



neighborhood news

The Latest News & Information from Bluemont Civic Association

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NEXT MEETING: Wednesday April 28, 7:30 pm, Zoom Police Community Outreach Team

Our April General Membership meeting will feature a presentation and Q&A with the Arlington County Police Community Outreach Team. <https://police.arlingtonva.us/community-outreach-unit/>

Wednesday, May 26, 7:30 pm via Zoom Bluemont Junction Trail Milling and Repaving

Our May General Membership meeting will feature a presentation and Q&A with Juan Du, Project Manager for the upcoming milling and repaving of the Bluemont Junction Trail. She will discuss the final plan for the project, and pedestrian and traffic detours. <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/bluemont-junction-trail-milling-and-repaving/>.

Have questions you'd like BCA to ask in advance, or other items for the agenda? Contact exec@bluemontcivic.org.

City Nature Challenge and Invasive Removal

Mary Carlin Woods, Sunday, May 2, 2-4 PM

You are invited to participate in an outdoors two-fer on Sunday, May 2 in Mary Carlin Woods! We'll combine an invasive pull with iNaturalist observations for the City Nature Challenge DC. Help document what species are in this park, while working to remove the invasive species that threaten our native flora and fauna.

Training on identifying invasive species and proper removal techniques will be provided. If interested in contributing to the international BioBlitz by documenting flora and fauna in our area, download the iNaturalist app and help us capture observations. Meet at the entrance to Mary Carlin Woods along the Bluemont

Junction trail (just West from the rocks). Please bring your own gloves, tools, filled reusable water bottle, and face mask. Weather appropriate clothing is advised, and dress for poison ivy: wear long pants and long sleeves.

Registration is requested:

naturalresources@arlingtonva.us. Volunteers under 18 require a parent/guardian signature, and parent/guardians must be present with any child 16 and under.

Tell the County to Include Bon Air Park in the Capital Improvement Plan!

Bluemont Civic Association members voted to seek to get Bon Air Park included in the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which would provide the capital funds needed to restore facilities lost in the July 2019 flooding. That flood destroyed Bon Air's only bathroom, basketball court, volleyball court, and its bridge. Moreover, its playground and picnic shelter, the most popular one in Arlington, regularly flood.

Although Bon Air Park and Glencarlyn Park suffered the most severe park damage from the 2019 flooding, only Glencarlyn Park had some facilities restored because there were no capital funds to rebuild facilities in Bon Air Park. Bon Air Park is still not on the County schedule for CIP funding. Let's change that and get the capital funds needed to restore lost facilities.

The CIP is the County's multi-year plan for building, upgrading, or replacing County facilities and infrastructure. If the CIP includes Bon Air Park, the County would seek community views on long term improvements for the park, possibly including locating structures outside the flood plain.

Although the County's survey of the public's priorities on the new CIP closed on April 17, there will be additional opportunities for public engagement. You can also e-mail the County Board at countyboard@arlingtonva.us; contact Board Members (Chair) Matt de Ferranti mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us, Katie Cristol katiecristol@arlingtonva.us, Christian Dorsey cdorsey@arlingtonva.us, Libby Garvey lgarvey@arlingtonva.us, and Takis Karantonis, tkarantonis@arlingtonva.us. You can talk informally with a County Board member every Monday through "Open Door Mondays," which are currently being held virtually <https://countyboard.arlingtonva.us/open-door-mondays/>

Come Join Our N Carlin Springs Road Committee Or Send Them Your Recommendations!

Neighbors living on and near N. Carlin Springs Road have raised concerns with BCA about unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles along the stretch of that road from N. Kensington Street to N. Edison Street. BCA formed a Committee to research what measures could increase safety in that area. We would love to have input from the wider community on potential safety and beautification improvements to N. Carlin Springs Road. Please take a minute to contribute your ideas to their survey here:

<https://www.bluemontcivic.org/northcarlinsprings.php>.

If you have questions or would like to join the Committee, please contact them at bca-n-carlin-springs-road-task-force@googlegroups.com.

"Missing Middle" Committee

BCA has formed a working group to consider issues involved with "missing middle" housing. Missing middle housing refers to the range of housing types that fit between single-family detached homes and mid-to-high-rise apartment buildings. Examples include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and townhomes. Arlington County is currently doing a study that will consider whether policy and zoning changes can and should be

implemented to encourage more development of such housing. This study may have significant implications for our neighborhood.

