



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

We've had great conversations about our priorities for the Livability 22202 reboot at our last two civic association meetings and at the community meeting on Oct. 26 at the Amazon community room. The current draft now contains most of AHCA's input, such as shifting away from housing as an ask, specifying that new community amenities not impact existing open space, and ensuring that the Aurora Hills library remain centrally located. Join us at our November 8 AHCA meeting to give your input on the priorities. I will be accepting written comments on the priorities until Nov. 17. Send written comments to president@aurorahighlands.org. If you're still wondering what "Livability22202" is, read more on page 2.

Our guest at the November meeting will be Melwood President and CEO Larysa Kautz on programs and future plans. Please see article on page 2 regarding the special GLUP study and respond to the survey by November 14.

We will vote on the slate of AHCA officers who were nominated at the October meeting. As always, we will need a quorum of 20 members in good standing to hold the election. To vote on Zoom, all members of a household will need to log in from separate devices. If elected by a majority of members, the new slate of officers will take over on January 1. The slate of officers is the following:

- President - Rachel Hicks (new)
- First Vice President - Jill Braun (returning)
- Second Vice President - Stacy Meyer (new)
- Treasurer - Ben Watts (returning)
- Corresponding Secretary - Alyssa Gardner (new)
- Recording Secretary - Nick Giacobbe (returning)

Neighbors, it's been an adventure leading this organization for the past two years. The issues facing our little neighborhood on the edge of a development boom have been vast and complex. I've had to learn so much on the issues as I have endeavored to bring you all together to participate in creating and maintaining the community you have chosen to live in. I wish the 2024 team all the best in continuing this important work.

Cory Giacobbe, President AHCA

Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

- Nov 3-5 - The Tell-Tale Heart at Syntetic Theater - [Tickets here](#)
- Nov 6, 13, 20, 27- Virtual Open Door Mondays, [RSVP here](#)
- Nov 6 - 55+ Jeopardy! at Aurora Hills - 2-3 pm - [Register here](#)
- Nov 8 - November AHCA Meeting, 7-9 pm, online via Zoom, [register here](#)
- Nov 9 - 7-8:30 p.m., Arlington Historical Society Lecture "Operation Skyshield: Cold War Games and their Impact on Arlington" [More info here](#)
- Nov 17 - 55+ Aurora Hills Thanksgiving Luncheon, 12:30-2:30 pm, \$10, [Register here](#)
- Nov 22 - 55+ Movies at Aurora Hills, 12:30-2:30 pm, [Register here](#)
- Nov 25 - Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)
- Dec 2 - Haley Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)

Food Drive this Saturday

This Saturday, November 4, is [Scouting for Food](#), a nationwide annual food drive organized by the Boy Scouts of America. Since 1995, local Arlington Scouts have collected more than 1 million pounds of food for the [Arlington Food Assistance Center](#) (AFAC). AFAC reports that the number of family visits to the Food Pantry increased just this year by 30%. If you miss the Scout food drive but want to help neighbors in need, you can drop off non-perishable food in the AFAC box in the lobby of the Aurora Hills Library. A list of the most needed items can be found at <https://bit.ly/FoodBankNeeds>

AHCA Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2024

It's time to pay dues for next year. Dues are \$20 per household. Pay dues either by mailing 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. To check your membership status, please contact the AHCA Treasurer at treasurerahca@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 8

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

<https://bit.ly/November2023AHCA>

AGENDA

- 7:00 pm** - Call to order and approve [October minutes](#)
- 7:05 pm** - Guest Presentation: Melwood President & CEO Larysa Kautz on programs and future plans
- 7:40 pm** - Election of AHCA Officers for 2024
- 8:10 pm** - Livability22202 Priorities Input
- 8:30 pm** - Committee Reports/AHCA Business
- 9:00 pm** - Adjourn

Newsletters & Social Media

We know you enjoy having a print newsletter. We'll do our best to continue it. It 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 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 website: <https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>

All Underlined Items are Links to Websites and Other Content - Go to our Website for Live Links! [AuroraHighlands.org](https://aurorahighlands.org)

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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[Nextdoor - Aurora Highlands](#)



info@aurorahighlands.org



[\(703\) 594-1344](tel:(703)594-1344)



[P.O. Box 25201 Arlington, VA 22202](#)

