



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is my last year, last meeting, and last newsletter as President. My term is up. As an officer for 6 years, I've been privileged to befriend people across the community & learn about topics ranging from development, architecture, and waste treatment to event management and even marketing.

AHCA has done so much over the past few years. I am proud of revitalizing our neighborhood newsletter and helping create the Livability22202 project that has brought neighbors together and caused the County to take notice of our needs for better housing, connectivity, schools, community facilities, and parks. We now have Ives Park, the first new neighborhood park in a generation, as well as the 1st 22202 public dog park. I am especially proud to have helped kickstart the community activation at Virginia Highlands Park, changing what was often dead, unusable space to hosting art, community events, and music series that helped many people through a trying pandemic, brought a sense of community to Pentagon City, and enticed the National Cherry Blossom Festival to expand to Virginia. That has made clear we still want and need more parks, particularly natural, casual use spaces that connect us with nature and are flexible to be used in a variety of ways.

None of that happens without enormous help. There are too many to list, but I would especially like to thank Natasha Atkins who works wonders while protecting our tree canopy, our pedestrian superhero Pamela Van Hine who stays on top of everything and takes great notes that fuel these newsletters, and Miriam Gennari for keeping a focus on sustainability and volunteering for so much. Kari Klaus deserves tremendous credit for helping us hold the County's feet to the fire and being the genesis of so many of our park projects and community events.

There is still lots to do. The National Landing BID is helping, but we really need residents to lead the next generation of events and activism that make our neighborhood a community. We still need to manage traffic, improve sidewalks, complete our bike network, expand parks, site a school, get a great community center, and the other improvements that will continue to make this a wonderful place to live while we grow.

I am so excited with the next group of officers, led by Cory Giacobbe, who managed the newsletter back in the day when it was a multi-page bohemoth and knows the neighborhood well. Please give them your support and consider ways you might give back and leave your own positive mark.

-- Scott Miles

Future 2022 Officers

Our neighborhood is fortunate to have people step forward to fill all the roles for officer positions next year. The candidates nominated in October will be voted on in November:

President: Cory Giacobbe	Treasurer: Alistair Watson or Ben Watts
1st VP: Ben D'Avanzo	Recording Secretary: Patty Pile
2nd VP: Jill Braun	Corresponding Secretary: Natasha Atkins

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 10

7-9pm, Virtual -- Zoom / Facebook

<https://aurorahighlands.org/event/nov2021>

Wastewater Treatment Plant Update

Paul Guttridge, our neighborhood rep to the Plant will recap the Oct Advisory Panel meeting: Still in planning, but you may want to hear about an important decision on the options being considered. bit.ly/biosolids-oct7

PenPlace/Amazon HQ2 Updates

We have asked Amazon/JBG if they can present and answer questions on the changes in the last PenPlace development plans and the schedule of activities going forward.

Bylaws Updates

Vote whether to approve amendments to improve membership, voting, and notifications. This was held over from October.

2022 Officer Elections

Vote on the officers nominated in October.

Miracle on 23rd Street Donation

Vote on Board recommendation to donate \$500 to Melwood in support of the annual neighborhood holiday event.

Read Up & Reach Out!



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Get Your FREE TREES

Winter is coming, but before you forget about the heat waves and torrential rains of summer, take this simple step: sign up for a beautiful new free tree to be planted for you in the spring. It will help mitigate climate change effects on your home, increase your property values, reduce your A/C bills, improve local air quality, and benefit local wildlife. If you have young kids or grandchildren, you'll be planting for their future. Interested? See <https://bit.ly/free-trees-2021>. Questions? email natashaatkins1@gmail.com. Natasha can help you find the right tree for the right place.

Explanation of Bylaw Changes

There were questions about the Bylaws Changes introduced in September that prompted the vote to be held over until November. The proposed changes are not intended to be perfect, but are important improvements from the current rules. To summarize, these are the changes recommended after a review by civic leaders:

- Limit voting membership to Aurora Highlands residents, and no longer allow residents from other neighborhoods.
- Require each member attending a meeting virtually that wishes to vote to sign in individually, so we can use the built-in attendance features to determine quorums and vote using Polls to avoid messy and time consuming manual counts.
- Require any topic to be brought up at a meeting for a vote to be advertised by the board beforehand. Members can petition the board to require an item be advertised. This is to fix the current system, which allows any topic to be raised for a vote at a meeting, by anyone, without having to notify other members.

An additional suggested change is included:

- Increase the minimum number of paid members for votes to occur from 15 to 20. This is intended to promote greater participation, but could hinder actions given many meetings may have low attendance.

See bit.ly/ahca-bylaw-change for actual wording changes. Please come prepared to vote on these items. Other changes or suggestions should be saved for another day.

