



# AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER

### NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

Last month Elise Cleva and Erika Moore of the County planning office gave us a short presentation on the Site Design development process and how we can be involved, and what type of input we can provide specifically in the JBGSmith development of the River House site. Please see the article below for links to the documents they presented on the process. In response to the outpouring of concern from the neighborhood regarding the River House development, JBGSmith, the developer of the River House property, has offered to hold listening sessions with the three Civic Associations in the 22202. We have accepted their offer to meet with us for our April 13 meeting. Please review the documents on the site development process, and come to the meeting prepared to share your ideas and concerns with Matt Ginivan of JBGSmith.

#### AHCA March Meeting Wrap-up

At our March meeting, members voted to hold a special meeting to discuss whether to send the AHCA Zoning Committee's Report on the Melwood GLUP amendment proposal to the County Board. A spirited discussion ensued at the special March 14 meeting. Some members believed AHCA should do more to engage with Melwood to see whether they could alter their plans in a way that could address the neighborhood's concerns about the size of the project; others pointed out that the report was not completely accurate; and others felt that the appropriate place to hammer out these concerns is with the Long Range Planning Commission, which will study Melwood's request for the zoning change and decide whether to change the zoning and if so, what limitations might be applied. A majority, however, felt it was important to send a letter from the AHCA President transmitting the report to the County Board, to let them know well in advance about opposition to changing the zoning to accommodate Melwood's project. The Zoning Committee Report and the transmission letter are available on the Aurora Highlands website in the Documents tab. Several AHCA executive board members will be meeting with County staff to discuss the process, and Stacy Meyer, chair of the Zoning Committee, will represent AHCA when the LRPC meets to discuss Melwood (date TBD). The meeting will be open for the public to observe, and you can stay abreast of this on the LRPC webpage.

#### April 13 LRPC Meeting on Melwood GLUP Cancelled

The Arlington County Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission has informed us of the cancellation of the April 13 meeting to review Melwood's application to change the GLUP designation from "Public" to "Low-Medium" Residential with an associated rezoning from C-1 and R-6 to RA8-18. The meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts, and has not been rescheduled yet as of the time of this newsletter publishing deadline.

For more information on the meeting, application and other materials, visit the Melwood project page of the County Board website.

#### Save the Date: County Virtual Open House on Development Projects in Crystal City and Pentagon City to take place on May 9 at 7 pm.

The County is developing a map showing the 50 or so development projects taking place around the Crystal City/Pentagon City neighborhood, and they want to familiarize us with it. The virtual open house will include breakout rooms covering most of the major projects, with experts in each one, hosted by planners from Parks, Transportation and Planning Divisions. They will invite the members of the three civic associations as well as all who are interested.

More details and link to the meeting will be posted when we receive them in the May newsletter as well as on our website and Facebook page.

### Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 13

7-9pm, Virtual -- Zoom / Facebook  
<https://aurorahighlands.org/event/apr2022>

#### AGENDA

##### 7:00 pm - Neighborhood Conservation Funding Proposal

David Litman, our AHCA representative on the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Commission, has asked the Civic Association to support an increase in NC funding from \$3M to \$6M. We will discuss and vote on whether to send a letter of support. Please see article below for more information.

##### 7:30 pm - Matt Ginivan of JBGSmith

In response to neighborhood concern regarding the RiverHouse development, JBGSmith will hold a listening session to hear our ideas and concerns about the building massing, transportation issues, green space and community facilities. JBGSmith is not presenting a design at this time, but rather gathering input before doing the site design.

