



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you enjoyed our social and our special meeting with the South Arlington County Planner. We have some exciting things planned ahead--this month we will be having **sliders, nachos, and calamari** generously provided by Makers Union.

For our March meeting we will have a presentation by David Litman regarding what neighborhood improvement projects our we can request from the County. We will discuss what projects we want to request. I think we are all a little surveyed out, so **if you would like to submit project ideas in advance please email them to info@aurorahighlands.org** before the meeting and I will make sure we include them in the discussion. We will also have a safety briefing from ACPD. Again, **if you have any specific concerns you would like covered by the safety briefing please email them to info@aurorahighlands.org** before the meeting.

We have written many letters on your behalf this month regarding various use and building permits in the neighborhood here is a brief list of some here:

- Crystal House 3- raised concerns regarding parking, lack of pedestrian consideration, decrease in quality of the building (affordable units need to be nice and desirable too!)
- Melwood- described concerns with the Tier II study
- Farmer's Market Permit- requested the County to be aware of the impact of street closures and parking
- Avis Use Permit at Brookfield on 12th St S- requested the County limit through traffic in relation to the other Avis facility.
- Pickleball and Volleyball Courts at 23rd St S and Crystal Dr- requested more information regarding security and any potential fees to use the facilities planned by JBG Smith.
- We have also been engaged with Alexandria, JBG Smith, and Monumental more inside on page 2.

Yours,
AHCA Pres. Rachel

Calendar

- March 8 - April 28 Artomatic featuring ARCA's Kateri!
- March 9 - Listen Learn Lead Summit for Middle and High Schoolers
- March 12 - County Board Meeting
- March 14 - LRPC meeting for Block W
- March 16 - Bailey's Branch Park Input
- March 18 - Community Engagement Forum on Aging 10 am at Lubber Run
- March 23 - Art of Pink @ Met Park at 1pm
- March 25,- 55+ Book club 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Aurora Hills
- April 6 - Pink in the Pool @ Long Bridge at 9am

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, March 13

At: Aurora Hills Recreation Center
735 18th St S, Arlington, VA | 7:00-9:00 pm

AGENDA

7:00 pm -Call to order, approve February Minutes, & enjoy appetizers from



7:15 pm - Spring Fair input & planning

7:30 pm - Arlington Neighborhoods Program (ANP) presentation and selection of neighborhood improvement project

8:15 pm - Safety Update from Arlington County Police Department

9:00 pm-Adjourn

Optional: Register via Zoom
<https://bit.ly/48GweqH>



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(703) 594-1344



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Local Listserve: 4D-A

<https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>

Melwood:

The County Draft Tier II Study was very concerning. The full study of it is available [here](#), but in summary the study did not properly consider the site. The requesting zoning change would prevent Melwood from offering the services it does currently. The study suggests that Melwood could receive an exception to continue to operate there but contains no description of how or why an exception would be appropriate.

The Study only considered 100+ units, an option too big for the site. The policy guidance omits relevant guidance from the GLUP itself, the Crystal City Sector Plan, the Pentagon City Sector Plan and the Aurora Highlands Neighborhood Conservation Plan which all speak to preservation of the single family neighborhood. The County Engagement Session section fails to reflect the comments of the community and the online surveys have failed to verify residency of respondents.

The Study recommends the removal of a historic building with a long and important role in the community, and removal of mature trees, which is against multiple County policies. The Draft Study cites the Affordable Housing Master Plan but fails to acknowledge that the site is outside of the suggested corridor and the site is not in a Metro Station Area. AHCA has over a thousand affordable housing units with over 700 more planned, including Crystal House 3 which will include Adult Disability Services within the building. The Study does not acknowledge that the exact needs Melwood purports to meet with this project are already planned in our neighborhood, at a site more appropriate (closer to the metro, stores, part of the affordable housing master plan) that does not require rezoning or a use designation change. The County still has not responded to any letters by AHCA.

Art Appreciation: Spring Poetry

Sadly, no entries were submitted.

This **LEads** us to a dark place.

Where we peer through **Ferns**,

and hope that grace may **Grant** us strength

to see through the cloudy **Hayes**,

that covers our eyes like vines of **Ives**.

We **hInge** ourselves to the hope of spring, and
wait, that we may **reJoyce**.

Monumental Sports Campus Update:

Is the Arena happening? We don't know. Today is the last day of the legislative session and it does not appear that any legislation will pass that will contain the needed authority and funding to create the arena; however, there are other other avenues possible to still accomplish the legislation needed.

