



neighborhood news

of the Bluemont Civic Association

April 2015

www.bluemontcivic.org

Mark Your Calendars

4/18 Sidewalk Safety Task Force, 8 am Two Chefs Restaurant

4/22 BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS

5/9 Arlington County Neighborhood Day

5/9 Walk for the Animals and Pets Fest, 10:30 pm, Bluemont Park

5/16 Sidewalk Safety Task Force, 8 am Two Chefs Restaurant

5/16 2015 Turtle Trot 5K, 10:00 am, Bluemont Park

5/17 Taste of Arlington, noon, Wilson Blvd at Ballston Common Mall

5/25 Memorial Day Bell Ringing, noon, Constitution Garden Park

5/27 BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS

6/24 BCA Meetings (Executive & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS

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Next Meeting: April 22, 2014

7 pm Executive Board/7:30 pm General Membership

Please attend the April 22 BCA meetings at Arlington Traditional School, 855 N. Edison St., Arlington, VA 22205. There are actually two: The Executive Board meeting, beginning at 7:00, is open to all members who are up to date with their dues. The general membership meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

Although many issues that directly affect Bluemont are reported in the BCA newsletter, the membership meetings allow you to learn more about the issues, ask questions, and offer your own ideas.

Thanks to Our Newsletter Carriers!

An army of neighbors diligently hand delivered this month's free BCA newsletter to your home or business. That's over 2,100 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 their time and effort:

Adrienne & Michael Pilot, Mary Thorne, Henry & MaryAnn McFarland, Don Sotille, Kathleen Reilly, Ed Fendley, John & Julie Van Doren, Judy Collins, George Rovder, Ellen Armbruster, Stephanie Paup, Lynn Barton, Mike & Bernadette Wolford, Susan Mockler, Bob Maynes, Laura & Bill Brothers, Lisa Kelly, Kate Mattos, Joi Kudirka, Caroline & Mark Haynes, Jody Harrington, Richard & Caroline Young, Lisa Everhart, Terry Serie, Adrienne & Michael Pilot, Dayna Davitz, Deborah Hartman and David Hughes.

The BCA delivers a free newsletter twice a year in the spring and fall. If you'd like to help, please contact David Van Wagner (dpvanwagner@gmail.com).

The March 2015 BCA General Membership Meeting

Among the highlights from the last BCA meeting: It was announced that Capital Bikeshare has proposed installing two more stations in Bluemont, and that the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority began the public comment period for its Fiscal Year 2015-16 Two-Year Plan. The Virginia

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Department of Transportation announced plans to improve multimodal transportation along I-66. Arlington County and Arlington Public Schools began their budget season, and the county held the second public meeting on the Wilson Blvd. reconfiguration. These meeting highlights and other issues are addressed in the following pages.

The 2015 Arlington County Neighborhood Day is May 9. BCA has been investigating requirements imposed by new laws around public events (the same laws that have reduced problems during beer crawls), and is able, again, to sponsor Neighborhood Day events in the neighborhood. Volunteers with time and ideas for a Bluemont-wide event are encouraged to contact the Executive Board of the BCA at exec@bluemontcivic.org.

Newsletter Editor Wanted

Neighborhood News is in transition while we search for another newsletter editor or editors to help us write, edit, and produce this newsletter.

If you are or you know someone who is interested in volunteering to write and edit our newsletter, please contact exec@bluemontcivic.org.

Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates for June Election

The BCA Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for BCA's board election to be held at the June 24th Annual Meeting. Officers' terms will run from June 2015 to June 2016. Candidates are needed for the following positions. Full descriptions are listed at http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA_BYLAWS_Dec2013MasterFINAL.pdf.

President: Leads the BCA's decision-making process and oversees and manages association operations. Chairs membership and Executive Board meetings and presents approved membership views and positions to public officials.

1st & 2nd Vice-Presidents: May chair meetings in the president's absence and perform other duties as assigned by the president.

Secretary: Records meeting minutes and prepares drafts for review at subsequent meetings. Provides final, approved minutes for posting to the BCA website and keeps a record of all association correspondence.