#### Other Business

- Zoning Committee Report
- New Business
- Adjourn

### Read Up & Reach Out!



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## Update on Neighborhood Conservation Program

For over 50 years, the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Program has been Arlington County's primary vehicle for neighborhoods to propose infrastructure projects (i.e., sidewalks, intersection improvements, park renovations, streetlights, etc.) to enhance the livability of our communities. In 2020, the County conducted a comprehensive independent review of the program to see if it was still meeting the needs of the neighborhoods. The final report published last year reaffirmed the value of the program but identified several areas where changes were needed. (<https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/04/Neighborhood-Conservation-Program-Review-February-2021-Final.pdf>)

Since then, County staff and the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) have been developing an implementation framework to address the Report's recommendations. The framework includes items such as aligning the NC Program with County neighborhood priorities, seeking additional funding sources, restructuring project prioritization and selection, simplifying the NC planning process, and renaming and rebranding the program. The program changes will be rolled out gradually over the next 18 to 24 months.

Aurora Highlands has benefited greatly from the NC Program including the relatively recent addition of sidewalks on S. Fern St. and the renovation of Nelly Custis Park. We have another project to complete the sidewalk on 21st St. S. between S. Ives and S. Joyce in the pipeline. However, our last NC Plan update was in 2008 and much has happened in our neighborhood in the interim to make that plan moot. Livability 22202 has likely supplanted the NC Plan as AHCA's guiding vision.

The NC Program shares the Livability 22202 vision of neighborhoods that are livable, connected, and safe and represents a critical tool to help us achieve those objectives. As the changes to the NC Program are developed and implemented, there is an opportunity to align the vision and objectives of Livability 22202 with the reimagined NC Program and bring that vision countywide.

There are several opportunities for AHCA residents to participate in the NC Program to make that happen: serve as a block captain for the 21st. St. Project (if you live on that block), become an alternate rep to the NCAC and participate in the program reinvention, or help coordinate the process to begin thinking about updating the AHCA NC Plan.

If you are interested in participating in any of these activities or would like more information about the NC Program, you can contact AHCA's NC representative, David Litman, at [david.litman@verizon.net](mailto:david.litman@verizon.net).

## PenPlace

The LRPC and SPRC meetings for PenPlace are over; on March 28 the Transportation Commission addressed and approved the plan unanimously with no further discussion. Chair Slatt said he was satisfied with the explanations from County staff about the failure to include protected bike lanes on 12th St. S. The Planning Commission will discuss the plan on April 4, before it goes to the County Board on April 23. The public can still submit written and oral comments.

## April AHCA Meeting Topic: River House Site Plan Input

JBG Smith will be joining the April AHCA meeting in order to receive input into their forthcoming development on the River House property. This is a next step in the Pentagon City Sector Plan, which was approved by the County Board earlier this year. JBG has previously joined the Crystal City and Arlington Ridge meetings, where they shared that they had no specific plans yet, that the renderings in the Sector Plan did not reflect their visions, and that they were interested in getting ideas for the site. Please come prepared to share concrete ideas and concerns with JBG about your vision for this site, including density, heights and architecture, green space/plantings, community facilities and transportation/roads. We will organize our discussion around these four topics. We understand these are strong opinions about these topics, so please help us ensure this is a civil and orderly discussion.

## Resource Information on Site Plan Review Process

At our March 2022 AHCA meeting, Elise Cleva and Erika Moore of the County planning office gave us a short presentation on the Site Plan Review Process, explaining how we can be involved, and what type of input we can provide specifically referring to the JBGSmith development of the River House site. They followed up their presentation by sending helpful links that lay out the process and keep us informed about the progress of each development project in the County. Please familiarize yourself with the process prior to next week's AHCA meeting when JBGSmith will attend to hear our ideas and concerns about the River House project.

- Webpage for the site plan review process: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Review-Processes/Site-Plan>
- Webpage about private development in Arlington County, which lists currently active site plans and webpages: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Private-Development>
- Subscription link to monthly Planning + Building eNews: [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAARLINGTON/subscribe/new?topic\\_id=VAARLINGTON\\_18](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAARLINGTON/subscribe/new?topic_id=VAARLINGTON_18)
- Engage page, which lists opportunities for public engagement Countywide: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Engage>

## Update to the Standard Site Plan Conditions

On March 14, the SPRC held a special meeting to review the current County Standard Site Plan Conditions, staff suggested revisions, and suggested additional conditions that should be added. Standard site plan conditions are the baseline expectations by which the typical site plan is expected to adhere. However, site plan conditions are amended, modified, and supplemented on a project-by-project basis to suit the needs of the site, the community, and through negotiations with the developer. This document is an administrative document, so it does not require approval by the County Board, the SPRC, or other commissions. It is usually reviewed and updated yearly, but it has not been updated during COVID. See the [staff slides](#), [meeting recording](#), and [draft document](#) for more information.