National Landing BID Update

The National Landing BID Board held their 2nd Quarter meeting on Oct. 28. Staff shared the FY2021 Annual Report and FY2023 Work Plan and Budget, which will be posted at <https://nationallanding.org/about/national-landing-bid/organizational-documents>

Chairs of the BID committees summarized their meetings and planning activities. Good news for the neighborhood - the BID has hired Luke Fichter as the Community Engagement & Community Specialist. Read about him - and other BID staff - through this link: <https://nationallanding.org/about/staff>

PenPlace Plans Revised

Plans for Amazon's HQ2 on the PenPlace site, across 12th St. from Whole Foods, will be undergoing changes following public input. The latest plans, which include medium to modest changes in design and movement through the site are at bit.ly/penplace2021. Amazon also announced that it will provide a permanent home for Arlington Community High School (ACHS) in the development. See bit.ly/penplace-achs.

Pentagon City Planning Study Draft 2 Released

While the plan is being marketed as a more livable, "greener" community, most of those who have participated in the year-long Pentagon City Study have expressed concerns about the proposals and conclusions, which include no statements assuring that 22202 will receive the necessary facilities and services to accommodate triple the current population. This includes ensuring that we have schools, community centers, parks, and accessibility. It also asks for a major, and extremely expensive re-routing of Joyce St around an existing green space in front of River House, of which the benefits are not explained and is not widely supported by community members nor JBG. <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/ahca-comments-on-pentagon-city-plan-draft2/>

CCCCRC Wants Momentum on Future of Restaurant Row

The Crystal City Citizen Review Council (CCCCRC) met on Nov 3 to explore how to "preserve or protect" Restaurant Row, as encouraged in the Crystal City Sector Plan (p. 15, <https://bit.ly/crystal-plan>). The meeting was led by Christer Ahl, who announced that this would be his last CCCCCRC meeting. Speakers represented the National Landing BID, County staff, property owners, tenants, CCCCRC and AHCA. Ideas for revitalization ranged from a "theme park" (possibly historical) to expanding the area to create a cohesive critical mass that connects east to Crystal City and west to Ives, with some possible extension to the north and south. All agreed that transportation issues need to be addressed: improving pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity, creating safe places for cyclists and micro-mobility riders, supporting transit on 23rd, and creating much needed convenient and easy to find parking for customers. Developing wayfinding and marketing tools will be essential. These are still ideas with no plan, but all agree - Restaurant Row needs to be protected - we just need to figure out the best way to do that.

Phase 3 of Crystal Substation Work Begins

Phase three involves constructing the new building along Hayes St, from the basement to the roof using pre-cast concrete structures brought in by crane. Removal of the lattice roof has been postponed until spring 2022. For more information, visit DominionEnergy.com/crystal.

County Seeks Residents for Community Oversight Board

The Arlington County Board is seeking resident applications through Nov 12 to serve on the County's new Community Oversight Board (COB) that will have independent oversight and help to increase transparency and collaboration with the Arlington County Police Department. This volunteer COB will work directly with an accompanying Independent Policing Auditor, who will be hired at a later date. bit.ly/cob-apply

Leaf Collection

Leaving your leaves on the ground provides many environmental benefits -- they enrich the soil as they decompose and provide habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians, and caterpillars. If you want to get rid of them, put them in your biodegradable--not plastic--bags or in the yard waste cart. Or leave them at the curb for vacuum pickup: Aurora Highlands: Nov 10-12 and Dec 1-4
Arlington Ridge: Nov 17-20 and Dec 8-11
For more details, see bit.ly/arl-leaves-2021

MetPark Park Space Unavailable as Construction Begins

The green and public spaces at the center of MetPark are being closed off and will no longer be accessible to the public until the redesigned park is completed in 2023. If you have concerns about inadequate access to green space to meet your needs for the next year and a half, please contact the County Board at countyboard@arlingtonva.us

Presidential Visit & Rally in Aurora Highlands

On Oct. 26th, the Terry McAuliffe campaign rally was hosted at Virginia Highlands Park with a visit from President Biden. Given the heavy rains, followed by equipment for the event and the attendance, the lower grass community field had some minor damage. The Dept. of Parks has their contractor evaluating repairs, which will be billed to the campaign.

November 2 General Election

Thank you for voting in this important election. Turnout for the November 2 election was over 50% in Arlington, including in the 8 precincts in 22202. You can see turnouts by precinct through the County's Voter Turnout Dashboard at <https://data-dashboard.arlingtonva.us/voter-turnout> and find more County voting information through the County Voting Website: <https://vote.arlingtonva.us/Home>

Paper Newsletters

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 and follow us at @AuroraHighlands to stay connected no matter what.

CC2DCA Fall 2021 update

The CC2DCA is a project exploration of a "multimodal connection between Crystal City and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) for use by people walking, biking, and using micromobility devices." The Fall CC2DCA Newsletter (bit.ly/cc2dca-fall-2021) summarizes the first public meeting and online public engagement and next steps. Participants want this new convenient way to reach the airport from our community and also want connections to the Mt Vernon Trail, VRE, and Metro. The second round of public engagement will extend from late Nov. 2021 through early Jan. 2022. View updates and participate at bit.ly/arl-cc2dca.

