



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

March 2014

bluemontcivic.org

In This Issue

February 26 Meeting Highlights	2
Looking Ahead to April & May	3
Lacey Lane Project To Resume	3
Don't Let This Be Your Last Newsletter!	3
March CivFed Meeting	4
Finding Seats for Students	4
Nominating Committee	4
Real Estate Assessments Rise	5
New ArlingtonVA Mobile App	6

Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	3/26
Election Day (to fill open County Board seat)	4/8
BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS Program: Arlington Neighborhood Villages	4/23
Sidewalk Safety Task Force Bus Ride with County Board Member Mary Hynes	5/1
BCA Sidewalk Safety Task Force Meeting 8 am, Two Chefs Restaurant	5/17
Neighborhood Day Picnic Details TBD	5/17
BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS Speaker: School Board Member Sally Baird	5/28



The county will decide Lubber Run Community Center's future.

Discussion: Lubber Run Community Center

Please join us on Wed., March 26, at Arlington Traditional School (ATS), 855 N. Edison Street. The Executive Board and general membership meetings will begin at their regular 7/7:30 pm times.

We have invited Arlington Forest Civic Association to discuss its efforts to preserve the Lubber Run Community Center site as a recreational facility for central Arlington. The BCA has used Lubber Run as a meeting location in the past.

In the next three months, the County and School Boards are likely to determine whether Lubber Run will be replaced by a new, low-rise, enhanced community center that retains existing green space or the site will be used instead for a multistory, large-footprint, 800- to 1,200-seat school or an affordable housing/community center complex following the Arlington Mill model.

Also at the March meeting, volunteers are being sought for the Nominating Committee (see related article on p. 4) and will be appointed by a membership vote. Planning for Bluemont's Neighborhood Day celebration on May 17 will be discussed, and members will vote to approve a budget for the event. BCA task forces/committees will provide updates.

Next Meeting:

**Wed., Mar. 26
ATS, 7/7:30 pm**



Is this your last newsletter?

Use the form on p. 6 to renew for 2014!

BCA Meetings at a Glance

February 26 Meeting Highlights*

- The Executive Board voted to appoint Dean Foster as a delegate to the Arlington County Civic Federation and Jonn Lau as an alternate delegate. André Provencher is assisting the BCA treasurer with upkeep of the membership list. We thank them for their service.
- David Van Wagner, Suzanne Sundburg, and Laura Kirkconnell volunteered to serve on a records review committee with the membership's approval. After reviewing the association's papers and retaining/archiving those deemed critical, the remainder will be donated to the Arlington Community Archives of Arlington Public Library.
- The Bylaws Review Committee submitted its final written report to the Executive Board electronically on Jan. 20.
- David Hughes, who served as the BCA's representative on the Marymount "Blue Goose" Site Plan Review Committee, reported that the developer's contributions to offset the substantial increased density on the site would include \$5.718 million earmarked for improvements to the Ballston Beaver Pond, the Custis Trail, and a west entrance for the Ballston-MU Metro Station. Hughes also noted that the BCA would need to monitor the project closely to ensure that these funds were utilized as promised.
- Members passed a final draft of the resolution presented by the BCA's 25 Glebe Task Force. President Rovder subsequently forwarded the resolution to The Penrose Group (the developer), county staff, and to the Planning Commission chair. A copy of the resolution can be found at www.bluemontcivic.org. At last contact, the developer indicated it had reached a tentative agreement with the Exxon property's owner (the last sticking point is responsibility for any potential environmental hazards) and that final plans would be submitted to the county in March.
- The BCA Safeway/Bluemont Village Center Task Force provided an update, including a list of actions taken between October and February. The Task Force reported that Safeway had "paused" its process on Bluemont's Safeway due to a "management change." In mid-January, the Task Force received a call from Safeway's public relations manager who indicated Safeway would have something to tell the BCA by mid-March or early April. Safeway is performing "due diligence" on another developer, and it plans to move forward on the redevelopment of the site with a new store. Subsequent to this report, Safeway announced its sale to private equity firm Cerberus Capital. For more details, visit <https://bluemontvillage.wordpress.com/>.



