



# neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

April 2019

[bluemontcivic.org](http://bluemontcivic.org)

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## Mark Your Calendars

### BCA Meetings

*(Executive Board & General Membership)*

Wed., April 24

Wed., May 22

Wed., June 26\*

\*Annual Meeting: Vote for 2019-20 Executive Board and officers

Please note that meeting dates are subject to change based on meeting space availability. Please check <http://www.bluemontcivic.org/> and <https://bluemont.nextdoor.com> for updates.

## Come Meet With County Board Member Libby Garvey on May 22!



County Board Member Libby Garvey will attend BCA's **May 22** General Membership meeting. She has found visits to Civic Associations a very helpful way to stay in touch with what is happening in Arlington. She looks forward to hearing from residents about issues in Bluemont, and answering any particular questions we have. (This is a rescheduling of her previously planned visit on April 24.)

## When and Where Do We Meet?

Generally, BCA meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month (Executive Board at 7:00 pm and General Membership at 7:30 pm) in Arlington Traditional School's library. All members are welcome to attend the Executive Board meeting. We may move meetings to other dates and locations to avoid holidays and other conflicts. Meeting date changes/cancellations are posted to [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org) and <https://bluemont.nextdoor.com>.

## New, Improved Website Coming Soon!

At the March General Membership meeting, BCA members previewed the proposed design of the improved Bluemont Civic Association Website. We thank volunteer website designer Christopher George, who developed the design and is creating our new, improved website! A fully functioning website should be up soon, which will restore access to the records and other content on the former website. The old website was built on an outdated and complex platform that prevented the Executive Board from effectively updating it. The website address will remain [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org).

**Next Meeting:**  
**Wed., April 24 at ATS, 7/7:30 pm**

## Ballston Metro Second Entrance: Upcoming Meeting, Letter Writing/Social Media Campaign

BCA continues to push for an additional entrance to the Ballston Metro. Following discussion at the February General Membership meeting, BCA contacted the County Board and Ballston Business Improvement District (BID) regarding a site plan amendment for a planned mixed-use building at 4420 Fairfax Drive, the proposed location of the new entrance.

BCA has long supported construction of a metro entrance at the west end of the Ballston Metro Station. It was called for in our 1999 Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP). Our current NCP, from 2013, asked that the west entrance be made a priority. This second entrance would encourage more metro use by shortening the walk to Metro for Bluemont residents, and be important for safety, making it easier to evacuate the station in case of an emergency.

In 2005, a developer for the site agreed to partially design and build a second entrance to the Ballston metro when they built their new building. This commitment was a concession given neighborhood concerns about bringing high density development across Glebe Road and into Bluemont. In exchange for the developer's work on a second metro entrance, the County waived normally-required cash payments for street and easement vacations and granted bonus density. But nothing has been built since then, and the site was sold. The terms of the original site plan meant the County had to wait on the developer's timetable.

On March 16, 2019, the County Board approved a new developer's proposed site plan amendment to replace the obligation to partially design and build the west entrance with a payment to the County. The County's Principal Planner for the project informed BCA that the site plan amendment allows the County to go ahead with design and construction of a second metro entrance separately from construction of the building. The County wanted to be able to advance the project independently of any new building being built there, and said the design of the metro entrance would not conflict with the proposed building. The developer's payment equals the current full 2019 market value for the street and easement vacations their project requires plus the current full value of the bonus density. The developer also agreed to grant the County the necessary easements for a new entrance by the end of May 2019.

BCA has invited the Principal Planner to attend an upcoming General Membership meeting. The planner will bring someone from the Department of Environmental Services to discuss the status of the other funding sources and where the project is in the Capital Improvement Plan.

The Ballston BID said the County is ready to move forward on a second Ballston metro entrance, but the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) is holding things up because of other priorities, including fixing maintenance problems, and Crystal City now that Amazon is coming. The Ballston BID has been encouraging the community and Arlington Chamber of Commerce to do a letter writing and social media campaign to get Ballston as a priority with WMATA. The more people who write in, email, tweet, Facebook, etc., the better chance we have of getting the entrance to move forward. If you would like more information, or are interested in organizing a letter writing/social media campaign, please contact [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org). Letters can be sent to:

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit  
Authority 600 5th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

You can also send letters to County Board Members and our state representatives. Ballston BID met with the delegate who covers Bluemont, Patrick Hope, who was well aware of the long-awaited second metro entrance.