LRPC Green-lights Eads Co-housing Phase I Study

Developers of the two properties on S. Eads St. just south of Burke & Herbert Bank are requesting zoning changes that would allow the two properties to be combined and developed with one large building to be used for co-housing. This is essentially like a 4-BR suite or apartment, usually shared by 4 unrelated tenants, as a way to keep rental costs more affordable. At a meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) in October, and at the October AHCA meeting, the applicant presented preliminary plans and said they were seeking a 45' height allowance even though the parcels are currently limited to 35'. But changes to Crystal City Sector Plan being studied separately could allow up to 60'. AHCA and ARCA reps urged staff to hold off moving forward with this site until the actual upper limit is known. Instead, members of the LRPC voted to move forward with the site study, emphasizing that there are many streetscape improvements necessary on Eads St. where the property is located, including bike lanes and sidewalks. New development is viewed as a way to begin vitalization of this section of Eads and benefit the Restaurant Row businesses.

COVID Updates from the County

The County began offering free COVID vaccinations Nov 6 for children 5-11 by appointment. Visit guest.vams.cdc.gov/?jurisdiction=AR to schedule. Booster shots for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are also available by appointment at Arlington Public Health Clinics to certain people at least 6 months after their Pfizer primary series. Visit vaccinate.virginia.gov to find additional locations and appointments near you. Pharmacies are offering them too. Want a digital record of your vaccinations? If you were vaccinated in Virginia, you can download a QR code through Virginia's vaccine portal as proof of vaccination. Save the code to a photo gallery, as a digital file, or print it out.

Celebrate, the Carbon-Neutral Way

Over the years, AHCA has focused on green events. So we have reusable plates, utensils, and even a portable battery. Contact info@aurorahighlands.org to use for your events.

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Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

Open Door Mondays

Every Monday, 7-8:30pm

Talk to a County Board member on any topic. bit.ly/opendoor-monday

Leaf Collection

Nov 10-12 & Dec 1-4

Yoga in the Park

Sundays, 5pm

Zumba in the Park

Mondays, 6:30pm

Crystal City Farmers Market

Tuesdays, 3-7pm

Courtyard Green, 2121 Crystal Dr

Ft. Scott Invasives Removal

Nov 27, 9-11am

Miracle on 23rd St

Dec 3, 7-9pm

Tree lighting, hot cocoa, snacks, crafts, poinsettia sale, & visit from ACFD, Santa, & Mrs. Claus.

Get Ready for Miracle on 23rd

Melwood will host its annual Miracle on 23rd Street holiday event again this year on Friday, Dec. 3rd, from 7 to 9 pm. Each year, Melwood invites more than 400 neighbors and families to kick off the holiday season with Miracle's festive community tree lighting and pictures with Santa Claus. Arlington Fire Department will escort Santa and Mrs. Claus to the tree lighting, and there will be activities with hot cocoa, snacks, crafts and a poinsettia sale.

Melwood is looking for organizations or companies to sponsor this fun community event. That support allows Melwood to provide employment, job training, life skill improvement, supportive and recreational services to more than 2,000 people with disabilities in our community each year. Please contact Marchesa Whittington mwhittington@melwood.org.

Coat & Toy Drives

Virginia Hospital Center Pediatrics is accepting new toys & new/used coats for their annual Winter Holiday gift program. See a wishlist at vhcfoundation.com/events/pediatric-toy-drive/ ACPD's 7th Fill the Cruiser Holiday Toy Drive will be at the Mall Nov 13 & Our Lady of Lourdes Nov 30, among others. See bit.ly/acpd-toys-2021

November AFAC Community Food Drive

In the spirit of giving, Livability22202 civic associations, the National Landing BID, and the SustainableScoop have organized a Thanksgiving food drive for AFAC. Join your neighbors Nov 1-20 to provide canned food and dry goods to help everyone enjoy a good Thanksgiving. Most needed foods include canned tuna, canned soup, canned vegetables, peanut butter, cooking oil, and low sugar cereal. No glass please, and low sodium and low sugar items are preferred. Locate the 17 food box sites on the National Landing website (bit.ly/22202-afac-2021). In addition, collection drives will be held at Advent Lutheran Church from 9-12 on Sundays Nov. 7, 14, and 21 and from 4-6 on Wednesdays Nov. 10 and 17, and at the Melwood parking lot from 9-12 on Saturdays Nov. 6, 13, and 20. Please help us give back to our community and those in need this Thanksgiving.

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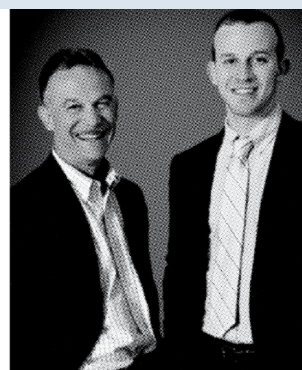
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