The County study currently is in its first phase, identifying community priorities and concerns and considering what housing types should be studied further. Later the study may result in proposed changes in the County's land use plan and zoning regulations. No specific policy proposals have been made, but suggestions include upzoning neighborhoods now limited to single-family houses, particularly those neighborhoods near Metro and transport corridors, to allow missing middle housing.

The working group plans to act as the Bluemont Civic Association's "eyes and ears" in the study process. It will monitor the County study to ensure that the members of the BCA are informed about the Missing Middle Housing Study's progress and implications. The working group will look for information about the study process and developments and will inform the association of any additional opportunities to participate in the study. The ultimate goal is to ensure that BCA can respond to any policy recommendations that arise from the study.

The working group members are Henry McFarland, the group's chair, Chip Gurkin, Bruce Leighton, Kate Mattos, and Ritch Viola. You can reach the working group by sending an e mail to exec@bluemontcivic.org.

Scouts Upgrade Paths in Bluemont

Anyone using the pathway connecting Bluemont Junction Trail with North Edison Street will have noticed some big changes. Gone is the old makeshift path with its tangled tree roots and cinder blocks, which turned into a sea of mud

when it rained. In its place is a new graded gravel pathway with wood rail borders. The path upgrade was developed and implemented by Arlington Scout Troop G104 in partnership with Arlington County Parks.

Leading the volunteers was Jessica Dertke, a student at Virginia Tech. The project fulfills a requirement for her to attain Eagle Rank. Members of her Troop G104 (Girls), and members of Troop B104 (Boys) assisted Jessica, as did several friends and family members.

This partnership between the Scouts and Arlington Parks employs the same approach used recently for trail improvements at Lubber Run and Mary Carlin Woods. Scouts propose individual projects, and the County may support accepted proposals with donated building materials. According to Lyndell Core, Parks Area Manager for Arlington County, "this is a symbiotic relationship, which has been working out well for all concerned."



A four-foot gap was intentionally left open between the pathway and the Bluemont Junction Trail. Arlington County Parks will deal with that gap as part of the pending milling and repaving of Bluemont Junction Trail.

The North Edison neighborhood is delighted with the improvements. BCA joins the neighbors in expressing our appreciation to Jessica Dertke and the Scouts of Troops G104 and B104, as well as to Arlington County Parks, for completing this welcome project.

Flooding Risk in Bluemont

Flooding risks in Bluemont were discussed at BCA's January General Membership meeting. The speakers were Elizabeth Thurber, County Floodplain Administrator; Demetra McBride, Chief Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management, and Aileen Winkquist, Watershed Outreach Program Manager.

A number of homes on North Abingdon Street are affected by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) preliminary revisions to its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). These homes border an open channel carrying Lubber Run. The preliminary revisions place them in a "100-year flood zone," meaning a 1% or greater risk of annual flooding. That could require the homeowners to purchase expensive flood insurance. FEMA based its revisions on an aerial survey imposed on pre-existing topographic information. County officials are doing a ground survey of actual elevations to seek more accurate information.

The County is not planning any projects that would address flooding risk in this part of N. Abingdon Street. Arlington is focusing on areas that experienced extreme flooding. Work is in its early stages on projects in the upper Lubber Run area, which is a priority due to past flooding near Virginia Hospital Center. Water from these projects will go to the Ballston Pond, north of the affected area of N. Abingdon Street. The Ballston Pond project was for water quality, and not designed for flood mitigation. (See the report on civic association activities for actions regarding N. Abingdon Street.)

The speakers said they were considering several steps to deal with increased flooding risks from development and climate change. The County

might require new construction projects to include water retention facilities. There might also be stricter regulations concerning soil amendment and de-compaction. Slides presented at the meeting are at <http://www.bluemontcivic.org/docs/BCA%20Bluemont%20CA%20Jan%202021.pdf>



What Your Civic Association Is Doing: Actions Since Our August 2020 Newsletter

(See meeting minutes at <http://www.bluemontcivic.org/meetingminutes.php> for the resolutions.)

September: Members voted that the civic association should work to get **Bon Air Park included in the next regular Capital Improvement Plan**. (See separate article.) Members also voted to support **County restoration efforts in Mary Carlin Woods, Lacey Woods and Bon Air Park**, and called for the County to include our civic association from the start and throughout the planning and implementation of this restoration.