## 800 N. Glebe – Requested Expansion of Loading Dock Hours and On-Street Loading

BCA continues to support neighbors opposing the "minor" site plan amendment request (SP#401) to expand loading dock hours and allow on-street loading and unloading. The original request for 800 and 900 N. Glebe Road and 801 N. Wakefield Street now covers only 800 N. Glebe. At the June 2018 General Membership meeting, BCA members approved a motion asking that the County maintain and enforce existing site plan conditions that restrict loading dock hours and existing street loading/unloading activities, that any amendments be acceptable to the residents living on or near N. Wakefield Street and 9th Street North, proximate to the buildings on SP #401; and that the County Board exercise the same care and consideration for the rights of residents adjacent to or near 800 N. Glebe as it did for those residents living near 750 N. Glebe Road by placing the same or similar requirements on the applicant of the "minor" site plan amendment for 800 N. Glebe Road as the existing conditions placed on the building owner of 750 N. Glebe Road site, including an effective loading dock management plan.

The owner of 800 N. Glebe started a loading dock management plan in January 2019. BCA members have attended several community meetings, including in January and April 2019, where the building owner presented results from its study of loading dock use. County Staff has recommended deferring consideration of the proposed site plan amendment to May 2019.



## Lubber Run Community Center Construction Progress

After a long planning period and community outreach process, construction of the new Lubber Run Community Center is under way. Demolition of the 1956 Lubber Run Community Center was completed on December 1st, and a foundation has been excavated and new concrete columns poured for the center's underground parking structure. (New columns are pictured above.) Construction of the \$48 million new community center will conclude in 2020.

When completed, the new building will provide programs for youth, adults and seniors including a pre-school, senior center, gymnasium, and fitness center and multi-purpose rooms for recreation programming and community use. It will also provide office space for approximately seventy Department of Parks and Recreation employees.

For more information, search "Lubber Run Community Center Project" on the County website.

## BCA Motions Passed

Below is a recap of the motions BCA members have passed since the October 2018 newsletter.

- At the October General Membership meeting, BCA members approved the resolution opposing the destruction of mature trees at Upton Hill Regional Park.
- At the February General Membership meeting, BCA members agreed to join the Tara-Lee Heights Civic Association in co-sponsoring a Town Hall with County officials on safety along Washington Blvd.

## Saving Trees at Upton Hill Park — Update

After eight months and many revisions to meet storm water runoff standards and the public's demands to save more trees, the County approved the permit for the Upton Hill Regional Park renovations on January 16, 2019.

Pressure mounted on NOVA Parks in the summer of 2018 to change their plans for the park. In September 2018, NOVA Parks cancelled the new parking lot and road, saving up to 49 trees slated to be cut down during construction. Some doubts remained whether NOVA Parks would reintroduce plans for the new parking lot and road. At its October General Membership meeting, BCA members approved a motion opposing the destruction of trees at Upton Hill Regional Park. In December 2018 and February 2019, NOVA Parks informed Friends of Upton Hill (FoUH) that the plans for lower parking lot and road were abandoned.

Despite this, 19 trees will still be cut down in the playground area and others are to be cut in the upper part of the park primarily to expand the parking lot. Some of these trees are dead, but a number are healthy and good-sized, including three beautiful mature maples.

The playground needs renovation — adding some swings and sections for older and younger children — and better care, like keeping the area free of trash. The work on the expanded parking lot and a planned climbing structure on the park's upper level is scheduled to begin in the winter of 2019-2020. Renovation of the playground on the lower level is further in the future and its design is still being developed, according to NOVA Parks. Friends of Upton Hill advocate that as NOVA Parks refines its playground design, it should make a natural playground integrated into the existing landscape or use boardwalks as Arlington County has in its parks to save more trees.