## Blossom Kite Festival Takes Flight for a Second Year



Despite the chilly weather, and perhaps because of the wind, the Blossom Kite Festival at Virginia Highlands Park on March 26 was a huge success.

Hundreds of people from the metro area showed up with kids, dogs, and kites in tow. The National Cherry Blossom Festival chose Virginia Highlands Park as a “featured park” for its festival activities again this year. Even though the expansion out of DC was originally to thin out crowds, the success may bring the annual event to our neighborhood for the foreseeable future.

Many thanks to the Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), who organized a full bank of volunteers and a diverse lineup of food trucks, craft activities and games, and live music from country to flamenco. The National Cherry Blossom Festival and DPR donated kites for kids to decorate, and the nonprofit Study Japanese in Arlington offered instruction in the kendama ball game and in origami making. The weather obliged by holding off the rain until the tail end.

Make sure to check out the pink lights along the Long Bridge Park Esplanade and the sculptures by local artists at 1550 Crystal Drive and 475 Long Bridge Drive, through April 16.

### Cherry Blossom Festival Activities Continue

The National Cherry Blossom Festival continues through April 17, though initial activities, most of the blooming cherries, and the parade (April 6) may be over before you read this. Continuing displays include Art in Bloom 2022, which brings back the beautiful large Cherry Blossom Chairs – view one of them at the southern end of the Esplanade of Long Bridge Park – and the lovely and creative Petal Porches, including several in 22202.

**Sat. April 9: Arlington Walking Palooza** – a series of 5 very different walks in Arlington, starting with one in National Landing at 10:30 A.M. Find more information – and preregister here: <https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/>.

**Sat. April 9, 4-7:30 P.M.** National Landing BID hosts **Enchanted Rhapsody** at 6th & S. Ball. Click the link to get on a waitlist for this event featuring live music, food, and drink.

**Sat. April 16** (rain date the 17th) **The Petalpalooza** is a full day of live music, art, food and drink, and family-friendly activities at the Navy Yard Ballpark.

## Announcements

### Dominion Energy Announces Continuous Day and Night Work Requiring Noise Exemption

Dominion Energy is preparing to begin the Glebe Project this summer, which will upgrade equipment at the substation on S. Eads Street and convert an existing overhead transmission line to underground.

Prior to the major construction work, they need to perform work at the substation and an existing underground transmission line approximately 0.4 miles north of the substation on Eads Street. This document shows the location of the work. Because of the nature of this work, it must be performed continuously, which will require a noise exemption.

- What: Construct a freeze pit located over an existing dielectric oil filled underground transmission line. The underground cables will be replaced, which requires the liquid dielectric oil surrounding the cables to be frozen.
- When: Beginning as early as April 25, 2022 for a total of three weeks from start date (day and night)
- Where: 2900 S Eads Street, in front of the existing building inside the Dominion Energy easement. Vehicle and material staging will be in Arlington County right of way.

Please plan to attend the Dominion Energy Glebe Project Virtual Community Meeting on May 11, 6:30 p.m. for an overview of the Glebe pre-construction project and find out what to expect throughout construction. The community meeting conflicts with our May AHCA meeting, but they have offered to attend our June meeting to give us the presentation. The project website is [www.DominionEnergy.com/glebe](http://www.DominionEnergy.com/glebe). We will publish links to the meetings in our newsletter and social media.

### More About Dominion Substation at Glebe

Dominion is starting the Glebe Rebuild Project: <https://www.dominionenergy.com/glebe>, which will have notable effects on the Four Mile Run Trail and the surrounding streets.