AHCA November Meeting Topics:

Livability22202 Community Meeting Followup and Feedback

The three civic associations in 22202 held a Livability22202 community meeting on October 26. The Livability priorities from 2019 are now being updated based on community input. We have been collecting feedback from the community since September and incorporating them into the priorities list. The current draft of the list is [HERE](https://livability22202.org/livability22202-reboot/). <https://livability22202.org/livability22202-reboot/> The next step in the process is to finalize the priorities and submit them to the County and to the [Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council \(CPCC\)](#). We will brief AHCA on the community meeting at our Nov. 8 AHCA meeting and take comments at that time. The final date to submit written comments is November 17. Please send written comments to president@aurorahighlands.org. For more information on the Livability22202 Reboot, see article below.

Melwood President and CEO at AHCA November Meeting

Also at our November meeting we will have a guest presentation by Melwood President & CEO Larysa Kautz on current programs and future plans. To learn more about Melwood and an opportunity of comment, please see the article below.

Melwood Special GLUP Study – Public Comments due November 14

Melwood has requested that the County amend the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and change the land use designation of its property at 750 23 rd Street S. The County is now conducting a Special GLUP Study to evaluate whether this would be an appropriate change. The site consists of two parcels: one houses the Melwood Horticultural Training Center and a smaller one contains a portion of Nelly Custis Park. The applicant wants to construct a new, primarily residential building of approximately five stories for both Melwood operations and affordable housing units. (The smaller parcel would remain a part of Nelly Custis Park and continue to be public. Information from the applicant and the County, as well as AHCA's report and the recording and minutes from the initial meeting on May 12, 2022, is available on the project website:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/General-Land-Use-Plan/Studies/Melwood>.

Online Community Engagement: Please review the staff presentation and slides, then share your thoughts on the guiding planning principles and the proposed building height and form, to help inform staff's recommendations. Deadline is November 14.

On November 28 at 7 pm, a Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Planning Commission will review community input and discuss refinements to the draft guiding principles and conceptual models. Representatives from relevant County commissions and other stakeholder groups impacted by this study are invited to participate. Members of the public may attend and provide comment.

Livability22202 Reboot: AHCA meeting November 8; Comments due November 17!

Livability22202 is a coalition of the 3 civic associations of 22202 – Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City – all of whom face common pressures from rapid commercial and residential development. In 2018 community leaders, activists, and interested citizens met to develop holistic strategies, based on shared themes, to create a better, more livable community. In 2019 the coalition published an Action Plan and Framework, which have been used by the County, developers and even VDOT in their plans.

Fast forward to June 2023, when County staff asked the Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council (CPCC) for a list of community priorities to help prioritize community benefits provided by developer and major projects in Arlington's Capital Improvement Plan. The CPCC, which comprises property owners, residents, and County staff and commission members – agreed that the 2019 Livability22202 priorities were the best starting point. Livability22202 leaders met to evaluate the current Framework and draft new recommendations incorporating feedback from the civic associations. The updated priorities have been discussed at the October CPCC meeting, the September and October AHCA meetings, and a community meeting on Oct. 26.

For more on the community meeting and for next steps, please see this article in its entirety at

<https://aurorahighlands.org/news/november-2023-newsletter/>

NOTE: See AHCA September and October Newsletters, meeting minutes and videos for background info on the Livability22202 Priorities Reboot. All are available at <https://aurorahighlands.org/documents/>

County News

Don't Forget to VOTE this Fall!

Election Day is Tuesday, November 7. Polls open 6AM-7PM!

Check your registration through this [link](#) before you go to vote. Make sure your name and address are current and correct and note the location of YOUR precinct. If you need to update your voting information, you can do so on Election Day in your precinct. If you missed the registration deadline, you can register on Election Day in your precinct through [Same Day Registration](#).

The results of the General Election on November 7 will be critical to the future direction of Arlington County and Virginia. Make sure you VOTE to make your voice heard! Everything that you need to know to vote successfully in Arlington is linked through the County Voting [website](#).

Who's on your ballot? Go to this [page](#) and select the sample ballot that matches your Virginia Senate and House Congressional Districts. All Virginia Senate and House seats are up for election this year. We are also selecting TWO new County Board members. Note that you may write-in legitimate names for all positions on our ballot. To learn more about the County Board candidates, try searching for their websites or attending candidate forums.