Treasurer: Maintains the BCA's books and financial records; handles its bank accounts, billings, and payments; records all financial transactions, including payment of dues and receipt of donations; and keeps the membership list current.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative and Alternate: As BCA representatives, one or the other attends all NCAC meetings and helps residents identify NC projects and meet NCAC requirements for project approval and funding.

Civic Federation Delegates and Alternates (4 each): Represent the BCA at Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) meetings and serve on ACCF committees. Delegates also serve as ex-officio members of the BCA Executive Board, reporting periodically to the board and the membership.

As part of their duties, all elected officials and representatives will be asked to attend BCA's monthly general membership meetings as often as possible and to report periodically to the membership at those meetings and/or through the BCA newsletter.

Send board nominations to NominatingCommittee@bluemontcivic.org, or contact any of the Nominating Committee members directly: David Van Wanger (dpvanwanger@gmail.com/703-524-5068), David Hughes (dzzard@aol.com/703-522-5257), or Dean Foster (cdandmar@verizon.net). The Committee encourages diversity and aims to broaden participation and engage new people.

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Under the BCA Bylaws, the Nominating Committee must accept as nominees for elective office any and all members in good standing, 18 years of age or older, who approach them to be nominated, whether those members are solicited by the Committee or not. Only current BCA members (dues paid for 2015) are eligible to run for or hold office.

The Nominating Committee will announce its slate of nominees at the May 22 General Membership Meeting. Each nominee must provide the Committee with a short biography prior to June 24th to be used to introduce nominees at the Annual Meeting.

Funds for Transportation Projects in Arlington

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) held public hearings on its Fiscal Year 2015-16 Two-Year Plan on March 25 and on March 30. Attending BCA representatives presented a letter reinforcing the position expressed in BCA's Neighborhood Conservation Plan that supports building a western entrance to the Ballston Metro station. The meetings were too recent to be described in this newsletter, but look for a recap in the May BCA newsletter. (Continued on page 3)

In 2013 Virginia restructured the mechanism it uses to fund state transportation projects. The change calls for NVTA to collect revenue and fund projects in two regions--The Hampton Roads region and the region composed of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties. The NVTA uses 70percent of the revenue it collects to fund regional projects and returns the remaining 30 percent to the localities where the revenue was generated.

Arlington requested approximately \$24 million from NVTA for Fiscal Year 2015-16 for projects to improve flow traffic flow on N. Glebe Rd. through Buckingham and areas north of it, to build a western entrance to the Ballston Metro station, and to improve Columbia Pk. near the Pentagon. Arlington residents would also benefit from a Metro

request for \$9 million to upgrade its electrical system to run eight-car trains more frequently. Although these projects scored high and were recommended by NVTA, people in our region's other areas are recommending other projects, which jeopardizes the Arlington and Metro projects. You can find more information about NVTA's Two-Year Plan at <http://www.thenovaauthority.org/>.



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Tolls and Multimodal Improvements for I-66 Inside the Beltway

On March 12, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) announced a plan to improve multi-modal travel on I-66 inside the Capital Beltway. Currently, only drivers with one or more passengers may use the highway during rush hours. Starting in 2017, under the proposed plan, drivers carrying only one passenger would be charged to use the highway during rush hours, while drivers with two or more passengers would continue to be free.

Revenue collected from the charges would be used to fund multi-modal transportation projects along I-66, such as enhanced bus service and bicycle and pedestrian access and connections.

VDOT still has work to do. For example, I-66 carpool lanes outside the Beltway require only two people per vehicle during rush hours. Read more about the plan and send you comments to VDOT at <http://inside.transform66.org/>

Arlington County Community Facilities Study Committee

In January 2015, the Arlington County Board and the Arlington School Board launched a broad-based, comprehensive effort to assess the county's public facilities, to establish criteria for locating new facilities, and to review likely revenue projections. They appointed a 24-member Study Committee to build a consensus framework regarding the community's future public facility and funding needs in the context of Arlington's and the region's projected 5-, 10- and 20-year economic and demographic growth.