New buildings to replace Marymount's Blue Goose

*[Note: Because ATS was closed due to inclement weather, the BCA's January meeting was canceled.]

BCA Meetings at a Glance



Looking Ahead to April & May

April

For the April 23 meeting, the BCA has invited Marybeth Tschetter of Arlington Neighborhood Villages (ANV). ANV is part of a nationwide network of nonprofits whose goal is to help older Arlington residents remain in their own homes or communities to age in place safely and with an enhanced quality of life. For more details, visit <http://arlnvil.org>.

May

On May 1, BCA officers and members of the Sidewalk Safety Task Force will ride along with County Board member Mary Hynes on a Metro bus tour of Washington Boulevard's two-lane configuration with pedestrian-friendly features and intermittent bike lanes west of George Mason Drive. Washington Boulevard carries approximately the same traffic volume as Wilson Boulevard.

School Board member Sally Baird (who will be retiring from the board at the end of her term) has been invited to speak at the May 28 meeting. She will focus on answering questions regarding options to resolve overenrollment at Washington-Lee (W-L) High School and other local schools as well as the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to fund school construction. On the minds of many is whether parts of Bluemont may be moved into the Wakefield High School attendance zone. See the related article on p. 4.

In preparation for Baird's visit in May, BCA Webmaster Jonn Lau has offered to coordinate and collect questions from the membership in advance. Please visit bluemontcivic.org to submit questions and provide information that will help us raise your issues so they can be addressed. You may also send your questions and comments for Ms. Baird to webmaster@bluemontcivic.org.

Lacey Lane Project To Resume

The BCA long hoped that the county would purchase the undeveloped parcel at the corner of N. Washington Blvd. and George Mason Drive (across from Lacey Woods Park) for preservation as parkland. However, last year, the land was graded and readied for redevelopment. Then construction of the project, called Lacey Lane, halted a number of months ago. And according to real estate transaction records, it appears that the parcel changed hands in December 2013 for \$5,700,000.

As reported by the Waycroft-Woodlawn Civic Association, Evergreene Homes intends to resume construction soon. The plans include a total of nine detached homes with four finished levels, detached garages, and landscaped courtyards. For more details, visit www.waycroftwoodlawncivicassociation.org, hit the "What-All" tab, and click on the Feb. 2014 newsletter.

Don't Let This Be Your Last Newsletter!

RENEW for 2014!

(See renewal form on p. 6)

Your membership renewal date appears on this newsletter's mailing label. Most BCA memberships expired on 12/31/13. Unless you renew your membership for 2014, this will be your last mailed newsletter. Please pay by check or cash in person at a BCA meeting or via our USPS post office box. Dues for 2014 are \$15 through Dec. 31, 2014.

March CivFed Meeting

In March, the Civic Federation hosted the School Board and the candidates running to replace former County Board member Chris Zimmerman.

A special election will be held Tues., April 8, and absentee voting has already begun. The candidates are Alan Howze (Dem.), Stephen Holbrook (Ind.), Janet Murphy (Ind. Green), and John Vihstadt (Ind.). For a recap of the debate, visit <http://www.arlnow.com/2014/03/06/vihstadt-i-dont-want-to-upset-the-applecart/>.

Civic Federation delegates also voted unanimously in favor of the Planning & Zoning Committee's Noise Control Resolution, which asks the County Board to apply the prohibited noise section of the revised code to all residential properties (including townhomes, condos, and apartments) and not just to those properties located in R zoning districts. To read the complete resolution, visit <http://www.civfed.org/2014/02/noise-control-resolution/>.

Nominating Committee

At the March meeting, BCA members will choose at least 3 members in good standing to serve on the organization's Nominating Committee.

Among the bylaws changes members approved in December were new procedures for the process of identifying candidates for the BCA's elected positions: President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, Treasurer, Secretary, NCAC Representative, NCAC Alternate Representative (new position), 4 Civic Federation Delegates, and 4 Civic Federation Alternate Delegates.

