



# neighborhood news

of the Bluemont Civic Association

May 2015

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

## Mark Your Calendars

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

5/28 Long Range Planning Committee hearing on Retail Action Plan, 7-9 pm, 2100 Clarendon Blvd Rooms C & D

6/2 Arlington County Community Facilities Study Open House, noon-9 pm, Courthouse Plaza

6/2 Arlington County Board Work Session on the Retail Action Plan, 7-9 pm, County Board Room

6/20 Sidewalk Safety Task Force, 8 am, Two Chefs Restaurant

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

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## Next Meeting: May 27, 2015

### 7 pm Executive Board/7:30 pm General Membership

The next Bluemont Civic Association Executive Board and general membership meetings are at 7:00 pm and 7:30 pm on May 27, 2015, at Arlington Traditional School, 855 N. Edison St., Arlington, VA 22205. All Bluemont neighborhood residents whose memberships are up to date are welcome at the Executive Board meeting.

B.F. Saul Company, which recently purchased the 750 N. Glebe Rd. property, has been invited to speak at the general membership meeting about its plan for redeveloping the site, which currently has a Mazda dealership and dry cleaning business. Confirmation from the company is pending.

All Bluemont residents can join or renew their memberships through December 2015 at the meeting or by completing the form on this newsletter's last page and sending it with a check to the address shown on the form. Paid members enjoy voting rights and newsletters delivered to their homes.

## Walkable Wilson Yes!

Wilson Blvd. resurfacing and reconfiguration is underway. In fact, by the time that you read this, it might already be completed. BCA's Sidewalk Safety Task Force has been pursuing improvements to the thoroughfare for many years. Now, we are seeing the benefits of the task force's thoughtful and diligent efforts. The changes will make Wilson Blvd. safer and more accessible for everyone, including people who walk or bicycle along Bluemont's main street.

BCA appreciates the efforts of Arlington County in reaching out to the community to ensure that this change supports residents' needs. As part of the planning process, county board members toured the area with BCA officers and members, and county staff held community meetings to review and refine designs. The final configuration reflects a suggestion made at a meeting to improve bus movement along the incline from N. Lexington St. to N. Kensington St. It also addresses concerns about vehicles entering from side streets, the movement of emergency vehicles, and the capacity to support all of the traffic that Wilson Blvd sees.

## **Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Approves Funding for the Western Entrance to Ballston Metro Station**

On April 23, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) adopted its FY2015-2016 Two Year Plan. The plan includes \$12 million for designing the western entrance to the Ballston Metro Station. Arlington County estimates the total cost of the project at \$90 million. The entrance will be on the southeastern corner of N. Glebe Rd. and Fairfax Blvd. It will create a second exit, which could be critical in an emergency, and make the walking distance from Bluemont to the station one third of a mile shorter.

## **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](mailto: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](http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA_BYLAWS_Dec2013MasterFINAL.pdf).

The committee is seeking candidates for the offices of President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, Neighborhood Conservation Advisor Committee Representative and Alternate, and four Arlington County Civic Federation delegates and four alternates.

Send board nominations to [NominatingCommittee@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:NominatingCommittee@bluemontcivic.org), or

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

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 27 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.

## **April General Membership Meeting Recap**

Approximately 100 people attended BCA's April meeting. Topics discussed included the Long Range Planning Committee process for 750 N. Glebe Rd., I-66 reconfiguration inside the Beltway, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority funding for an entrance at N. Glebe Rd. and Fairfax Dr. to the Ballston Metro Station, and the Powhatan Skate Park visioning meeting that was on May 5.

The largest part of the April meeting was used to hear attendees comment and vote on resolutions regarding two additional proposed Capital Bikeshare stations in Bluemont. Due to time and administrative limitations and to the number of people who attended, speakers' membership was not verified and comments were limited to one, 30-second comment per person. Voting results were largely one-sided.