Once complete, the effort will guide the on-going 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process for both the county and Arlington Public Schools. The effort seeks to address issues raised by the community around coordinated planning for parks, schools, affordable housing, and other facilities and to resolve the discord that arose in public discourse related to planning of recent county projects.

County Board Chair Mary Hines brought the effort forward and has made the study her primary focus during her 2015 chairmanship. Hines asserts the county is at a similar crossroads to the one it faced 40 years ago when Arlington County committed to transit-oriented development on the "grand bargain" that it could concentrate development in its two Metro corridors while preserving and strengthening single-family neighborhoods.

The Study Committee has met four times, and its meeting schedule and material are available at <http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/community-facilities-study/>. It will report on the development of the 2017-2026 CIPs to the two boards in September 2015 and will present its final report in November 2015.

Coalition for a New and Better Lubber Run Community Center

The leadership of the Coalition for a New and Better Lubber Run Community Center (LRCC) met with Arlington County staff on March 3. Attendees included representatives from the Arlington Forest Citizens Association, Cathart Springs Home Owners Association, Bluemont Civic Association, Barrett School PTA, Arlington Parks Coalition, and the Lubber Run Amphitheater Foundation. County representatives included Deputy County Manager Dave Schwartz, Parks and Recreation Director Jane Randolph, Sports and Recreation Division Chief Laura Lazour, Deputy Director for Facilities & Engineering George May, Planning Supervisor Kris Krider, and Parks Planner Scott McPartlin.

The purpose of the meeting was to obtain information on the pre-planning and planning processes for the new community center within Lubber Run Park at the intersection of N. George Mason Dr. and N. Park Dr. and to ensure inclusion of the coalition and nearby residents in community center plans.

The coalition shared with county staff the results of a community-based questionnaire, which largely support maintaining the current greenspace (open grassy areas, trees, and playground), and the facility itself keeping the same footprint, with one additional story.

The County Board is committed to active community involvement in defining the center's needs. The new LRCC will provide a full complement of recreational, social, and learning activities for all ages. The Center's planning and design will begin this year, with construction expected in 2017.

Parks Director Jane Randolph and her staff plan to host one or more "visioning sessions" to obtain community input on features desired for the new LRCC.

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She will also attend community meetings and partner with the coalition on messaging, community input, and branding. Representatives from the coalition will tour the existing community/senior centers with Laura Lazour to get ideas for offerings and space management in the new center.

Built in 1959, the LRCC was the first community center in Arlington and is long overdue for a make-over. The facility is small and not ADA compliant. Thus it cannot fully accommodate activities to serve the community. Its pre-school and after-school programs, programs for teens and at-risk youth, services for seniors, and recreation and fitness programs are all over-subscribed.

After a 20-year delay, last summer the Arlington County Board allocated \$28 million to create a new, robust, and thriving Lubber Run Community Center.

To be fully funded, the proposed budget will require a transfer to the school board from the county board of \$459.1 million. Additional funds will come from federal, state, and local sources as well as from a projected carry over from the current budget of \$7.5 million. The budget provides for increases in enrollment and elimination of early release Wednesdays at four schools that still have it, a step increase for employees, and projected savings through program efficiencies. If not fully funded, cuts could be made sequentially in three tiers until the budget balance is achieved. The first tier would include reduction in central office staff.

The school board's proposed 2016 budget will be presented to the county board on April 10. A public hearing on the budget will be held on April 23, and it will be adopted on May 7.

Following the budget presentation, the board fielded several questions from the membership on countywide schools and programs, apparent gaps in academic performance between 8th graders and 4th graders on standardized tests, foreign language instruction, and early release programs at some schools and, of course, school system capacity issues.

Also at the civic federation meeting, the Arlington Economic Development Commission (EDC) director, Sally Duran, discussed efforts by the EDC to work with the community and the business sector to implement "Arlington's Innovation Economy Strategy." This plan's purpose is to address the decreasing federal presence; the 20 percent office vacancy; the changing office market; and increased competition at the local, regional, national, and international levels for business and commercial firms. Ms. Duran stressed the EDC's view that citizens need to engage collaboratively with businesses to find fair solutions, approaching development with a culture of "WE" and not "us versus them"---there being a perception in the commercial sector that Arlington is anti-business.

