



# neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

October 2015

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

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## Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	10/28
Election Day 6 am–7 pm	11/3
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)	11/18
Thanksgiving Day Bell Ringing Noon, Constitution Garden Park	11/26
Small Business Saturday All day, Arlington's small businesses	11/28
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)	12/16
Christmas Day Bell Ringing Noon, Constitution Garden Park	12/25
New Year's Day Bell Ringing Noon, Constitution Garden Park	1/1/16
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)	1/27/16

## Next Meeting: October 28, 2014

### Guest: Officer Cesar Ruiz, Police Liaison

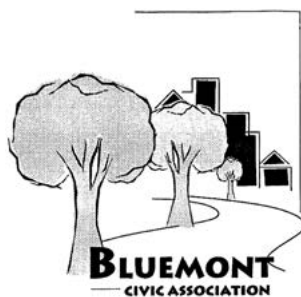
Please join us on Wed., 10/28, at Arlington Traditional School (ATS), 855 N. Edison Street. The Executive Board and general membership meetings will begin at their regular 7/7:30 pm times. We have invited Arlington Police Liaison Officer Ruiz to provide an update on police-related matters.

Come meet your new officers and representatives (elected in June 2015, see the list on p. 5). Hear updates from BCA committees and representatives and learn the latest on Safeway, the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) sidewalk project for Wilson Boulevard, the Exxon (670 N. Glebe Road) and Mazda (750 N. Glebe Road) redevelopment projects, and more. This is also your chance to bring forward matters of concern to the attention of your civic association.

## When Do We Meet?

The BCA meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month (Executive Board at 7 pm, the membership at 7:30 pm) in Arlington Traditional School's

library. However, we may move meetings to other dates to avoid holidays and other conflicts. Please check the calendar of events for upcoming meeting dates. Meeting date changes/cancellations are posted to the website: [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org).



**Next Meeting:**

**Wed., Oct. 28  
ATS, 7/7:30 pm**

## Thank You Volunteer Carriers!

We offer special thanks to all the neighbors who volunteered their time to deliver this newsletter to households across Bluemont. Twice a year, we hand-distribute BCA newsletters neighborhood-wide to members and nonmembers alike as part of our outreach efforts. People who are interested in volunteering to help distribute the newsletter should contact David Van Wagner ([dpvanwagner@gmail.com](mailto:dpvanwagner@gmail.com)).

# BCA Meetings at a Glance

## June Annual Meeting

BCA members elected new officers and reps (see the list of officers and representatives on p. 5) and voted to approve a resolution offering conditional support for the redevelopment project at 750 N. Glebe Road (the Mazda block). To read the resolution printed in the June newsletter, visit [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org) and click on the “Newsletters/Minutes” button in the top right-hand corner.

## Over the Summer

Even though the BCA takes a July–August break for summer vacation, the BCA Executive Board and various committees and task forces continue to meet. Executive Board members met on Wed., 8/26, to plan for the upcoming year. Find approved minutes on the BCA’s website.

## Sept. 30 Meeting

The membership hosted Stephen Roberts, a Ballston resident and organizer of the Save the Bridge group (see <http://saveballstonbridge.com>). Removal of the Ballston Festival pedestrian bridge (over Wilson Blvd.) is planned as part of the Ballston Common Mall renovation. The bridge currently serves the roughly 3,000 pedestrians who cross it each weekday—including many elderly and disabled residents—to travel between the mall (with its daily/monthly parking garage) and the Ballston Metro. More details about this project appear on p. 5.

The BCA Bikeshare Task Force presented its report recommending four locations for future Bikeshare stations in Bluemont:

1. Lacey Woods (Washington Blvd. & N. Frederick St.)
2. Wilson Blvd. (next to Safeway’s bus stop)
3. Wilson Blvd. (north side of N. Lexington St. at Bon Air Park)
4. Wilson Blvd. (west side of N. Illinois St. on the street)

For full details and to see the map showing all the locations that have been or are being considered, visit [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org).

After approving Executive Board and General Membership meeting minutes from June, the membership also unanimously passed a motion to suspend a Standing Rule requiring advance advertisement of motions. (However, upon subsequent review of the BCA Bylaws, no such standing rule exists. The BCA generally advertises motions prior to votes being taken, as a matter of habit.)

The membership then passed a motion recognizing and thanking Webmaster and Immediate Past President Jonn Lau for his ongoing service to the association with a \$100 gift card. Members also approved this motion: “The BCA supports the retention of the pedestrian bridge across Wilson Boulevard connecting Ballston Quarter (now Ballston Common Mall) with the building on the north side of Wilson Boulevard (Stafford Place One/4201 Wilson Boulevard).”

