



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

Arlington County Police Department will give a community update at the Aurora Highlands Civic Association meeting on Wednesday, February 8 at 7:00 p.m., virtual via Zoom. Join us to hear Corporal Kenneth Giles and Corporal Areyal Hall from the Community Outreach Unit talk about the latest trends in 22202. In my article on Page 2 I discuss what led us to invite the ACPD to meet with us.

Also on the agenda, we welcome back Dana Bres, who will update us on the Arlington National Cemetery expansion project. There will be some significant disruptions to traffic patterns on Columbia Pike and Southgate. Dana will help us know what to expect and for how long.

And finally, Mike Dowell will join us to introduce the new expanded Crystal City Citizens Review Council, which is in the process of expanding to include Pentagon City. This means we will have more delegates to represent us on this innovative community collaboration model.

We will have regular updates from our representatives on SPRCs and from our committees, as well as a budget report from our treasurer, Ben Watts.

As I'm sure you've noticed, there is A LOT going on in our community these days. A lot of changes are coming our way, and we're trying to stay involved with the players in each sector so we can make sure our needs and concerns are heard and met. But it's A LOT of work. Please consider heading or joining a committee of the AHCA that covers an area the concerns you, interests you, or is an area where you have particular knowledge or experience. Committees exist already for zoning, budget and the neighborhoods program. Our bylaws state that we should also have standing committees on Planning, Publicity and Membership. I'd also like to form a committee on neighborhood impacts of construction and development, such as noise and disruption.

Cory Giacobbe, President, AHCA

Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

- February 4 - RIP Haley Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. Register [here](#)
- February 8 - February AHCA Meeting, 7 pm, [online via Zoom](#)
- February 9 - "Freedman's Village" Arl. Historical Society, 7 pm. Register [here](#)
- February 24 - Black History Month: Film "The Butler" at Aurora Hills Lib. 1:30 pm
- February 25 - RIP Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 10 a.m. Register [here](#)
- March 3 - April 2 - [Beauty and the Beast](#) at Synetic Theater

Celebrate Black History Month in Arlington!

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/Black-History-Month>

Black History Month Events in February

- [Teaching Heritage, Reaching Community](#) at Arlington Career Center: Sat, February 4, 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm
- [Black History Heroes, Soldiers and Spies](#) at Central Library: Wednesday, February 8, 4:30pm - 5:30pm
- [Author Talk: Michael W. Twitty](#) at Central Library: Thursday, February 16, 6:30pm - 7:30pm
- [Green Valley Pharmacy: A Community Gathering Place](#) at Shirlington Library: Thursday, February 23, 6:30pm - 8:00pm
- [Afternoon Tea and a Movie: "The Butler"](#) at Aurora Hills Library: Friday, February 24, 1:30pm - 4:00pm
- [Feel the Heritage Festival](#) at Charles Drew Community Center: Sat., Feb. 25, 12:00pm - 5:00pm

AHCA Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2023

Please show your support for AHCA and the community by paying the annual dues for 2023. The cost is \$20 per household and is used to support the monthly newsletter, community events, and other neighborhood building activities, and additionally, is required to be able to vote on referendums at meetings. There are two ways to pay dues, either mail a check to AHCA, P.O. Box 25201, Arlington, VA 22202, or go to www.aurorahighlands.org and click the "Donate" button to pay by PayPal.

** Paying by check saves the AHCA the PayPal transaction fee.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 8

7pm-9pm, [Virtual via Zoom](#) ([Register Here](#))

<https://bit.ly/Feb2023AHCA>

AGENDA

7:00 pm - Call to order and approve [January minutes](#)

7:10 pm - Crime Update with Arlington Police

8:00 pm - ANC/Columbia Pike/Southgate - Dana Bres

8:15 pm - Expanded CCCRC - Mike Dowell

8:25 pm - SPRC reports -

- Americana - John Whall
- Crystal Towers 3 - Ben D'Avanzo

8:35 pm - Committee Reports - Budget; Zoning

8:45 pm - Other Business

- New Business/Announcements
- Adjourn

Newsletters & Social Media

We have heard from neighbors that they 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 distribute it. Sign up for newsletters by email at aurorahighlands.org/join-ahca and follow us at @AuroraHighlands on Twitter, Facebook, or Insta to stay connected no matter what.

