



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020

2019 was an extremely busy year for the civic association and our community! Here's a quick recap of just a few highlights:

- Shepherded the Livability Initiative from a concept in January to a detailed Action Plan in October with support from all three area civic associations, developers, businesses, and the county.
- Lost a 200+ year old "County Champion" White Oak tree on the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes church in April, but supported the planting of many new street and private trees elsewhere.
- Saw the adoption of Accessory Dwelling regulations in May allowing detached "granny flats" in addition to in-home units.
- Adopted a dog park resolution in July and finally convinced the County to consider creating a public dog park at Virginia Highlands (work still in progress).
- Completed landscaping and playground refurbishments at Nelly Custis park, celebrated with a ribbon cutting event in July.
- Said goodbye to Jefferson Davis Highway and hello to Richmond Highway in September, along with the closing and removal of the 23rd street pedestrian tunnel.
- Navigated Crystal Houses and Met Park HQ2 development planning from May to December, resulting in community benefits of over half a mile of protected bike lanes on Eads & 15th, two new public parks, renovation of Metropolitan Park, and more.

2020 is shaping up to be even busier. If you have an interest in shaping the community, consider volunteering with the civic association. The biggest needs right now are for a newsletter editor and events planner, but all skills and interests are welcome!

JOINT MEETING ON LIVABILITY

Tues. January 14 7-9pm, the Westin Hotel, 1800 Richmond Hwy

The three 22202 civic associations are joining forces to start off the new year with a joint meeting of great importance to our neighborhood: The Livability Framework and Action Plan, which provides us a way to tackle the challenges facing our area with holistic strategies based on shared livability themes to create a better, more livable city.

- Come out to learn more about the LFAP and how we are partnering with developers, businesses, and the County to implement it.
- There will be a panel on Open Space as an example of how we can implement the action plan, with representatives from developer JBG Smith, Amazon, and the Crystal City BID.

We are also planning collaborative workshops for the upcoming months on Housing Affordability, Open Space, Route 1 East-West Connectivity, and the Underground and Community Facilities.

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, January 8**

7pm, 735 18th St.

*Aurora Hills Community Center
Childcare provided!*

7:10 Pentagon Centre Construction

Developer Kimco will provide details on the construction starting this month at 15th & Hayes and answer questions from residents.

7:30 Melwood / Miracle on 23rd donation

Recap of the *Miracle on 23rd* event from December and consideration of \$500 donation. Melwood will also talk about their new initiatives like *abil/T* that trains individuals of differing abilities and injured veterans skills to compete for high-demand jobs in the IT sector.

7:45 Showing of Styrofoam Mom: The Movie

Our planned speakers on Climate Reality and the Community Energy Plan had a last minute conflict.

Fortunately for us, this opens up some time to break out the popcorn and watch the 1-hour documentary from our local hero speaking out against unsustainable packaging. Check out the trailer at <http://styrofoammom.com>


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Mark Your Calendar

Christmas Tree Collection

Through Jan 10
Place your Christmas tree out on your regular trash collection day for collection and recycling, after removing all decorations, nails, stands and plastic bags. Residents in apartments and condos can drop their tree off at the county Earth Products Yard in Shirlington.
<https://bit.ly/2FceHLI>

Netwalk on Reflection and Looking Ahead

Sat, Jan 11, 2:00 - 4:30 pm
A free, curated 1-2 mile walk to meet neighbors, ask questions and have authentic conversations with social impact leaders and local business owners, and discover hidden gems around Crystal City. More info & registration at <https://bit.ly/2ZHlvsR>

MLK Tribute Event

Sun, Jan 19, 5-6:30pm
Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King’s legacy at Arlington’s 51st annual tribute event in the Wakefield High School auditorium. Admission is free. Details at mlktribute.org.

Recycle Holiday lights

Through Jan 31
MOMs on Mt. Vernon Ave. is accepting holiday lights for recycling until January 31
<https://momsorganicmarket.com/recycle-center/>

COMMUNITY UPDATES & RESOURCES

Pentagon Centre 15th & Hayes construction starting

Construction will begin on a new 10-story 253-unit residential building on the corner of 15th & Hayes this month. Initial work will focus on street and utilities work, which may impact commuters and nearby residents. Come to this month’s meeting to learn more and ask questions.

VHC Urgent Care is Open!

The long-expressed community need for a true hospital affiliated urgent care facility has now been fulfilled. Virginia Hospital Center Immediate Care opened January 1st on 23rd street, right beside Keshet daycare, across from the Mormon church. They are an "immediate care", one step below emergency room and can do flu/strep tests, X-rays, and can transfer records to Virginia Hospital Center if needed. They triage before billing starts, so the patient doesn't pay twice in the event they need to go to the emergency room. Primary care and obstetric services are expected to be added by the end of March. <https://bit.ly/2ZHn4rl>

Crystal House development plans approved

The Arlington County Board approved plans to add 819 new housing units, two new public parks and a small amount of ground floor retail space to the 17-acre Crystal Houses site between 18th and 22nd St. S. The developer will convey a part of the site to the County that can provide at least 105,000 square feet of gross floor area for affordable housing. A new retail space, probably a coffee house, will be at the corner of 18th and S. Eads. There is no indication when construction may begin or if the developer will now sell the enhanced property rights.

Met Park 6/7/8 HQ2 development plans approved

The Arlington County Board also approved the plans for Met Park 6/7/8, the first two buildings associated with Amazon HQ2. Concessions were as expected: \$20 million to the affordable housing fund, \$14 million to redevelop the park space, new bike lanes, bus islands, and shelters. Construction is expected to start soon with anticipated completion in 2023. The developer has already reached out to coordinate with civic associations on construction plans and park planning processes.

Historic agreement to expand rail connectivity

Virginia has announced it will build a new rail bridge over the Potomac River along side the existing Long Bridge from Crystal City connecting Arlington and DC. This will significantly expand commuter and passenger train service over the next decade, removing the equivalent of one lane of traffic off I-395 each day. An independent bike/pedestrian crossing is also possible, providing easy access to DC from Long Bridge park and Crystal City. The bridge will be completed by as early as 2027 as part of a \$3.7 billion investment. <https://wapo.st/2tnU2RM>

Miracle on 23rd Street brought community together

AHCA is proud to help support the annual Miracle on 23rd street tree lighting and festival put on by Melwood last month. Due to timing, we were unable to approve a donation on behalf of AHCA before the event, but will take up a motion at the January meeting to donate \$500 in appreciation of this community-building event.

Reusable Party Supplies

In November, local teens from GlobalCoLab.org shared their innovative idea for reducing single-use plastic. Their efforts inspired AHCA to take a step to promote sustainable consumption by purchasing a party box of reusable cups, plates, and napkins. We debuted the program at the December AHCA Holiday Party where over 70 people attended our festive zero waste event. Vice-President Miriam Gennari took the items home, washed and prepared the box for its next use. Many have asked if they could sign up to use the box and the answer is: "Yes!" More information will be available at our meetings, but simply put, if you are a member of AHCA you can borrow the box for your next block party, soccer celebration, or graduation. We want this box to serve as an example of our community's commitment to improved waste management and the preservation of our precious resources.

Advertise here and reach over 1,000 of your neighbors! Send inquiries to newsletter@aurorahighlands.org