## Not a Member? Join Today!

*(Use the membership form on p. 6)*

A Bluemont Civic Association volunteer delivered this newsletter to your door free of charge.

Membership benefits include a newsletter (Sept.–June), the right to participate fully at BCA meetings and to vote on positions and officers. As a BCA member, you have representation in the Arlington County Civic Federation (to which the BCA and other county civic groups belong) and at commission hearings and other county meetings on matters pertaining to Bluemont.

Use the membership form on p. 6 to pay \$15 dues by check or cash in person at the 10/28 meeting or by check via our USPS post office box to keep your membership current 1/1/16 through 12/31/16.

## UFC Role in Our Tree Canopy

By Nora Palmatier

Some of my work as an Urban Forestry Commissioner is incredibly fun—overseeing the Tree Canopy Fund and tree distribution ranks up there with playing Santa Claus! Other duties require attending numerous meetings to ensure that trees are considered during the planning process for sector plans, individual site-plan projects, parks, and school rebuildings. Like many concerned citizens, I sit through long sessions waiting to comment on tree-related matters that may not have been considered and to ensure that very specific tree-planting requirements are listed in the meeting minutes.

Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) members attended Rosslyn meetings for more than 3 years. As a result, the Rosslyn Sector Plan calls for new developments to provide soil volumes of between 600–1,000 cu ft for each street tree and to use alternative planting techniques to prevent soil compaction, poor drainage and mitigate the harsh street-tree environment.

We're also trying to ensure that more street trees are planted by changing the current standards. At the 9/16 Ballston Quarter Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting, I was thrilled to hear the developer's landscaper describe plans to increase soil volume and use structural soil cells to plant trees!

UFC meets monthly on the 4th Thursday, 7:30 pm, at 2100 Clarendon Blvd. Meetings begin with a public comment period; all minutes and advisory letters to the County Board are public documents as well. If you have any questions or wish to see the UFC's recommendations for a particular site, please contact me at [NoraPalm@Verizon.net](mailto:NoraPalm@Verizon.net).

## Voting In November

By David Van Wagner



Election Day this year is Tues., 11/3/15. The polls will be open from 6 am to 7 pm.

### ***Unsure about your polling place?***

That's not surprising, considering that the BCA covers four different voting precincts: Ballston, Arlington Forest, Ashlawn and Westover. Just visit the Virginia Dept. of

Election's website for a search feature allowing you to enter your home address and find your polling place (<https://voterinfo.sbe.virginia.gov/PublicSite/Public/FT2/PublicPollingPlace.aspx>).

### ***Think you'll be out of town on Election Day?***

Obtain a Va. Absentee Ballot Application Form by visiting the Arlington County voter registration website and downloading an application. The Office of Voter Registration must receive your application no later than 5 pm, 10/27.

### ***Interested in voting absentee in-person?***

Voters can go to the Office of Voter Registration (2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 320) and vote their absentee ballots in person during the following dates and times.

- Mon.–Fri., Sep. 18–Oct. 30: 8 am–5 pm, *except as follows:*  
Thurs., Oct. 22 & 29: 8 am–7 pm  
Sat., Oct. 24 & 31: 8:30 am–5 pm

### ***Have any other voting-related questions?***

Contact Arlington County's Department of Voter Registration and Elections at 703-228-3456.



## Newsletter Editor(s) Wanted

*Neighborhood News* is searching for a newsletter editor or editors to help us write, edit, and produce this newsletter.

If you are interested in volunteering to help write and edit our newsletter, please contact [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).

## Redevelopment Projects

### Exxon Block (670 N. Glebe Road or 672 Flats)

Final meetings for the Exxon block conclude in Oct. The project—a 6-story, 178-unit apartment building with ground-floor retail—will include approximately 8 onsite committed affordable units. The primary sticking point has been the loading dock's location. The Penrose Group (the applicant) and the community want the loading dock placed on 7th Street North. County staff has insisted that the county's discretionary alley "policy" must be followed and prefers the loading dock to be placed on the alley rather than on 7th Street, despite residents' objections. The County Board will decide the matter on 10/17 (after this publication goes to press).



*Rendering of alley behind 672 Flats*

### Civic Federation Turns 100

The BCA belongs to the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF)—the umbrella organization for the county's civic organizations. When you pay your BCA dues, you have dedicated ACCF representatives working for you.