Capital Bikeshare had approached the Bluemont Civic Association in February with proposals to add

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two stations in Bluemont. Capital Bikeshare and BCA neighbors toured one of the proposed locations in March. Capital Bikeshare ran on-line survey to solicit comments on the proposals and it offered alternate proposals after receiving comments. BCA members voted at the February general membership meeting to print a resolution in the April newsletter opposing proposals to place stations along the Bluemont Junction Trail and on N. Harrison St.

During the April meeting, votes were held on five motions to amend the advertised resolution, one of which was to separate the motion into two resolutions. A final vote was held to approve the amended resolutions, and the resolutions are as follows:

#### **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. The BCA looks forward to working with Capital Bikeshare to identify suitable locations for stations in the Bluemont Civic Association area. Notwithstanding that general support, the BCA is particularly opposed to certain proposed Bikeshare locations on N. Harrison St. and along the Bluemont Junction Trail for the following reasons:

#### **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 N. Harrison St. and Fairfax Dr.

- The BCA is particularly opposed to this location because of the potential safety hazards of having a Capital Bikeshare station at N. Harrison St. The hazards include traffic being obscured by the 6 foot by 3 foot Capital Bikeshare station marketing and mapping sign; danger to bike renters exiting the bike rack directly onto heavy residential traffic flow on N. Harrison St. with no

bike paths or speed controls except speed bumps placed on N. Harrison St.; the issue of increased access to St. Ann elementary school grounds by bike renters short cutting to the Custis Trail; and the danger posed by the dip in the road that obscures the full view of the Capital Bikeshare station until the last few seconds traveling south from Washington Blvd. on N. Harrison St. between N. 11th St. and N. 10th St.

- 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 Dr. 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 N. Harrison St. with particular emphasis at the location close to Fairfax Dr. 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 St. and N. Jefferson St.
- 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 contain an approximately 45-foot-long concrete slab, commercialized signage, and brightly painted metal structure that is

inconsistent with the open green space character of the Bluemont Junction Park.

- The stretch of the Bluemont Junction Park between N. Emerson St. and N. Jefferson St. traverses a narrow area that is close to single family homes that 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 Capital BikeShare on reasonable alternative locations, including along Wilson Blvd., 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 St. and N. Jefferson St.

Therefore,

**Be it resolved that BCA opposes the installation of a new Capital Bikeshare station within the parkland of the Bluemont Junction Trail.**

### **What's Happening at the Arlington County Civic Federation?**

On May 5, Arlington County Civic Federation delegates heard from the senators and delegates that represent Arlington in the Virginia General Assembly delegation. The assembly approved new, stricter ethics legislation after last-minute negotiations on February 27. The session, according to the Virginia House and Senate members present, was relatively peaceful in comparison to the last few sessions.

Also at the May meeting, two new draft resolutions were presented. One resolution calls for the Federation to support the county's draft 3.0 Affordable Housing Master Plan (see [3.0.pdf\). The other resolution calls for the Federation to ask Arlington Public Schools to address over-enrollment problems by bringing down the cost per seat for new construction, thereby making capital funds go further. It also asks the county to find new revenue sources and to defer county bond projects in favor of schools.](http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2015/03/DRAFT-AHMP-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Both these draft resolutions were published in the May newsletter, which can be found at [www.civfed.org](http://www.civfed.org). A vote on both resolutions will most likely take place at the June 2 meeting, along with the Federation's annual election of officers.

Regarding a resolution that was passed at the February meeting, which was to hold the real estate tax rate for FY2016 at its current level, the County Board and the County Manager agreed with the resolution. Even without changing the tax rate, the county will raise more revenue because real estate assessments have increased.

### **Lubber Run Community Center Redevelopment**

On April 29, approximately 75 people attended a "visioning session" at the Lubber Run Community Center (LRCC), 300 N. Park Dr., hosted by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The event was held in response to a request from the Coalition for a New and Better LRCC to provide residents an early opportunity to brainstorm ideas for the facility. For background, the new LRCC will offer a full complement of recreational, social, and learning activities for all ages.

Attendees toured existing offices and program areas before DPR Director Jane Rudolph introduced staff members and the concept architects for the project. Participants rotated among three 15-minute brainstorming sessions to discuss three topics:

- How can LRCC positively impact the community and vice versa?
- What types of spaces and uses should be accommodated in the building?