The 4D-A group list-serve is an alternative to Nextdoor for hyper-local information and to post queries to your neighbors: To subscribe, go to the group website, read the rules and scroll down to the membership button. Here is the *updated* website: <https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>

Links to Websites and Other Content

We use many links in the AHCA Newsletter to easily lead you to websites where you can get more information and stay up to date on the issues that interest you. Any underlined text is a hyperlink to a site. To save space in the print version, we haven't printed the long URLs, but it lets you know that you can go to the AHCA website for a clickable version of the [AHCA Newsletter](#). See what I just did there? ;)

Read Up & Reach Out!



www.aurorahighlands.org



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Neighborhood News

FEBRUARY MEETING TOPIC: Crime Analysis

Many neighbors have expressed their concerns to the Civic Association leadership about an uptick in crime in recent months in ever-encroaching proximity to our neighborhood. Reports in the news and on NextDoor of gunshots, carjackings, and muggings well within a 2 mile radius have caused anxiety for our safety and the safety of our kids. We want to get a clear picture of the trends in amount and type of crime in 22202 over that past few months, and an analysis of whether crime is in fact increasing, and, if so, what we can do to keep our community safe. Some people feel that the constant reporting of crimes on the NextDoor app is giving a distorted accounting of the prevalence of crime, leading to an unnecessary increase in community anxiety. We have invited the Arlington Police Department to brief us at the February 8 AHCA meeting on crime trends, how to stay safe in our community, to answer our questions, and hear our concerns.

Missing Middle Housing Study – Update

The County Board authorized a Request to Advertise (RTA) public hearings on the Missing Middle Housing Study Draft Zoning Ordinance text and General Land Use Plan amendments. If adopted, the amendments would expand housing options in the portions of the County that currently only allow single-detached homes. Read the one-page summary. At the second carryover meeting on January 25, the Board decided to eliminate the 8-unit option. You can watch and listen to the hundreds of citizens and Board members: Jan. 21 (start @ 2h1m), Jan. 24 (start @ 3h52m), and Jan. 25. The Planning Commission and County Board will hold separate public hearings on Missing Middle Housing: March 6th/8th (Planning Commission) and March 18th (County Board). Be sure to make your voice heard.

S. Arlington Ridge Road and S. Lynn Street Safety Improvements

At the January ARCA meeting, Gabriela Kock, Project Manager, presented an updated plan for this project, which provides new pedestrian crosswalks, a median refuge, pedestrian bumpouts, some new sidewalk, and new landscaping at the intersections of Arlington Ridge Road and Lynn and Arlington Ridge Road and the ramp to I-395. Plans are at 100% with no major public engagement for two busy, challenging intersections in our neighborhood. The residents who attended the meeting had extremely valuable input to contribute based on years of daily interaction with the project locations. Many lamented that their input could have produced a better and safer design.

Crystal City Civic Association January 18, 2023 Meeting:

During the January CCCA meeting, CCCA leaders provided great updates and community perspectives on the many transportation and development projects in our area. These updates were followed by a presentation by the Department of Parks and Recreation on local park plans. The full meeting recording and all slide decks are available on the CCCA website.

County News

Engage Arlington: Visit this site frequently for new opportunities to give the County feedback!

55+ Activities - Spring Registration Opens Feb. 15 @ 10 am!

The Spring Activity Guide is not up on the site yet, but when it is it will be here. In the meantime, get ready by registering in advance and creating an account. View activities and register! If the Winter program is any indication, there are great programs for fitness, art, music, dance, trips, hikes, parties and more!

Upcoming activities for seniors at Aurora Hills Center include Jeopardy on Feb. 6, , and Movies at Aurora Hills on Feb 10, Acoustic Hour on Feb. 17. See the full list of 55+ events here. 55+ Pass holders only. Don't have a 55+ Pass? Learn how to get a pass here.

Winter Is Not Over

Keep the County Snow and Ice website link handy to know what's closed, how to report snow removal problems, and what the relevant ordinances are.

But Spring – and Cherry Blossoms – will return!

National Cherry Blossom Festival, March 20 – April 16, 2023

Watch the cherries bloom on the webcam, walk around the Tidal Basin, watch the parade, be a Junior Ranger, listen to music, participate in so many events. Get involved – plant trees, create a Petal Porch. Let's have a critical mass of Petal Porches in Aurora Highlands!

National Landing BID plans Cherry Blossom Celebration at Long Bridge Park – And you can drink to that!

The County Board recently approved alcohol sales at special events in Long Bridge Park and Penrose Square. The National Landing BID is planning a major Cherry Blossom Celebration – Pink in the Park – that will include alcoholic beverages. Watch the BID Events page for more details when available.