Where, How, and When to Vote – Lots of Options!

Vote early by mail: If you have requested and received a ballot to mail back, please complete your ballot and envelopes and mail back the completed ballot/envelope. Ensure that it is postmarked by November 7; the County needs to receive it by November 13. Note that you can also drop off your completed ballot/envelope at our community drop box at the Aurora Hills Community Center anytime until 7PM on Election Day. You may also drop off your completed ballot/envelope at any Arlington precinct on Election Day (until 7PM).

Vote early in person through November 4 at one of three early voting sites. We do not have an early voting site in 22202; the closest early voting site to 22202 is the Walter Reed Community Center, with limited hours and days.

Vote in person on Election Day, November 7, between 6AM and 7PM. Know where you vote, what you need, and who's on the ballot before you go!

Bring an acceptable ID: Note that out of state drivers' licenses are not an acceptable ID to vote in Virginia, but many other forms of ID are fine.

Know where you vote: We have 8 different precincts in 22202 with surprisingly complex borders. Please go to YOUR precinct to ensure that your vote will count!

Try "curbside" voting if you are over 65 or have impairments. We will bring your ballot out to you! Find more information on County disability services at the polls [here](#).

Need a ride to the polls? Contact the Democratic (703-528-8588 ext 5 or info@arlingtondemocrats.org) or Republican (703-677-8217 or info@arlingtongop.org) ride services.

Transportation

Vision Zero Update:

In July 2019, The County Board adopted a resolution to commit to a Vision Zero policy and in 2021 adopted the first five-year Vision Zero Action Plan. County staff have been working to improve transportation safety ever since. Most recently, Vision Zero staff released their mid-year Progress Report in September and held their Vision Zero Mid-Year Check-In on October 19. The meeting slides and recording are available here – along with links to many other ways residents can be involved with Vision Zero activities. The Vision Zero Maps & Safety Data page links to a Vision Zero dashboard, hot spot analyses, High Injury Network (HIN) data, critical crash reports, and other important data. No surprise – we have lots of serious crashes in our community!

Free ART Bus Rides From October 2 to December 25

Inbound ART buses during the morning rush and outbound ART buses during the evening rush will be free for all routes. Consult the website to see when free rides will be available for your bus route. Skip the driving, save money on gas and tolls, and get to your destination stress-free. Note the time limitations for free rides!

Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion (ANC SE)

The ongoing ANC SE DAR and realignment of Columbia Pike continue to require contortionist maneuvers through various road closures and detours for all travelers. Be careful, especially after dark, as lanes are narrow, rough, and poorly marked and street lights are scarce.

Amendments to Code Requiring Motorists to Stop for Pedestrians

The County Board amended Chapter 14.2 of the Arlington County Code to require motor vehicle operators to stop completely for pedestrians in crosswalks. Previously, local code only required operators to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. This amendment brings the County into conformance with recent changes to state law and supports Arlington's ongoing Vision Zero efforts. Can't wait for this to be implemented!

National Landing BID Transportation Roundtable

The BID held its most recent quarterly Transportation Roundtable on September 27. The meeting recording is available here. These roundtables are the best, most succinct way to keep informed about transportation plans and construction in our community, as they contain updates on all local County projects and development projects in our area. The next Roundtable is scheduled for November 16, 10AM. Please contact Matt Jones at the BID if you would like to participate (matt@nationallanding.org).

Private Development Projects

RiverHouse Neighborhood: The second LRPC Meeting was Tuesday, October 24 (Staff presentation slides; Applicant presentation slides; Meeting recording), Third LRPC Meeting November 16 at 7:00 pm (online or in-person at Bozman Center). This third meeting will be followed by an on-site tour and the first park master planning meeting for the two open spaces on the RiverHouse site. A series of at least five SPRC meetings will start in 2024. See the new meeting schedule on slides 5 & 6 of the staff's presentation.