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- What types of spaces and uses should be accommodated on the site?

Because of the center's importance to the community, the third question was included even though no funds for site development are in the current budget. The evening closed with summaries of the group discussions. When questioned about the next steps, the DPR team said it will develop concept drawings for potential building uses and present them to the community in the fall.

Both the April 29 visioning session presentation and a survey for residents who may have missed the session or who may have additional comments can be found by going to [parks.arlingtonva.us](http://parks.arlingtonva.us) and clicking on the link: Lubber Run Community Center Visioning. Residents have until 5:00 PM, Sunday, May 31, 2015, to participate in the survey.

### **Arlington County Long Range Planning Commission Hearing on 750 N. Glebe**

As Terry Serie, BCA's representative for the project to the Arlington County Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC), reported at the February BCA meeting, all of the land in the Mazda block on N. Glebe Rd., except for one small parcel (Enterprise car rental), has been purchased by the B.F. Saul Company for redevelopment. The company's preliminary plan is for a 45,000-square-foot grocery store and 431 apartment units. (A news article with a rendering of the project is at [http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/breaking\\_ground/2015/04/ballstons-withering-auto-market-saul-centers.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/breaking_ground/2015/04/ballstons-withering-auto-market-saul-centers.html))

At the April 20 meeting of the LRPC, Arlington County staff proposed using the RA-4.8 residential zoning district designation for that block instead of the Residential-Commercial (R-C) district that has been listed on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) for decades. The RA-4.8 district has been used only one time in the past 36 years under the HMRMU land designation in the Courthouse Metro area.

(The staff presentation is available at [http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/Presentation\\_LRPC\\_750-N-Glebe\\_1504202.pdf](http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/Presentation_LRPC_750-N-Glebe_1504202.pdf))

Since 1980, the Mazda block has had a land-use designation for High Medium Residential Mixed Use (HMRMU), and the only zoning district listed on the GLUP has been R-C. The GLUP map does have a note explaining that other zoning districts besides what is listed under land-use categories on the map could be used.

The staff report concludes that both districts are essentially the same, except for a significant difference in height: the R-C maximum height is 95-feet and the RA-4.8 maximum is 136-feet. The staff presentation has a more complete comparison on pages 8 and 13.

If the original R-C zoning district designation is used for the project, the height on N. Glebe Rd. will be limited to 95-feet and then will taper down only to 75-feet across on N. Tazewell St., which has townhomes on the opposite side. On the other hand, using the RA-4.8 will allow for a height up to 136 feet on N. Glebe Rd. with tapering down to 55-feet across from the existing townhomes at the corner of N. Tazewell St. and N. 7th St. (Details are provided on page 6 and 7 of the staff presentation.) Tapering allows the height of the side of the building that will face the townhomes to be lower than the side facing Ballston, which affects the impression the building makes on the residential townhomes.

The LRPC did not reach a decision at their April 20 meeting about the appropriateness of using the RA-4.8 zoning district on the Mazda block. The committee decided to visit this topic again after the staff provided background documents that Terry Serie requested, including:

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1. The history on the creation (purpose and scope) of the High Medium Residential Mixed Use (HMRMU) land-use designation that has been on the Mazda block since 1980;
2. The history of the creation (purpose and scope) of the R-C and the RA-4.8 zoning districts.

The documents will be reviewed to answer questions about the appropriateness of using the RA-4.8 zoning district on the Mazda block—and other blocks in Arlington County—with the same GLUP designation. They will be made available for everyone to review shortly after the county provides them.

The staff report identified eight areas in Ballston, Virginia Square, Clarendon, and the Courthouse metro areas where the RA-4.8 district could be considered instead of the R-C district designation. One of them is the 672 Flats area, and the applicant for that site plan could withdraw the current proposal for only a 75-foot building across the entire site and resubmit a plan with the RA-4.8 district designation to put a 136-foot-high building on Glebe with some tapering to the adjacent townhomes.

## 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 May 27 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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