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Appetizers, Dinners & Desserts to Go
Catering
6017 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, 22205
Tues-Friday 4-8pm; Sat-Sun noon-4pm
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Arlington County Civic Federation March 3 Recap

The Arlington County Civic Federation hosted the Arlington School Board at its March 3 meeting. The school board presented the superintendent's proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget of \$561.1 million in a slide show that can be viewed at the civic federation web site:

<http://www.civfed.org/newContent/2015-03/ASB%20Presentation%20to%20Civic%20Federation%202015-03.pdf>

She also stated that the commission has a goal of maintaining Arlington's desired 50/50 split in the tax base between commercial and residential.

A copy of her slide presentation can be viewed at this link on the civic federation website:
<http://www.civfed.org/newContent/2015-03/EDC%20Presentation%20to%20Civic%20Federation%202015-03.pdf>

Everyone is invited to attend Civic Federation meetings. The next meeting is on May 5 at 7:30 pm in the Virginia Hospital Center Hazel Auditorium. Newsletters, detailed meeting agendas, and policies are available at <http://www.civfed.org/>.

History of the Bluemont Junction Trail

The Bluemont Junction Trail is part of what was formerly the 1.3 mile Thrifton-Bluemont Spur of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad. The spur connected Bluemont Junction with Thrifton Junction, which was on the site of the current Lyon Village Shopping Center. The Spur had six stations: Lacey, Waycroft, Garrison, Arlington Avenue, Bluemont Junction, and Bon Air. Bluemont Junction served as a hub to the multi-line W&OD Railroad. The railroad served commuters from Virginia suburbs and tourists to the resorts in Loudon County. Today, the retired caboose from Bluemont Junction is in Bluemont Park.

W&OD continued passenger service on the Thrifton-Bluemont Spur until 1951 (with a two-year hiatus during World War II). By 1951, the Spur dropped passenger train service and became a freight train. In 1963, Chesapeake & Ohio RR, as the Spur's new owner, shut down the line and sold it to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Today, the asphalt-paved trail connects the Ballston area with the W&OD Railroad Trail at Bluemont Junction Park. In Ballston, the trail connects to the Custis Trail, which traces a path through Arlington along I-66.

Proposed Resolution of the BCA Regarding the Location of Bikeshare Stations in Bluemont

As reported last month in BCA's newsletter, there are proposals to place two Capital Bikeshare stations within Bluemont, which will be additions to the two stations already here. The existing locations are at George Mason Dr. and Wilson Blvd. and the other is at N. Glebe Rd. at N. 11 St. One proposed location is between the intersections of Bluemont Dr. and N. Illinois St. ("the rocks" on the trail) and Bluemont Dr. and N. Greenbrier St. The other proposed location is on N. Harrison St. near the entrance to the Custis Trail. The proposed locations meet Capital Bikeshare guidelines for station placement.

During the Bluemont Civic Association meeting held on Wednesday, March 25, the following resolution was introduced to oppose placement of stations on any part of N. Harrison St. primarily due to safety, traffic flow, and parking concerns, and at any location in the stretch of Bluemont Junction Trail between N. Emerson and N. Jefferson Streets. During the April meeting, this resolution will be discussed, at which time members may speak on the resolution and motion to amend or postpone action on it or to limit debate on it. After the discussion, members will vote on whether to adopt the resolution with any approved amendments.

PREAMBLE

The Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) welcomes the interest expressed by Capital Bikeshare and Arlington County in locating additional Bikeshare stations within Bluemont and notes that Bluemont residents recently supported such an expansion in its Neighborhood Conservation Plan.

Notwithstanding that general support, the BCA is particularly opposed to certain proposed Bikeshare locations on N. Harrison Street and along the Bluemont Junction Park for the following reasons.