The ACCF celebrates 100 years of public service in April 2016. Tickets to the banquet are \$40 each, and all dues-paid BCA members may attend. If you're interested in purchasing a ticket, send an e-mail to [civicedel@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:civicedel@bluemontcivic.org). And if you want to learn more about the Civic Federation, visit [www.civfed.org](http://www.civfed.org).



### Mazda Block (750 N. Glebe Road)

Members of the Exxon-Mazda Block Task Force and other BCA members met with representatives of the BF Saul Group on 9/22 to view the Mazda block's revised redevelopment plans. Saul now controls the entire block, and it formally submitted its site plan to the county on 9/15.

The number of apartments increased from 431 units to 487 units. In direct contradiction to its support for the alley policy for the Exxon block, county staff appears poised to support vacating the alley (which Saul will develop) on the Mazda block as planned by the developer.

The entry-exit driveways for a grocery store, residents, and the loading docks, etc., will be located on N. 7th Street, despite objections of local residents. Moreover, even though this development comprises a "superblock," there has been no public pressure from staff to require better access and circulation within the block, as was the case with the Peck-Staples block.

In short, virtually none of the BCA's requests contained in the resolution members passed at the June Annual Meeting were met in Saul's revised plans. (See the June Annual Meeting recap on p. 2.)

Task Force members questioned the exceptionally low traffic assumptions for the site's 48,000 sq ft grocery store after having conducted traffic counts at Clarendon's Whole Foods and Ballston's Harris Teeter that verified 50% more cars than Saul's estimates. The better-than-normal level of service for the eastbound lanes of Wilson Blvd. at the intersection with Glebe Road were also questioned.



## Redevelopment Projects (cont'd)

### Ballston Quarter (Mall Redevelopment)

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meetings have been held on 7/20, 7/30, 9/16, 9/28 and 10/12 to review plans for Ballston Common Mall's renovation.

These plans include removing part of the mall's roof; replacing the eastern end of the mall (formerly Macy's furniture store) with a 22-story, 405-unit apartment building; and removing (and hopefully replacing) Ballston's Festival Bridge. (See the Sept. 30 meeting recap on p. 2.)

The county is "fast-tracking" the project to help reinvigorate the mall, which has been declining over time. The mall's owner, Forest City, presented its largely unchanged "vision" or plan to BCA members back in Oct. 2014.

After the uproar at the first July SPRC meeting, Forest City and the county pledged to replace the bridge, a community benefit built in exchange for "bonus" density added to nearby sites redeveloped years ago. However, the County Board has the final say as to whether the bridge will be replaced. Demolition is scheduled for Sept. 2016. If it is replaced, the new bridge will reopen about 20 months later.



Forest City asked the county to enter a public-private partnership (PPP) agreement to facilitate the mall's redevelopment, though discussion of the PPP is not part of the SPRC process. Thus far, no solid details of this agreement have been made public. For more information on the Ballston Quarter project (SP#193), visit <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/ballston-common/>. To review the SPRC meeting schedule for all site plan projects, visit <http://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission/sprc/>.

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## Moving Fire Station #8

Plans to move Fire Station 8 from its current location on Lee Highway (at N. Culpeper St.) northward to N. 26th Street have run into community opposition. Residents in the neighborhoods losing and gaining the fire station are upset, and the move will have a ripple effect on Ballston's/Bluemont's Fire Station 2: If Station 8 moves north, the area Station 2 must cover will expand.

On p. 46 of the county's 2012 TriData Study station location report, found at <http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2014/06/2012-TriData-Final-Report-FS-Location.pdf>, the impact of Station 8's move on Station 2 is acknowledged.

A lot has changed since the 2012 TriData Study, whose recommendations are based on data from 2011. Since then, much more density is being planned along the Lee Highway corridor and is being added to the West Ballston-Bluemont area. Moreover, Station 8's proposed move still won't provide satisfactory emergency response times for all addresses north of Lee Highway.

Station 2—including its EMS unit (Medic 102), which has the highest call volume (over 3,000 calls annually) of any unit county-wide—can meet its response-time “performance objective” only when a unit is always available in its bay. Otherwise, Station 2 requires backup from other fire stations to ensure a timely response to emergency service calls.

Based on public pushback, the County Board may form a task force to study the move. However, the Fire Department remains firmly committed to relocating Fire Station 8 to the location already being proposed due to a limited budget. For more information, visit <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/fire-station-8/>.

# JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

Enclose or attach  
\$15 dues for  
Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2016.

## 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 Oct. 28 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.