



# AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

We had a Delightful Spring Fair. It was a huge success with about 150 people in attendance and lots of fun had! The food, band, and company were all great. Thank you to the eleven people who assisted with this event, we hope we will have more volunteers for our next one!

Things are in full swing for Melwood's Special GLUP Amendment Application. **The Planning Commission will consider it Monday May 6**, sign up to speak at the meeting [here](#). Then the County board will consider it May 20, 2024. We invite you to let your thoughts be heard.

We had a special meeting in late April to vote on how to respond to the study and the majority voted to ask the Planning Commission and County Board to reject the study (50-5). We continue to advocate for the neighborhood but need your help to get opinions out. Please consider attending Monday night.

Takis Karantonis, **County Board Member**, will be at our meeting this month to discuss the needs of our neighborhood and answer your questions. Let us know what topics you want her to discuss and **submit your questions in advance using the survey link provided**. Mosi London, who is conducting the parking structure on 23rd, including residential parking on Fern St, will also be presenting. Federico's will generously be providing an antipasto tray for the meeting. More updates inside!

Yours,  
AHCA Pres. Rachel



**Survey Link:**  
<https://bit.ly/May2024AHCAsurvey>

## Calendar

- May 5 - [Freedom Concert](#) at 4pm @ Netherlands Carillon
- May 5 - Knights of Columbus Breakfast @ Our Lady of Lourdes
- May 6 - Planning Commission Meeting
- May 8 - Twilight Tattoo at 10 am @ Ft. Myers (Details on back)
- May 12 - Mother's Day -- Don't Forget!
- May 17 - Acoustic Hour in the Park 55+ @Aurora Hills
- May 20 - County Board Meeting
- May 22 - Flute Circle at 12 pm @ Sustainable Scoops
- May 25 - Fort Scott Park Invasive Plant Pull @ 9 am
- May 27 - Memorial Day Mass at 9 am @ Our Lady of Lourdes
- May 29 - Apple Device Basics 55+ @ Aurora Hills Register [here](#).

## Next Meeting:

### Wednesday, May 8

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

### AGENDA

**7:00 pm**-Call to order, approve [April Minutes](#), & enjoy antepasto by



**7:15 pm** - AHCA business

**7:30 pm** -Mosi London, County Staff, 23rd St Parking study

**8:00 pm**- **County Board Member Takis Karantonis**

**9:00 pm**-Adjourn

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



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

## Melwood's Special GLUP Amendment

Based on the vote held at our special meeting we recommended the Planning commission (1) reject the Tier II Study, (2) retain public use of the site, (3) consider the AHCA alternate example which prioritizes green space, appropriate scale, and historic preservation, (4) delay all GLUP Studies until the process can be reviewed. The County Board in January acknowledged the need to study the special GLUP process.

AHCA's Stacy Meyer has spearheaded an effort to meet with each planning commissioner to share our concerns. Staff's Planning Commission Draft Report mentions many of our questions but does not resolve the concerns raised.

Please continue to make your thoughts known to the County and attend the Planning Commission May 6 and the County Board May 20, 2024. Registration to speak May 6 closes Sunday night.

## Art Appreciation: Nature Photography

We had MULTIPLE entries and here are some top picks! Most were around the neighborhood but we had some that came from vacation! More can be seen [here](#).



## Elections June 18- Don't forget to vote!

**Dual Primary June 18** - Arlington County is holding an a dual primary on Tuesday, June 18. The Democratic Party is selecting a candidate for the County Board election this fall, and the Republican Party is selecting a US Senate candidate for the fall election.

Virginia does not require party registration to vote in primaries. Arlington voters may vote in **either** primary, but **not both**. This County [voting\\_page](#) provides key information on both primaries, including the candidate names for each party ballot.

The Democratic Primary election will again be by ranked choice. You may rank up to 3 of the 5 Democratic candidates on your ballot. More information on how ranked choice voting works can be found [here](#). This page also links to a [sample ranked choice ballot](#) to practice this type of voting.

[Register to vote](#) (or update your existing voter registration) by May 28. If you miss the registration deadline, you may be able to do [Same Day Registration](#).





## Changes to the Neighborhood

JBG Smith announced that it is closing all retail in the Underground in Crystal City. You might wonder what is the plan? So do we. JBG Smith has not shared any details with us despite our monthly community updates with them. This in combination with the recent cancellation of the Crystal City Library Branch has raised concerns over JBG Smith's plans for the community and what sort of presence it intends to have. The retail stores are to be closed by October. Currently it is unknown what will become of the space but the pedestrian passage will remain open. It is unclear what will become of the galleries/artist space in the Underground. Many in December's Livability's priority meeting suggested the space could house community programs, but we have not heard of this idea gaining any traction.

In other news, AHCA is looking for a representative to assist in Arlington's Library Vision initiative. Please email [info@aurproahighlands.org](mailto:info@aurproahighlands.org) if you are interested. It is unclear how many meetings there will be but we need someone to continue to advocate for the neighborhood in this process.

## Updates

### Adopted FY 2025 County Budget Invests in Priority Needs for the Community

The Arlington County Board voted Saturday, April 20, 2024, to adopt a \$1.65 billion balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2025, a 6.4 percent increase over FY 2024. The adopted budget focuses on foundational services for the community, including public safety, housing, behavioral health, environmental sustainability, transportation, and schools. Read more [here](#).

### APS Offers Community Course

The School board through the Office of Student Services will host monthly Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for staff, families and community members. Friday May 17 at 9 am – 3 pm Hybrid course. Register at least one week prior. Syphax Education Center, 2110 Washington Blvd. 22204

### Nominate a Park Hero!

Know someone who is dedicated to improving our parks and public spaces? Nominate them for the 2023 Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award! Nominations due June 6, 2024. Details and nomination form [here](#).

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### Art Appreciation: Summer Fun!

All mediums accepted photos, drawings, etc. Officers will select one entry to be published in the May Newsletter! Mail or email your entry by June 1 to the AHCA P.O. Box or email it to [info@aurorahighlands.org](mailto: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

COL Tasha N. Lowery, Commander, Joint Base Myer – Henderson Hall, invites you for a brunch social followed by a **Twilight Tattoo** matinee performance on Wednesday, May 8th on Joint Base Myer - Henderson Hall, VA. The reception begins at 10 am in the Fife and Drum Room at Patton Hall, and Twilight Tattoo Matinee begins at 12:30 pm at Summerall Field, Joint Base Myer - Henderson Hall.

Twilight Tattoo is a live-action, military pageant, featuring Soldiers from The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" and The 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). Experience a glimpse into American history through performances by The U.S. Army Blues, and Army Voices, The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, and The U.S. Army Drill Team. <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/anim.cfm?i=867016&k=0A6745097A51>

**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](mailto:treasurerahca@gmail.com)  
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