



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

December 2015

bluemontcivic.org

**Is this your last issue?
Renew today! (p. 4)**

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Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 12/16
7/7:30 pm, ATS

Christmas Day Bell Ringing 12/25
Noon, Constitution Garden Park

New Year's Day Bell Ringing 1/1/16
Noon, Constitution Garden Park

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 1/27/16
7/7:30 pm, ATS

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 2/24/16
7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 3/23/16
7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 4/27/16
7/7:30 pm, ATS (tentative date)

Next Meeting:

Wed., Dec. 16

ATS, 7/7:30 pm

Meet Your New County Board Members On 12/16



Please join us on Wed., 12/16 (a week earlier than usual), 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 new County Board members Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey for conversation and questions. For more details regarding their 12/14 swearing-in ceremony or the farewell for County Board Chair Mary Hynes and member Walter Tejada, visit <http://countyboard.arlingtonva.us>.



Please remember that all BCA memberships must be renewed for 2016. Bring a check for \$15 to the meeting or use the form on p. 4 to pay by mail. At the meeting, members also will vote on a resolution concerning proposed process changes for Neighborhood Conservation projects (see p. 2 for details).

2016 TreeStewards Class Applications Due

The Arlington–Alexandria TreeStewards are volunteers dedicated to improving our urban trees' health through educational programs, tree planting and care, demonstrations, and tree maintenance throughout the community. TreeSteward training classes begin on Tues. evenings, 2/2/16–4/12/16, along with some Saturday morning classes.



Recognized tree-care experts and citizen-advocates provide this fun, interactive training for new volunteers. Join us and learn how to care for trees on the streets; in parks; at schools, churches and temples; and in your neighborhood. For more information and to complete an application, visit TreeStewards at www.TreeStewards.org or send an e-mail to info@TreeStewards.org.

BCA Meetings at a Glance

Meeting Recaps

October

At the 10/28 meeting, members passed a motion to vote at the Nov. meeting, authorizing the BCA president to send a letter to the Arlington County Board expressing concern that the proposed High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes may increase traffic along arterial, local, and connector roads in the Bluemont neighborhood and throughout Arlington. However, the matter came before the County Board prior to the BCA's Nov. meeting, and with the Executive Board's consent, the president sent a letter about the HOT lanes to the County Board on 11/18.

The members also passed a motion authorizing the BCA president to send a letter to the County Board about the Ballston Common Mall redevelopment project to remind Board members that Bluemont's Neighborhood Conservation Plan supports a western entrance to the Ballston Metro and to ask that community benefit funds be used for this purpose. Pres. Rovder subsequently sent this letter to the County Board on 11/16.

Copies of both letters were distributed at the 11/19 general meeting and will be attached to those minutes.

November

Due to an ATS scheduling conflict, the BCA's meetings moved from 11/18 to 11/19.

Reeves Farm Conservation Society Representative Sandra Spear spoke about the group's proposal to buy and historically preserve the Reeves farmhouse and outbuildings. Although the website is still under construction, photos of the property can be seen at <http://reevesfarmconservation.com>.

Members also voted to advertise the draft motion below, which concerns the proposed new requirements for civic associations putting forth Neighborhood Conservation (NC) projects for county funding:

The Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) declines to support the proposed changes to the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) as currently drafted in its May 18, 2015, document, "Proposed Plan for Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Neighborhood Enhancement Planning Process," and in the

companion "Comparison of NCAC approval of neighborhood plans vs. proposed plan for project approval."

With more than 2,000 households within its boundaries, the BCA has inadequate volunteer manpower, financial resources and organizational structure to carry out the notification efforts required by these proposed changes. The BCA has successfully utilized the existing "clipboard" method to poll immediate neighbors of proposed projects to discern whether there is sufficient primary stakeholder support (60% or greater) for a project before adding it to the funding queue.