New Food Security Coalition in Arlington

Arlington's Food Security Coalition oversees the implementation of the Food Security Strategic Plan that was developed in 2022. Read the full article in the online version of the February newsletter at AuroraHighlands.org

P.L.A.C.E. Grant – Applications due April 28, 2023

Arlington County P.L.A.C.E. Grant (Promoting Local Arts and Community Equity Grant) is a competitive grant program that will support community-initiated projects related to Arlington's history, built environment and/or cultural heritage. The grant reinforces the goals of the Arts Commission to advance cultural equity in Arlington for all and enhances Arlington County's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Read the full article in the online version of the February newsletter at AuroraHighlands.org

VHC and Arlington Announce Plans for a New Behavioral Wellness Facility

VHC Health and Arlington County recently announced an agreement to expand much needed mental health and rehabilitation services. The agreement is a letter of intent between the County and VHC Health. Once a formal plan is submitted this Spring, it will go through the regular public review process and final decisions, including approval for plans and the sale of the property will come before the Arlington County Board for action. VHC Health will purchase and transform 5.8 acres at 601 S. Carlin Springs Rd. into an advanced rehabilitation and behavioral health wellness facility. VHC Health plans on breaking ground on its new facility in late 2023 or early 2024 and expects construction to be complete in late 2025. Watch the County Manager announcement here.

County News - Continued

Performance Parking Pilot – Includes Route 1 Corridor

The pilot project includes about 4,500 metered parking spaces. The spaces are in two County Planning corridors: Rosslyn-Ballston and Richmond Highway. Most of the spaces included in the pilot will be on-street parking. System design, installation, testing, and initial data collection will occur in the first year of the pilot project, while the second and third years are dedicated to data collection and pricing calibration. Community outreach and engagement occur throughout all three years of the pilot project. The pilot will use in-ground sensors to provide real-time occupancy information for each of the parking spaces included in the project area. The sensors can detect the presence or absence of a vehicle, and duration-of-stay can be calculated. No camera technology is being used, and no personally-identifying information can be collected by the system. Once initial occupancy data has been gathered, the project team anticipates applying the pricing tools to the pilot project corridors on a quarterly basis, changing prices up or down across the 4,500 parking spaces included in the pilot to meet the goals of the pilot project. **A Virtual Community Kick-Off for the parking pilot will be held on Thursday, February 23, at 7PM.** Please plan to attend or watch the recording later.

Commercial Development

Crystal Towers 3: The Site Plan Review Committee will host an in-person walking tour at the Crystal Towers 3 site on February 3 at Noon. The first SPRC meeting for Crystal Towers 3 is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 7PM. Note that public comments have been posted to the project website. Community members are welcome to attend both events; see details on the [project page](#).

Americana: The second SPRC meeting will be held on Monday, February 13 at 7PM. Probable topics include transportation, environment, and community benefits. All prior materials are on the [project website](#). The public is welcome to attend.

RiverHouse: JBGS submitted their revised 4.1 plan for RiverHouse in January. JBGS hopes to have County comments back in February. JBGS staff continue to negotiate with County staff on the best approach for public engagement for this massive, complex project. In discussions with Livability 22202 leaders, JBGS is considering one overview of the entire site to cover issues such as transportation and open space, which impact the entire site. Holding separate SPRCs for each project phase makes sense however, with a second final overall project meeting at the end. Stay tuned for details.

While waiting for County comments, JBGS plans to continue with their own community engagement, including an “open house” at their center at 251 18th Street (tentatively scheduled for Thursday evening, March 2). Monitor the JBGS RiverHouse project website for updates to their plans and community engagement: [RiverHouse Neighborhood](#).

Transportation

Yellow Line/Blue Line Disruptions Continue through April, 2023

The Metro Yellow Line continues to be closed through April. Allow extra time to reach your destination. An excellent summary of the current status of the Yellow and Blue Metro lines can be found here at [Arlington Transportation Partners](#). The relevant [WMATA page is here](#).

WMATA Seeks Input on Strategic Plan by Feb. 14

[Provide your input](#) to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on its strategic transformation plan through February 14.

VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Phase 2 (update)

VDOT planned to hold the fourth virtual public engagement (PIM 4), then issue their final Phase 2 report “early this year” but they are behind schedule. Watch for notices of upcoming meetings and reports. VDOT has yet to provide their comprehensive TDM (traffic demand management) plan or detailed plans for 18th Street - both are essential components of the Route 1 proposal. The [Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group](#) submitted comments on PIM 3 and Working Group representatives presented updates at recent AHCA, CCCA, and ARCA meetings. County staff also submitted comments, which were discussed in detail at the January 11 joint BAC-PAC (Bicycle Advisory Committee/Pedestrian Advisory Committee) meeting, and the [recent ARCA meeting \(County response to VDOT is here\)](#).