For more information see: [www.friendsofuptonhill.org](http://www.friendsofuptonhill.org)

### Come Ring Our Bell!

Every federal holiday at noon, BCA hosts the ringing of the bell at Constitution Gardens (corner of George Mason and Wilson by the Fire Station.) Everyone is welcome. You and your children can ring the bell! So, mark your calendars for: **Memorial Day: Monday**, May 27; **Independence Day: Thursday**, July 4; **Labor Day: Monday**, September 2; **Columbus Day: Monday**, October 14 and for all the federal holidays!

## Ballston Pond Restoration Planned

Arlington County will begin restoring Ballston Pond this fall. The pond is north and west of the bike path connecting the Custis Trail to Fairfax Drive, south of I-66, and west of the part of the Bluemont Junction Bike Trail that connects Fairfax Drive to Washington Boulevard. Lubber Run goes through the pond. The pond should act as a storm water retention facility to collect and slow storm water runoff from Interstate 66. Because of a buildup of sediment, the pond no longer effectively serves that purpose. Moreover, it is strewn with trash, making it an eyesore.

The restoration is part of the County's storm water management plan, helping fill the County's commitment to reduce storm water pollution flowing into Chesapeake Bay. The planned restoration will feature:

- A low dam where Lubber Run enters the pond to control the water level. There will be a deep-water area in the middle of the current pond, and several channels for water to flow through the area.
- Sediment and trash will be removed, and devices installed to make it easier to remove trash in the future.
- Invasive plants will be removed, and native trees and wetland plants planted.
- A short boardwalk for viewing birds and other wildlife will be placed on the east side of the pond. It will include three interpretive signs. The existing viewing platform will be removed.
- Turtle basking stations will be added.



## Returning This Spring: The Lubber Run Farmers Market

After a successful launch in 2018, the Lubber Run Farmers Market will return on Saturday, April 27th. Located in the parking lot of the Barrett Elementary School (4401 N. Henderson Road) near the intersection of Henderson and N. George Mason Drive, the market will be open every Saturday until November, from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

On Opening Day 2019, the market should have up to sixteen vendors including four fruit and vegetable farms, a meat-and-egg producer, a goat cheese maker, a bakery, and a local coffee roaster. The vendor line-up can change from week to week as the growing seasons change, so please check the market's website for a complete list of the fruit and vegetable offerings at various times of the season. The URL is: <https://lubberrunfarmersmarket.org/produce-calendar/>

Many weeks, local musicians are featured to entertain market customers. Look for them at the open-air "café" near the middle of the market. If you can't find a seat, bring your own folding chair to sit and enjoy. For families with young children, the elementary school's adjacent playground beckons. (Note: Dogs are not allowed at the market.)

If you drive to the market, please consider parking along N. Park Street between the elementary school and the Lubber Run Community Center (now under reconstruction).

## Thanks to Our Newsletter Carriers!

A volunteer army of neighbors diligently hand-delivered this month's free newsletter to your home or business. That's over 2,000 newsletters! We greatly appreciate the efforts of our volunteers in helping to keep us all informed about Bluemont news, and would like to thank them here for graciously pitching in with their time and effort.

The BCA delivers a free newsletter twice a year in the spring and fall, in addition to regular e-mail updates sent to BCA members. If you'd like to help out distributing newsletters, we could always use more help. Please contact David Van Wagner ([dpvanwagner@gmail.com](mailto:dpvanwagner@gmail.com)) and let him know of your interest.

### Executive Board BCA Officers & Reps

**President**

Nick Pastore  
[President@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:President@bluemontcivic.org)

**First Vice President**

Laura Kirkconnell

**Second Vice President**

George Rovder

**Treasurer**

David Van Wagner

**Secretary**

Barbara Wien

**Neighborhood Conservation  
Advisory Committee (NCAC)***Representative*

Richard Gibson

*Alternate*

Angelo Collins

**Civic Federation***Delegates*

Mark Haynes, Allen Norton, David Hughes,  
Laura Kirkconnell  
[CivicFed-Del@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:CivicFed-Del@bluemontcivic.org)

