the past that have been responsible for the dearth of historic fabric here in Arlington.

This County Board majority made their position clear - just like with Missing Middle and Faith in Housing – **It is Density Only.**

Susan Cunningham did what she could as the minority voice advocating for adaptive reuse and for the 12 civic associations and other organizations that supported preservation across Arlington.

Three political candidates spoke out in favor of preservation:

Julie Farnam, who is running against Matt de Ferranti in the democratic primary was polished and prepared. Julie, who lives near the neighborhood, concluded that the community would have supported a three-story building or adaptive reuse rather than the five stories that was approved. We could have already had a net gain of new, additional affordable housing and received the support of the neighborhood. But this board has unfortunately not taken that approach.

Audrey Clement, independent candidate for county board who will be on the ballot in November, has consistently supported the civic association throughout this process as well.

Natalie Roy, President of the Lyon Park Civic Association, and past democratic candidate for county board was also in support and on fire, calling out the County Board for once again not listening to residents.



12th St. S got a glow up & is now a new hot shade of LIPSTICK RED

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Report a Problem

If you see problems you can report them to the County. Try it: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem>

CONTACT INFO: email president@aurorahighlands.org if you are curious, or interested in volunteering, **or just show up at a meeting!** Please don't be shy! **Any and all help is welcome and appreciated.** *AHCA is committed to inclusivity and open, civil dialogue.*



Curb & gutter repair S. 25th Street. Photo by: Peter Lyon

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Calendar



JULY ONGOING

- Mon Nights: McNamara's Trivia
- Tues Nights: Crystal City Sports Pub Trivia
- Weds Nights: Crystal City Sports Pub Poker Nights / Comedy
- Freddie's Drag Bingo
- Thurs Nights: Wine Tasting at Flight Wine Shop
- Fri Nights: Highline RxR Karaoke
- Tues & Saturday: Met Park Famers Market
- 3rd Sat Night: Comedy at Highline RXR
- Sat Night: Freddie's Follies
- Sunday: Freddie's Brunch

- More events: <https://www.nationallanding.org/events#calendar>
- <https://web.arlingtonchamber.org/events?ce=true>



Early Primary Voting all month Primary Election Day August 4, 2026

- Happy 4th of July!! GO USA!
- July 6: Planning Commission Hearing 601 / 701 12th Street
- **July 8: AHCA Meeting 7 pm, Aurora Hills Library**
- July 18: LibraryFest at the Central Library 10 -7
- July 18: County Board Meeting
- Fridays at the Fountain:
 - July 17: The Montaines (alt pop/indie rock)
 - July 24: Sing Steph (Soul/R&B)
 - July 31: Marilyn Hucek (indie pop)
 - August 7: Alex Hamburger (jazz fusion)
 - August 14: Taisha Estrada (Puerto Rican Singer-songwriter)
 - August 21: Chicha Morada (Bachata)



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More Info About the Candidates

Arlington County Democratic Committee Forum:
<https://www.arlnow.com/2026/06/08/de-ferrantis-challengers-rip-tax-levels-allege-excessive-spending-by-county-board/>

Arlington Chamber of Commerce Candidate Forum:
<https://www.arlnow.com/2026/06/25/county-board-candidates-vow-less-bureaucracy-more-business-support/>

The Arlington Patch Articles on Democratic Candidate Profiles / Positions:

Julie Farnam County Board Candidate Profile:
<https://patch.com/virginia/arlington-va/julie-farnam-running-arlington-board-democratic-primary-candidate>

James DeVita County Board Candidate Profile
<https://patch.com/virginia/arlington-va/james-devita-running-arlington-board-democratic-primary-candidate>

Matt De Ferranti County Board Candidate Profile
<https://patch.com/virginia/arlington-va/matt-de-ferranti-running-reelection-democratic-primary-candidate-questionnaire>

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