



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

We are on the homestretch to the end of 2026, and need to start planning for next year. While I have very much enjoyed representing the Civic Association, I can't continue to serve next year. Alex Chakrin, our current Vice President, is willing to serve as President, and Nick Giacobbe is willing to stay on as Recording Secretary, but Ben and Lexi will also not be able to return as Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary.

Please, if there are folks that are interested in serving in any way, think about what you can contribute to this organization - on the board, or committees - Membership Chair, Social Chair, Newsletter writing / publishing / delivery, Website maintenance, liaison to other Arlington orgs.

Nominations for all board positions will be held at our October meeting, and the vote will be held in November. If you are interested or have questions, please let me know.

president@aurorahighlands.org

We will start collecting 2027 dues in September. They are due by December 31. Your 2026 dues must be paid in order to vote in November.

This is a big shout out to Les Garrison and the folks who deliver this newsletter to you each month. *THANK YOU!*****

In other news, Sarah Summerville, our Crystal and Pentagon Cities County (CPCC) rep, is moving to Clarendon, and her role will be taken over by Dana Bres. Thank you Dana! Good luck Sarah!

The National Landing BID & EcoAction Arlington will present at the September meeting.

Regards,

Stacy Meyer
President



Next Regular Meeting:
Wednesday, Sept 9, 2026
Aurora Hills Community Center
735 18th St S
7:00-9:00 pm

AGENDA

6:30 pm Doors open - social
7:00 pm Visitor Introductions
7:05 pm Announcements
7:10 pm Rob Mandle -
National Landing BID
7:30 pm Kim Fredrich -
EcoAction Arlington
8:00 pm AHCA Business
9:00pm Adjourn (Latest)

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

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Or View the Digital edition
with live links at:

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Aurora Highlands 1920's: The Streetcar Suburb

As part of the research into the history of the to-be-demolished Nellie Custis School at 750 23rd St., I came across some interesting history about Aurora Highlands. For more info, see the Aurora Highlands website, under "Documents," dated June 9, 2026.

Clarendon is often credited as the first Arlington-to-DC "streetcar suburb," but the **Aurora Highlands area was platted in 1896 along the newly extended electric railway connecting Alexandria with Washington, four years before Clarendon.** Clarendon lost much of its historic character to sector-plan development, while other historic streetcar suburbs like Aurora Highlands, including Maywood, Del Ray, Lyon Park and Lyon Village, have not. Of these, only Maywood has rigorous historic protection.

In the late 19th century, the area now known as Aurora Highlands was part of Alexandria County and was largely rural/industrial. But the arrival of the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Electric Railway ("streetcar") in the 1890s made daily commuting to DC practical. The railway connected the diverse communities along its route both physically and economically. What was Alexandria County was even renamed Arlington County in 1920, to make it clear that it was a commuter area connected with Washington, DC rather than its previous connection to what is now Old Town Alexandria.

Unlike later automobile-oriented communities, which separated homes from shopping and services, "streetcar suburbs" were designed around proximity and connection. But Aurora Highlands neighborhoods **were also not designed like the older urban neighborhoods such as Georgetown and Old Town, which had back alleys for loading and parking to accommodate the increased density.** Instead, the streetcar suburbs offered a new alternative: a natural, open-air urban-adjacent life—a consideration of greater importance in the 1920s on the heels of the devastating 1918–1919 pandemic.

more streetcar info & maps: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Virginia_trolleys

The Aurora Highlands area developed within a green and diverse landscape shaped by Four Mile Run to the south, the African American community of Queen City to the northwest, and the industrial brickmaking district along the Potomac. The streets were arranged in a connected grid; homes were located within walking distance of transit stops, and local businesses developed near residential areas. Streetcar stops included the **Addison Station, the Virginia Highlands Station and the Aurora Hills Station, now known as "Aurora Highlands."** The same transportation network also connected workers to nearby industries, including residents of Queen City who worked in the brickyards. Because of its proximity and connectivity, Aurora Highlands experienced significant growth after 1910 and especially during the 1920s, as Washington's population and the federal government grew. Aurora Highlands' livability, walkability and connectivity wasn't accidental; it was created by a streetcar-era landscape in which suburban residential development, work and nearby diverse communities were first physically and economically connected by innovations in rail transportation. It is the original 5 minute, walkable city.

Unfortunately, preservation of this historic neighborhood is now a question. Recent policies and proposals—including Faith in Housing, Missing Middle and the Melwood development—increase density without adequately accommodating impacts. **Arlington is now revising the Comprehensive Plan that has protected the historic character of the neighborhood for decades.** Four of five County Board members have clearly demonstrated they support additional density, even at the expense of livability or historic preservation. The neighborhood character is on the table, and given past action it seems unlikely that this County Board will continue to recognize any of the historic and livability characteristics of Aurora Highlands as past representatives have, including approving changes in land-use policy that will fundamentally alter the neighborhood.