*Alternates* George Rovder, Marilyn Stone,  
Flint Lewis, Barbara Wien  
[CivicFed-Alt@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:CivicFed-Alt@bluemontcivic.org)

## Seeking Nominations for BCA Executive Board and, Civic Federation Delegations, and Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee

We want YOU! The BCA Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the following positions:

- **BCA Executive Board:** President; First Vice President; Second Vice President; Treasurer; Secretary; and Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative.
- **BCA Civic Federation Delegates:** eight positions — four delegates, and four alternate delegates.
- **Neighborhood Advisory Committee Alternate Representative.**

Any member in good standing, 18 years of age or older, is eligible to serve in these positions. If you wish to serve, please contact the Nominating Committee: Barbara Wien; Rich Gibson; and Mark Haynes. They can be reached via e-mail at [barbarawien@verizon.net](mailto:barbarawien@verizon.net), [richardvgibson@gmail.com](mailto:richardvgibson@gmail.com), and [Haynes@concordiapower.us](mailto:Haynes@concordiapower.us).

The Nominating Committee will announce the nominees at the May 22 General Membership meeting. Eligible candidates may also nominate themselves from the floor at that meeting. BCA will post the slate of nominees on the BCA website [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org) with regular updates. BCA will also send an electronic announcement featuring the slate of nominees to members who have provided BCA with their e-mail addresses.

## Who Will Represent Bluemont?

### The Civic Federation Position on Proposed Property Tax Increase

On February 23, 2019 the County Board voted to advertise a proposed property tax increase of 2.75 cents per \$100 assessed value for 2019. The one Board member voting “no,” was Katie Cristol, who proposed advertising a proposed tax increase of 2 cents. The County Manager had requested a property tax increase of 1.5 cents. By law, the Board can adopt a tax rate no higher than the advertised rate, although it may adopt a lower rate.

These property tax increases would be in addition to increases from rising assessments. Assessments on most residential properties rose in 2019. Collectively, residential property assessments rose 2.9%, while commercial property assessments rose 4.1%.

The County Board also approved advertising a series of tax and fee increases. The County estimated that the average increase in property assessments, a 2.5% property tax rate increase, and the proposed fee changes would cost the average Arlington homeowner (home value of \$658,600) an additional \$330 in FY 2020.

Based on his proposed property tax rate increase of 1.5%, the County Manager proposed a FY 2020 budget of \$1.34 billion, a 4.7% increase in spending over FY 2019. That includes the proposed County operating budget of \$810.1 million, a 4.5% increase, and the Arlington County Public Schools budget of \$525.6 million, a 4.9% increase.

At their April meeting, Arlington County Civic Federation delegates voted “with reservations” to support a FY 2020 increase in the property tax rate “not to exceed the County Manager’s recommendation” and encouraged the County Board, Manager and Staff “to continue their efforts to prioritize core needs, and identify savings ideas, as stated in the Civic Federation’s resolution of June 2018.”

You could be part of such discussions! Eight of the BCA positions for which we are seeking nominees are BCA delegates or alternate delegates to the Arlington County Civic Federation [www.civfed.org](http://www.civfed.org). The purpose of the Civic Federation is to promote general welfare of Arlington County and vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner.

## Check Out Proposed BCA Bylaw Changes on the BCA Website!

As discussed in previous newsletters, BCA is considering updates to its bylaws to enhance and clarify sections based on issues raised by the General Membership and the Executive Board. The Bylaws Committee and Executive Board presented proposed changes to members at General Membership meetings starting in September 2018. After discussions with the Executive Board and General Membership, the proposed changes were posted on the BCA website as a draft concept for future implementation: [http://www.bluemontcivic.org/\\_new/index.html](http://www.bluemontcivic.org/_new/index.html). The direct link to the current bylaws is: [http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA\\_BYLAWS\\_Dec2013MasterFINAL.pdf](http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA_BYLAWS_Dec2013MasterFINAL.pdf). The direct link to the proposed changes is: [http://www.bluemontcivic.org/Bylaws\\_Comparison.pdf](http://www.bluemontcivic.org/Bylaws_Comparison.pdf). If members have questions, they are welcome to reach the Bylaws Committee at [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org) and encouraged to join our discussion on April 24.