The focus of the second LRPC meeting was transportation. JBG Smith staff and consultants highlighted changes in response to comments from the first LRPC. The resident representatives from the three condominiums to the west of the RiverHouse project offered many relevant comments on the current plans and useful suggestions for further refinement. Please follow the evolving plans for RiverHouse, a huge site that will have huge impacts on our neighborhood! Plan to watch the third LRPC meeting on November 16, go on the on-site tour (TBD), participate in park planning, additional public comment sessions, and the upcoming SPRC meetings! This is a short summary of the RiverHouse LRPC. Please see the full article with many details in the web version of this newsletter at <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/november-2023-newsletter/>

Crystal House 3: Watch for engagement opportunities for Crystal House 3

Arlington County awarded APAH and EYA the opportunity to co-develop the five Crystal House buildings that were approved in 2019 but never built. Because the 2019 plans were approved, and according to the County's zoning code, the plans for Crystal House 6, the first of the five projects, were considered a "minor site plan amendment", the new Crystal House 6 plans did not need to go through the usual County review process. AHCA sent a letter to the County encouraging a more collaborative and inclusive review process, and the County then provided an inadequate one-hour public engagement. The recording is here; the staff presentation is here; the applicant presentation is here; the plans are here. AHCA sent a second letter expressing concerns about the process after the meeting. The County Board approved the Crystal House 6 project at their October 14 meeting. Next up – Crystal House 3 – approved for over 400 units in a long 11 story building that covers the length of Eads from 20th to 18th, then wraps around the corner of 18th, potentially cutting off pedestrian access through this megablock. Watch for public engagement.

More Commercial Development Coming to 22202

Watch for new active site plans section (e.g. Pentagon Centre PDSP) and preliminary site plans section (e.g. Crystal Plaza, Brookfield, and Crystal City Block W) of the County's Private Development page for information on upcoming commercial developments in our area.

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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>.

Report a Problem Web and App!

If you see problems you can report them to the County. After marking the location on the map, select Blocked Sidewalk, Street, or Bike Lane and complete and submit the form. You can also report broken traffic signals, potholes, damaged sidewalks, street lights out, damaged traffic signs, and lots of other things! Try it:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem>

Arlington Public Library Events in November

Check out the featured November library events here at this link:

<https://library.arlingtonva.us/events/featured-events/>

To see all Arlington Library events, visit <https://library.arlingtonva.us/events/>

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

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



Tax Credit for Planting New Trees

In 2024, the County will assess a stormwater utility fee on your property. You can offset that fee by planting a shade tree. Even better, you can have a FREE tree planted, at no cost to you, by applying for one (or more) through the Tree Canopy Fund. The deadline for the Spring 2024 Tree Planting is January 5. For more info tree applications, go to <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/instructions/tcep-application/>.

The list of species is at <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/TCEP-Species-Available-Spring-2024-v.-1.-.docx-1.pdf>. Read more about the stormwater tax credit at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Stormwater/Stormwater-Utility-Implementation/Stormwater-Utility-Credit-Program>. Email natashaatkins1@gmail.com if you want advice or help with the (quite cumbersome) application.

Stormwater Utility Credit Program Now Open

Now thru January 15, 2024, property owners in Arlington can apply for credits offsetting up to 35% of their Stormwater Utility bill. Qualifying credits will be calculated based on the type of property and actions taken, such as tree planting, volunteer activities, and installing some types of pervious surfaces. Actions taken in 2023 will be eligible for credit on the first bill in May 2024. Read the Stormwater Credit Manual in [English](#) or [Spanish](#), and view the [credit program video](#) for more details, including application instructions, required documentation, and tips for a successful submission.

Parks and Rec Events in November for all ages

There is an astounding number and variety of events and activities in Arlington: art, athletics, movies, music, nature, book clubs, cooking, hiking. See the Parks and Rec calendar here:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-Events>

Here is a link to the main Parks and Rec page with programs for all ages:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Programs>

55+ Activities - Winter Registration opens Nov. 15 at 10 a.m. for 55+ programs, events and classes!

The Fall Activity Guide is [here](#). There are great programs for fitness, art, music, dance, trips, hikes, parties and more! [View activities and register!](#) Or register by phone by calling 703-228-4747, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Arlington's Racial History Timeline Update: Sign Up to Share Your Story

The County Manager's Office of R.A.C.E. is expanding its Racial History Timeline, a resource that documents key historical events in housing, education, transportation, community facilities and more. We are collecting oral histories from community members like you to build on the time period from 1976 to 1990. Visit the [project page](#) to sign up to share your story and to learn more about the Racial History Timelines.

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