Putting forth projects that do not have strong primary stakeholder support invites conflict and runs counter to the BCA's historical practice of giving special consideration to the views of primary stakeholders and those living closest to a proposed project in deciding whether or not to support the project.

The membership instructs the BCA president to send a letter to NCAC stating the BCA's objections noted above.

The BCA's NCAC Representative, Rich Gibson, reported that other civic associations had expressed objections to these changes at the last NCAC meeting. Concerns include the elimination of the current polling of stakeholders (residents/property owners living on the same block or near a proposed NC project) to confirm that that 60% of those living nearest a project would support it. Typically, the BCA

(cont'd on p. 3)

Meeting Recaps (cont'd)

has recruited its NC reps from among block captains who want to implement an NC project on their own blocks.

The new rules formalize the procedures for notification requirements, making civic associations completely responsible for notifying ALL property owners (including absentee owners) within the civic association's boundaries before voting to approve an NC project.

Within the BCA are more than 2,000 households, making notification efforts very labor intensive and expensive. Because notification would formally become civic associations' responsibility, there is also an extension of legal liability from the county, whose employees are indemnified against lawsuits, to unincorporated and/or un- or under-insured civic associations and their volunteer-members.

The new rules also require civic associations to permit absentee voting and the ability of nonmembers to vote, which run counter to many civic associations' bylaws, including the BCA's.

Unfortunately, the NCAC has not made its documents outlining these changes available online. However, copies will be attached to the 11/19 general meeting minutes for review. Members will vote on the motion at the upcoming 12/16 BCA meeting.

New Bikeshare Stations Coming



In line with BCA input, Arlington County is planning to install new Capital Bikeshare stations at Washington Boulevard and N. Frederick Street and at Wilson Boulevard and N. Illinois Street. Work on the concrete pad for the station at Washington Boulevard and N. Frederick Street has already begun.

These plans respond to requests from Bluemont residents. The BCA set up the Task Force on Adding Capital Bikeshare Stations, which identified the two noted locations. They were among several sites that the Task Force determined to be preferable. On behalf of the BCA, Co-chairs Ed Fendley and Nick Babiak thank all who participated in the Bikeshare planning process for their hard work and interest.

Contact Information

Use the e-mail addresses listed below to reach specific individuals electronically.

President

George Rovder president@bluemontcivic.org

First Vice President

Larry Smith firstvp@bluemontcivic.org

Second Vice President

John Schoenecker secondvp@bluemontcivic.org

Treasurer

David Van Wagner treasurer@bluemontcivic.org

Secretary

Christy Vigfusson secretary@bluemontcivic.org

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative

Rich Gibson ncac-rep@bluemontcivic.org

Civic Federation Delegates and Alternates

Craig Deering, Dean Foster, David Hughes, Suzanne Sundburg (Alternates: Carla Aly, Mark Haynes, Kate Mattos, Larry Smith)

BCA Representatives & Committee Chairs

NCAC Alternate

Dayna Davitz ncac-alt@bluemontcivic.org

Newsletter Editors

[Position Open] editors@bluemontcivic.org

Newsletter Designer

Cindy Matlack

Newsletter Distribution

David Van Wagner dpvanwagner@gmail.com

Webmaster

Jonn Lau webmaster@bluemontcivic.org

Ballston BID Board Member

Larry Smith firstvp@bluemontcivic.org

Emergency Preparedness Liaison

Jim Thorne james.thorne7@verizon.net

Metro Liaison

Henry McFarland hmcfarland@hotmail.com

Parks and Recreation Liaison

Nora Palmatier norapalm@verizon.net

Sidewalk Safety Task Force

Ed Fendley edfendley@gmail.com

Chris Healey cphealey@mac.com

Bikeshare Task Force

Nick Babiak n.babiak@verizon.net

Ed Fendley edfendley@gmail.com



Bluemont Civic Association
PO Box 5134
Arlington VA 22205
bluemontcivic.org

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP 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 Dec. 16 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.