The April 24 General Membership meeting will discuss any changes or questions members have, so that a final draft can be posted on the BCA website in preparation for an up-or-down vote at the June Annual Membership meeting.

Proposed substantive changes are:

- Defining a quorum for General Membership meetings.
- Allowing past Presidents and First Vice Presidents to compete for another term after serving the currently allowed maximum of three years in office.
- Defining procedures for raising membership dues rather than setting an amount in the by-laws
- Allowing amendments to the by-laws to be proposed by a petition signed by at least ten members, rather than the current two.

Proposed clarifications cover:

- Rights of business and honorary memberships
- Which elected BCA positions are “offices,” which includes voting rights on the Executive Board
- Nomination procedures
- Procedures if there is no candidate for Second Vice President
- Duties of BCA officers
- Requiring minutes be taken at all official meetings
- Requiring meetings be held monthly, rather than specifying which days

Proposed updates to language used in the bylaws are:

- changing “surplus” and “deficits” to “unduly high or low balance”
- replacing “newsletters” with phrases also reflecting modern forms of communication
- replacing references to “charges” with “reasons for removal” when discussing removal of BCA officials
- removing gender specific pronouns



### Connect with Bluemont

Check our BCA website [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org) for BCA meetings, official information, and how you can get involved with BCA. Join today!

**BCA E-mails:** BCA members who provide their e-mail address to the Executive Board receive regular e-mail updates on issues affecting Bluemont residents.

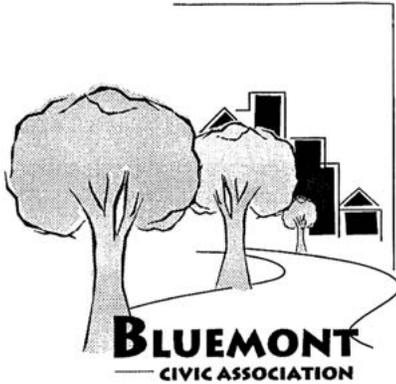
**Contact the Executive Board:** BCA welcomes comments, suggestions and questions from members. Please contact us at [exec@Bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@Bluemontcivic.org)

**Facebook:** Like our Bluemont Civic Association page on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/bluemontcivic](http://www.facebook.com/bluemontcivic)

**Nextdoor.com** is a free, private social network where you can connect with people who live nearby. BCA posts official announcements on Nextdoor.com. Sign up at <https://nextdoor.com> by providing your name, address and email address.

## The Secret Is Out! Bluemont Is A Great Place To Call Home!

The online review service Niche recently ranked Arlington VA as the "Best City to Live in America." Among other factors, the county's high-quality public schools, low crime rate, abundant nightlife options and walkability were the chief factors in achieving the top spot ( <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/arlington-arlington-va/> ).



But that's not all: Niche also ranked Arlington neighborhoods among the top places to live in Virginia. Four Arlington neighborhoods claimed the top spots in Niche's — Colonial Village, Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights, North Rosslyn and Waycroft/Woodlawn. But ranking first among Arlington neighborhoods was our very own Bluemont. All of this is not really news to most of us, but validation is always welcome!

Here's a factor that Niche didn't consider — the energy and enthusiasm of Bluemont's residents. To keep informed and help as we all strive to keep our neighborhood a great place to live, think about joining our Civic Association (or renewing your existing membership).

Members receive regular e-mail updates on events and issues affecting Bluemont, and on upcoming discussions and votes at BCA General Membership meetings. These updates help members actively participate in BCA meetings, bring their ideas and concerns to the General Membership and Executive Board, as we work together to support our neighborhood.

## Join or Renew Today!

Keep your membership current! Please use this form to join or renew.

### BCA Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew your membership to any general membership meeting at Arlington Traditional School, or
- Mail this form with your check made out to "Bluemont Civic Association" to BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205.

 **Go paperless & save trees!**

- Check this box to receive *BCA Neighborhood News* by email.

All information is for BCA use only.