Transportation Construction Headaches – Not a Comprehensive List:

Boundary Channel Drive Project Closure of Exit 10A from I-395: In late January, VDOT closed the ramp from southbound I-395 to westbound Boundary Channel Drive (Exit 10A) will be closed for several months as part of the Boundary Channel Drive at I-395 Interchange Improvements project, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation. All traffic to Boundary Channel Drive must detour to the Exit 9 Clark Street ramp then turn left or right as needed. Signs direct traffic.

Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Southern Expansion Required Closing Columbia Pike between Nash and Joyce Streets

VDOT has closed the section of Columbia Pike between Nash and Joyce so that FHWA can begin the reconstruction of this section of the Pike and intersection with Joyce. See the ANC SE news release, [FHWA DAR site](#), and the County’s [Columbia Pike page](#) (best detour map) for more details. The ANC SE News release describes the detours, including how to access the Air Force Memorial (off of Southgate), but does not include a map. We are in [Phase 2](#) of construction. The stretch of Joyce between Army-Navy Drive and Columbia Pike is narrow and curvy. Wayfinding for cyclists and pedestrians is not clear, and some crossings are not safe. Drive carefully, ride carefully, walk carefully.

The 12th Street Complete Streets and Transitway Extension projects will eventually include dedicated bus lanes down the center of 12th Street (between Route 1 and Hayes) and new bus shelters. Meanwhile, the projects are causing torn-up streets and sidewalks along the east side of Crystal Drive and both sides of 12th Street.

Hope springs eternal – the W. Glebe Bridge Reconstruction Project [page](#) states that travel lanes are expected to reopen in spring of 2023, and the bridge is expected to reach substantial completion in fall of 2023. Meanwhile, we continue to have major traffic backups on many local roads, including Arlington Ridge Road and Mt Vernon Avenue.

Construction Resources: The [County Crystal City-Pentagon City Area Map](#) shows information on both commercial development and transportation projects in our area, with links to project pages and contact information. The National Landing [BID page on construction projects](#) provides additional construction information.

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Free ART Bus Rides for APS Students:

Middle and high school students from Arlington Public Schools ride free anytime on Arlington Transit (ART), the County's bus transit system, with an iRide SmarTrip card, <https://bit.ly/3B3q84L>

Oakridge Elementary Walking School Bus

Known as "The Us Bus," the Oakridge Walking School Bus matches local seniors with families who live in the one-mile walk zone of Oakridge and who want their kids to walk to school. The Us Bus operates one morning a week, but the good feelings last all week. Seniors interested in volunteering should contact Andrea Walker at tasteless@verizon.net

Families interested in having their students join the Us Bus, contact Lauren Hassel at

LHA1165@yahoo.com

For more information visit WalkArlington.com or read our article in the [January 2023 AHCA newsletter](#)

It's Girl Scout Cookie Season!

According to the ARLNow article, pre orders will be filled shortly and Girl Scouts are selling cookies on site through mid-March. Use the [Cookie Finder](#) link to find official cookie selling sites, though other sites may pop up.

2023 AHCA officers

President Cory Giacobbe

1st Vice President John Whall

2nd Vice President Jill Braun

Treasurer Ben Watts

Recording Secretary Nick Giacobbe

Corresponding Secretary Natasha Atkins

Generous Donation to Aurora Hills Library

We want to thank the anonymous donor who recently gave an extremely generous gift of \$10,000 to our library. This support for one of our community treasures is much appreciated. If you haven't been to the library in a while, stop by to pick up a few books, use the computers, enjoy story time, or check out some of the special programs underway including Maker Monday, Self-Care Saturday, Book Club and more.

Souper Bowl of Caring: Food Drive For AFAC

Advent Lutheran Church (corner of S. 23rd and S. Arlington Ridge Rd.) is collecting non-perishable food items until the Superbowl on Feb. 12. For details see our website <https://aurorahighlands.org/>

Teens Making a Difference (TMAD) – Youth Community Groups Volunteer Opportunity

Want to make a difference? TMAD (Teens Making a Difference) is a Service Club that helps students ages 12-18 plan service projects, learn leadership skills, and improve their schools and community. The program offers participants a chance to earn a stipend for work related learning programs. If interested in TMAD, apply through [this application](#) (no deadline). Visit [this page](#) for more information on the program.

Arlington County Civic Federation Update

At its February 21 meeting, CivFed will take up the long-discussed resolution aiming to **Restore the Public's Confidence in Arlington County Governance**. This set of good-governance reform proposals to make Arlington County more transparent, inclusive and accountable can be read online at www.civfed.org.

National Landing BID Releases New Edition of Mobility Next

The National Landing BID celebrated the release of the **2nd edition of Mobility Next** at the Alamo Draft House on January 31. Mobility Next features the major transportation plans and needs that will help National Landing continue to thrive by meeting the evolving transportation needs for residents, employees, and visitors.

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