Candidates for all positions are being sought. Members in good standing who wish to run for a position must identify themselves to the committee prior to or during the May 28 meeting. At the conclusion of the May meeting, the election ballot will be finalized and the nominations process will be closed. No nominations will be taken from the floor at the June 25 Annual Meeting unless there are no candidates for a position appearing on the preprinted election ballot.

If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee, please contact George Rovder at president@bluemontcivic.org.



Finding Seats for Students:

Solving Washington-Lee's Overenrollment

The W-L PTA is awaiting study results from Arlington Public School (APS) consultants who are looking for the most efficient ways to utilize W-L's existing facilities starting next fall.

As part of the long-term strategy to address overenrollment, the APS community will hold a meeting on March 26, 7-9 pm, in the Career Center's Common Area (816 S. Walter Reed Drive). This meeting will cover options for middle and high schools in the Capital Improvement Plan and Capacity Development Plan.

Background information on the capacity issue is posted on the W-L PTA website at <http://www.apsva.us/Page/22070>. APS reports on options to address enrollment growth can be viewed at <http://www.apsva.us/moreseats>.

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Real Estate Assessments Rise

In January, many residential and commercial property assessments rose—dramatically so for some Bluemont homeowners. Therefore, whereas the advertised real estate tax rate for the coming fiscal year (FY 2015 begins July 1, 2014) remains unchanged, the effective tax rate (and your payment) may be higher.

If you disagree with your home's assessed value, you have the right of appeal to the Department of Real Estate Assessments and the Board of Equalization. But remember that you must provide evidence showing that your property's market value is either inaccurate or unfair (the tax rate cannot be appealed).

The period to file appeals for the 2014 calendar year closed on March 5. However, if your assessment seems unreasonable, you may want to learn more about the appeals process (<http://topics.arlingtonva.us/realestate/assessments/appeals/>) to prepare for next year.

Exemptions and tax relief are available for disabled veterans whose disability is 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total and for surviving spouses of veterans whose death occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2011.

In addition, Arlington's Real Estate Tax Relief Program provides an exemption and/or deferral of real estate taxes for qualified Arlington homeowners age 65 and older and certain totally and permanently disabled homeowners.

Applications for this program must be filed by March 31, 2014.

To learn more about tax relief, visit <http://topics.arlingtonva.us/realestate/taxes-payments/exemptions/>.



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Secretary

Laura Kirkconnell secretary@bluemontcivic.org

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative

Chris Healey ncac-rep@bluemontcivic.org

Civic Federation Delegates and Alternates

Dean Foster, David Hughes, Terry Serie, Suzanne Sundburg (Alternates: Patrick Bryan, Craig Deering, Jonn Lau, James McMullin)

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What's Inside?

- *Lubber Run Community Ctr.'s Future, p. 1*
- *Safeway Task Force Update, p. 2*
- *Washington-Lee H.S. Overcrowding, pp. 3 & 4*
- *County Board 4/8 Special Election, p. 4*

IS THIS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

(Check the expiration date on your mailing label.)

New ArlingtonVA Mobile App

On Feb. 3, the new ArlingtonVA mobile app launched. People can report problems from smartphones, along with a photo of the issue (pothole, broken streetlight, fallen tree, damaged playground, missing sign, etc.). Users receive a tracking number and notification when the issue is updated or resolved (if they sign up with their email address). The app is available for iPhones and Android devices. Download the smartphone application, or report a problem directly using the online form by visiting <http://topics.arlingtonva.us/reportproblem/>.

RENEW TODAY!

Keep your membership current through December 2014.

Until the online payment option resumes, please use this form to renew.

GO PAPERLESS AND SAVE TREES

- Members may elect to receive *BCA Neighborhood News* electronically rather than by mail by simply checking this box. Be sure to provide your e-mail address! (All information is for BCA use only.)

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

- Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew at the March 26 general membership meeting at ATS, or
- Mail the form with your check to the Bluemont Civic Association at BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205.