This past month the AHCA, CCCA and ARCA presidents were invited to attend a meeting with JBG Smith and Monumental concerning the Arena. Arlington's role in the process was discussed, as well as the need for it to be included. JBG Smith stated that they believe Route 1 as is, and at grade, will be able to handle any arena traffic. As stated in the [letter](#) sent by Livability 2202 (AHCA, CCCA, and ARCA), this analysis seems faulty and unrealistic. Monumental shared that pre-pandemic 60% of their fans arrived by transit and they hope to return to it. As you know the new location does not have service from as many metro lines.

Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) through their [MonumentalALX](#) page continue to post information. **AEDP and Monumental are scheduled to present to AHCA at our April Monthly meeting** where we will have more opportunities to explore our specific concerns. JBG Smith plans to use its southern most garage on Crystal Drive, and others, for arena parking and run shuttle buses. Many questions still remain regarding logistics and how our neighborhood will be protected from the anticipated overflow traffic, parking, and congestion.

HELP WANTED: WEBMASTER

Our website needs some help! We use Wordpress and need assistance maintaining our website and keeping it up to date. This volunteer position would require 1-5 hours a month of work. A great resume and skill builder! If interested please email: info@aurorahighlands.org

Private Development Projects

As you all know we have several developments underway. The Minor Site Amendment for **Crystal House 3** will be voted on by the County Board on March 12, at the County Board meeting. We have raised concerns regarding the amendment change in quality of the affordable units. The proposal cuts all balconies and the pool from the building creating a building with less amenities than the surrounding area. The County also appears to have already accepted some of these changes as the County manager's recommendation from 2022 incorporated converting the building to all affordable (instead of mixed), but the current amendment we are considering converts the building from mixed to 100% affordable. It is unclear why this was included in the manager's recommendation to the Board before any community input.

Additionally the pedestrian cut through, to prevent the creation of the super block has been taken out of the plan. Further, the park that is supposed to be part of the Crystal House block, is not scheduled for concurrent delivery, but will come at the end of the project, another concern.

The Board will vote on this amendment the day before our Monthly Meeting. We hope that there are some modifications, to bring back the amenities for the building and the pedestrian cut-through, but it remains unseen what will be. Staff was responsive to our inquiries, but does not appear to have made any suggested changes.

Transportation

Arlington Ridge Road and 23rd St S: Signal work continues will last until mid-April, weather permitting. Construction will occur on weekdays between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Eads and 15th St S: Washington Aqueduct contractor crews will restore asphalt at the intersection of South Eads Street and 15th Street South on Tuesday, March 12. Work hours will be from 7 a.m.-5 p.m., weather permitting. During this time, the intersection will be partially closed to allow for milling, overlay and striping. One lane will remain open to traffic, with flaggers in place to safely direct vehicles through the intersection. **Please be aware that this work may impact morning and evening rush hour commutes.**

Route 1: We are still waiting for the final Public Information Meeting and several reports from Phase 2 of the VDOT Route 1 study. Missing reports include the speed study (safety and traffic impact of 25mph), more details on their TDM plan, and the draft and final reports for this phase. However, recently VDOT posted their answers to questions posed during PIM 3, held in May 2023! This Q&A report is linked here. If you have more questions after reading, please share them with VDOT staff at the upcoming Joint BAC-PAC (Bicycle Advisory Committee-Pedestrian Advisory Committee) hybrid meeting on Wednesday, March 13 at the Long Bridge Aquatics Center. See the BAC or PAC page for further details.

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FREE SHREDDING EVENT

Community Service by your local real estate agents

Saturday, March 16, 2024

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

See 'Events' on our site for details



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Art Appreciation: Solar Eclipse Performance or Visual Art

Officers will select one entry to be published in the April Newsletter! Performances accepted via digital video submission. Mail or email your entry by April 1 to the AHCA P.O. Box or email it to info@aurorahighlands.org

Report a Problem

If you see problems you can report them to the County. Try it: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem>

Engage Arlington: Visit [this site](#) frequently for new opportunities to give the County feedback!

2024 AHCA officers

President Rachel Hicks
1st Vice President Jill Braun
2nd Vice President Stacy Meyer
Treasurer Ben Watts
Recording Secretary Nick Giacobbe
Corresponding Secretary Alyssa Gardner



buy plants & support teacher grants!
pre-sales open thru 3/31
pick-up Saturday 4/20 10a-2p
wakefieldpts.org/plantsale



Volunteering Opportunity: Be a "driver" of our walking school bus by walking a small group of kids to Oakridge Elementary one hour, one morning a week. Training and background checks are provided & safety vests for all. Ready for a test drive? Go to <https://friendsofthealliance.org/walking-school-bus/> and click on the volunteer link.

AHCA Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2024

Dues are \$20 per household. Mail a check to AHCA at P.O. Box 25201, Arlington, VA 22202, or via PayPal at <https://bit.ly/AHCAdues>
Find out your membership status by emailing: treasurerahca@gmail.com
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