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N. HARRISON STREET

A letter, dated March 11, 2015 signed by Mr. Jason Hardin, consultant to Arlington County Commuter Services proposed a Capital Bikeshare Station located on North Harrison Street and Fairfax Drive.

- The BCA is particularly opposed to this location because of the potential safety hazards having a Capital Bikeshare station at North Harrison Street. The potential safety hazard includes traffic obscuration based on the 6'x3' Bikeshare station marketing and mapping sign from the St. Ann parking lot; the potential safety hazard to the bike renter exiting the bike rack directly onto a heavy residential traffic flow with no bike paths or speed controls except speed bumps placed on North Harrison Street to calm the traffic; the potential safety hazard to the St. Ann elementary school children by increasing access to school grounds by bike renters, short cutting to Custis Trail and; the potential safety hazard caused by a dangerous dip in the road that obscures the full view of the Capital Bikeshare station until the last few seconds traveling south from Washington Boulevard on North Harrison Street between 11th and 10th Streets.
- The BCA is also opposed to the location based on its close proximity to single family residences, the change in the neighborhood appearance, and potential parking complications.
- As an alternative Bikeshare station location to serve the same general area, the BCA suggests that Capital Bikeshare consider locating a station ¼ mile west down Fairfax Drive at the junction of Westover Park and Bon Air Park.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that BCA opposes the location of a Bikeshare station on any part of North Harrison Street with particular emphasis at the location close to Fairfax Drive as detailed in the March 11, 2015, letter referenced above to residents of the Bluemont neighborhood.

BLUEMONT JUNCTION PARK/BIKE TRAIL

Capital Bikeshare, through an Arlington County Commuter Services consultant, has also advised BCA of plans to install a bike rental station along the Bluemont Junction Trail between N. Emerson St. and N. Jefferson St. With regard to this proposal, BCA calls attention to the following:

- BCA has worked closely with County staff for many years on the use and appearance of the beautiful and unique stretch of the Bluemont Junction Park between N. Emerson and N. Jefferson Streets.
- This stretch of open park is used by many neighbors and Arlington Citizens for many purposes and is one of a very few unbroken open green spaces in any neighborhood in Arlington.
- The bike stations comprise an approximately 45 foot long concrete slab, commercialized signage, and brightly painted metal structure that is inconsistent the with open green space character of the Bluemont Junction Park.
- The stretch of the Bluemont Junction Park between N. Emerson and N. Jefferson traverses a narrow area that is close to single family homes which will be disproportionately affected by the look, use, and truck servicing of the station.
- Neighborhood streets along the Bluemont Junction Park have experienced problems with commuter parking and neighbors are concerned about parking connected to the bike station.
- BCA neighbors have made constructive suggestions and offered to work with BikeShare on reasonable alternative locations, including along Wilson Boulevard, where bike lanes will be created this Spring.
- BCA neighbors are deeply troubled about setting a precedent of installing single purpose infrastructure in the Bluemont Junction Park between N. Emerson open green space.

Therefore,

Be it resolved that BCA opposes the installation of a bike share station at any location in the stretch of Bluemont Junction Trail between N. Emerson and N. Jefferson Streets.

Wilson Boulevard Improvements Coming

Responding to requests of the BCA and the Dominion Hills Civic Association, the county is restriping Wilson Boulevard between N. Frederick St. and N. Manchester St. to make it safer. The repaved road features one general travel lane in each direction, a new two-way center turn lane, and new bicycle lanes.

The BCA has asked the county to improve Wilson's sidewalks so they meet ADA and county safety standards. The county describes the reconfiguration as a demonstration project that will improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist safety and access, including by reducing speeding and by separating pedestrians from traffic. A potential second phase could involve reconstructing sidewalks and relocating utility poles.

For more information, see the project's web page at <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/wilson-boulevard-improvements/>

Renew Today

Keep your membership current through December 2015.

Please use this form to renew until the online payment option is resumed.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

- Bring this form and cash or check for \$15 to renew at the October 22 general membership meeting at Arlington Traditional School, or
- Mail this form with our check to the Bluemont Civic Association at BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington, VA 22205

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.)

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