>>For those who enjoy the character of the neighborhood, it is more important than ever to participate in civic life, and your civic association is a great place to start.<<



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Aurora Highlands Today: Big “Missing Middle” Changes

If you are new in the area or haven't been following “Missing Middle” zoning, you might wonder what is going on with all of the demolition of houses. The Arlington County Board approved “Expanded Housing Options” in March, 2023 to eliminate single family home zoning. A lawsuit was filed a month later by nine homeowners. In October 2024, the Virginia circuit court ruled in favor of the homeowners, but the Virginia Court of Appeals reinstated the policy in September, 2025. **The case is currently with the Virginia Supreme Court, with a final ruling expected in October. In the meantime, construction is proceeding for developments in the queue.** Neighbors for Neighborhoods recently put together a very thorough podcast on the Missing Middle case on Spotify, “Stop Missing Middle Episode 1: “The Brief” - available here:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2X5Sb2iH11NaccELZFXVr2?si=nBDNAUSGTd-N7a6j2B8YrQ&nd=1&dlsi=3667bb40bf6e4ca0>

Missing Middle now in our neighborhood:

Right: 2612 S. Fern Street by Eads Park. By combining parts of lots, this project was able to shoe in six apartments on a lot with very limited street frontage.

Bottom Left: 2721 S. Grant Street. What was a classic split level bought for ~\$900K was razed, for two townhouses to be built there instead (typically these have sold for well over \$1M.)

Bottom Right: S. Hayes Street between 23rd & 22nd Streets. Two historic houses were razed for six townhouses with a potential for two additional Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs). The original houses faced the main streets of 22nd and 23rd, as is typical along these streets, but the townhouses will now be turned sideways, hodgepodge, to face Hayes Street.



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Arlington Community High School opened this fall at Amazon HQ2, 510 14th Street, S. Arlington Community High School is an alternative high school that offers courses required for a high school diploma on a semester basis (classes completed in one semester) for day classes, and a year basis (classes completed in a year) for evening classes, to any county resident aged 16 or older.

2026 AHCA Officers

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Delivery Les Garrison

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.

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It's Festival Season Y'all!

AROUND TOWN FESTIVALS

- Sept 9: Speed Friending Social Lubber Run Park
- Sept 13: Taste of Peru, DC
- Sept 13: Adams Morgan Day
- Sept 13: George Washington Pkwy Patriot Run 10 miler
- Sept 18-20: Courthouse Social Oktoberfest, Arlington
- Sept 19: Sawasee Thai Festival, DC
- Sept 19: Alexandria Oktoberfest, Courthouse Square
- Sept 25: Mosaic Fall Festival, Fairfax
- Sept 26: Bull Run Wine Festival, Centreville
- Sept 24 - 27: Oktoberfest at Ft. Belvoir
- Sept 27: Tour de Trail: Pentagon 9 am - 2 pm

<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Arlington/TourdeTrailPentagonMemorial>

- Oct 3: Festival LatinoAmericano, Arlington Mill

ONGOING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Mon 10 - 12: Yarn Crafters Aurora Hills Library
- Mon Nights: McNamara's Trivia, Highline RxR Trivia
- Mon & Fri 10 am -12: Mahjong Aurora Hills Library
- Tues & Saturday: Met Park Famers Market
- Tues Nights: Crystal City Sports Pub Trivia
- Weds: 1 - 2 pm Scrabble, Aurora Hills Library
- Weds Nights: Crystal City Sports Pub Poker / Comedy
- Thurs Nights: Wine Tasting at Flight Wine Shop
- Fri 10:15 - 11 am: Line Dancing at Aurora Hills Library
- Fridays 6pm: Movies at Met Park
- Fri Nights: Highline RxR Karaoke
- Sat Night: Freddie's Follies
- 3rd Sat Night: Comedy at Highline RXR
- Sunday: Freddie's Brunch
- Sundays Fall Family (Art) Days 10 am - 1 pm Met Park

SEPTEMBER IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Sept 8: CivFed Candidate Night, 7 pm, Hazel Conference Center, Virginia Hospital Center
- Sept 9: 3 - 4 pm, Remembering 9/11 lecture, ACPD Steven Holl, livestream:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/58EJC0IBH1A>
- **Sept 9: AHCA Meeting 7 pm, Aurora Hills Library**
- Sept 11: 25th Anniversary, 9/11, 11 am - noon, Fire Station 5, 1750 S. Hayes Street, honors first responders and survivors. Watch live
https://www.youtube.com/live/ahQniQtv_8I
- Sept 13: Profs & Pints Highline RxR Prof Wilson from Georgetown discusses "BioArcheaology - The Stories in Our Bones"
- Sept 16: MOCA at Met Park, 525 14th Street, Sound Bath, 6:30 pm, Register at EventBrite
- Sept 19: Arlington County Board
- Sept 20: Landing Local Artisan Market 5 -9 pm, WaterPark, 1601 Crystal Drive
- Sept 20: Profs & Pints Highline RxR The Victorian's Sexual Underworld, Prof Ross from Loyola UMaryland examines marginalized sexual / queer communities in the 19th Century



More events & info:

<https://www.nationallanding.org/events#calendar>

<https://mocaarlington.org/events/>

<https://www.profsandpints.com/washingtondc>

<https://web.arlingtonchamber.org/events?ce=true>

Events are subject to change -
double check before you go!

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