This project includes the rebuild and modernization of Glebe Substation, construction of a new underground 230 kV electric transmission line to replace the existing 230 kV overhead line between Glebe Substation and Potomac Yard Transition Station, and the decommissioning of the Potomac Yard Transition Station and existing overhead transmission line. Note that sections of 4MRT will be closed. Dominion will provide a Temporary Diversion Boardwalk for construction that would be in place for several months. Underground transmission line construction will begin this summer and run through 2024; substation construction to start 2023. Stay tuned for details on detours – which will impact ALL forms of transportation in the area. Project timeline here:

### New Park at South Eads & Army-Navy Drive (otherwise known as the “Teardrop” Park)

County staff are holding a final public engagement for this unnamed new park across Eads from the PenPlace site. To watch the project video and submit your comments by April 8, click the link or put New Park at Eads into the search bar.

### What is National Landing, Actually?

Find out by viewing the recording the BID’s webinar “Building for Tomorrow: The Evolution of National Landing”, which took place on Thursday, April 7. There should be a link available soon to watch a recording of the webinar at the National Landing Website.



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## Calendar

See [aurorahighlands.org/events/](http://aurorahighlands.org/events/)

### Open Door Mondays

**Every Monday, 7-8:30pm**

Talk to a County Board member on any topic. [bit.ly/arl-board-mondays](http://bit.ly/arl-board-mondays)

### DPR Spring Programs - Sign Up NOW!

Follow this link to sign up for camps, sports and programs for kids, adults and seniors.

### HOG Pull, Saturday

May 7, 2022, 9-11am

Invasive Plant Pull

Meet at Haley Park, 2400 S.

Meade St., Arlington, VA 22202

Please preregister at

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080f44acae22a7fa7-haley>

### Ft. Scott Invasives Removal

**April 23, 10 am to Noon**

During COVID, registration is

required. Pre-register at

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080f44acae22a7fa7-ftscott>

### 55+ Programs @ Aurora Hills

If you are 55 or older, check out the 55+ Pass programs at Aurora Hills.

<https://bit.ly/arl-ah55plus>

### Help RIP (Remove Invasive Plants)!

You can make a difference in our County parks! Removing invasive plants is the first step in habitat restoration. Events are held throughout the county on a weekly basis - check out our calendar. Want to learn more about invasive plants in Arlington County? [Visit our webpage](#). The next RIP event at Ft. Scott is March 26. See the upcoming Ft. Scott schedule [here](#).

### AHCA Committees

The Zoning Committee met for this first time this month. Our AHCA Bylaws provide for the establishment of several other standing committees. In addition to the Zoning Committee, we also have Neighborhood Conservation, Membership, Publicity, and Planning Committees. We also would like to revive our Budget Committee and our Publicity Committee. Other committees can be established as needs, concerns and interest arise. Please come with ideas and questions and think about volunteering.

### >> Dues are Due! <<

Please show your support for AHCA and our community by sending in your annual dues for 2022. It's only \$20 per household and helps support this monthly newsletter, community events, and other neighborhood building activities, and also lets you vote at meetings. Please pay online at [aurorahighlands.org](http://aurorahighlands.org) by clicking the "Donate" button to pay by PayPal. Checks can also be mailed to AHCA, P.O. Box 25201, Arlington, VA 22202. Thank You!

### Newsletters & Social Media

We have heard from residents that really enjoy having a print newsletter. While we'll do our best to continue it, that will depend on continued support from advertisers and volunteers to assemble it. Sign up for newsletters by email at [aurorahighlands.org/join-ahca](http://aurorahighlands.org/join-ahca) and follow us at @AuroraHighlands on Twitter, Facebook, or Insta to stay connected no matter what.

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## FREE Community DeClutter Event

TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING!  
Bring your items, large or small!



**April 23**

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Or until the truck is full

**Calvary United Methodist**

2315 S Grant St,

Arlington, VA 22202



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