October:

Members voted to request the County reevaluate the design and effectiveness of **replacement speed humps** being deployed on N. Vermont, N. Abingdon, N. Jefferson, and N. Harrison, and remediate replacement humps that are less effective than the originals in

slowing traffic. The resolution recommended the police make additional efforts to enforce the speed limits along those streets, plus N. Kensington, and the County not change traffic calming measures in place on Bluemont streets without input from the neighborhood.

Members agreed to form a Committee to consider improvements to **N. Carlin Springs Road** between N. Edison and N. Kensington Street (See separate article).

After a delay due to the pandemic, members held our annual elections. See the last page for the volunteers elected to serve until the next annual elections at our June 30, 2021 annual General Membership meeting.

November: Members approved a resolution on Arlington Public School's (APS) **Elementary School Boundary Process**, which included requesting the School Board keep McKinley Elementary students together during transition to the new neighborhood school at the Reed site.

Members voted to support pausing the **8th Road North from N. Lexington Street to Kensington Street Safe Routes to School sidewalk project** until the concerns of area residents are heard and considered. The County had informed residents that it would soon finish the design phase of the project but had not resolved residents' concerns about the draft design.

UPDATE: In December, County Board Members Matt de Ferranti and Takis Karantonis did a walk-through of the project site with residents and members of the BCA Executive Board. On March 31, the County Planner for the project held a virtual meeting with residents to answer questions and provide an update.

The revised concept for the project proposes alternating parking along the south side of 8th Road to retain some parking on each side of the street. A recording of the meeting is on the project page <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/8th-rd-n-n-lexington-st-safe-routes-to-school-street-project/>.

December: Members voted to request the County act quickly regarding **preliminary revisions by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)** affecting the west side of N. Abingdon Street in the 500, 600 and 700 blocks. (See separate article.)

UPDATE: County officials met with the General Membership in January to discuss flooding risks in Bluemont. In February, the County began surveying the bottom of the open channel that carries Lubber Run behind the affected homes on N. Abingdon Street, and the elevations behind houses most severely impacted by the FIRM, to determine the accuracy of FEMA's calculations.

In response to a query by the County's Parks and Natural Resources (PNR) Division on replacing wood split rail **fencing along the Bluemont Junction Trail** with metal pole and wood fencing, members voted to advise PNR of the views expressed in a survey of residents living along the Trail. Residents opposed metal pole and wood fencing.

UPDATE: PNR dropped the idea of that fencing, did a walk-through with residents, members of the Executive Board, and the Bluemont Park Steward to discuss possible solutions, and quickly removed and repaired broken split rail fencing.

Members voted that the civic association should be a Community Partner for the **Missing Middle Housing Study** but should make known that its status as a Community Partner does not indicate it has taken any

position for or against the Missing Middle Housing Study nor any matters that are, or may become, a subject of the study. (See <https://housing.arlingtonva.us/missingmiddle/communitypartner/>).

Members voted that BCA be a Community Partner for the County's **Dialogue on Race and Equity**.

UPDATE: In January, BCA held two DRE dialogue sessions for Bluemont and nearby neighbors (See <https://topics.arlingtonva.us/equity/dre/>).

January: Members agreed to form a **Committee on the Missing Middle Housing Study** to look at issues in more depth and inform the civic association. (See separate article.)

February: Members agreed the President should contact the County to ask about plans for **re-opening the Central Library**.

UPDATE: The County responded that libraries cannot open additional locations or services with current staffing levels; the County Manager approved exceptions to the hiring freeze with a goal to reopen additional locations as soon as possible in the fiscal year starting July 1, 2021, but the process will take time.

The library's March 16 presentation about its proposed budget is here <https://budget.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2021/03/FY22-Presentation-Libraries.pdf> and a recording can be watched here: http://arlington.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3888

March: Members voted to ask the County to **revisit the Ballston Pond project to see what additional improvements can be made to**

reduce flooding risk to nearby properties along the open channel carrying Lubber Run from the Pond.

Members **voted that the County Board should reduce the real estate tax rate** for CY 2021 so that once rising assessments are considered, the real estate taxes paid by homeowners do not exceed the amount paid in CY 2020; seek additional savings in fiscal year 2022; seek to reduce the property tax rate as necessary to offset rising real estate assessments and, at a minimum, prevent individual properties' tax bills from growing faster than the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria Consumer Price Index.

The Executive Board approved the request of BCA's Missing Middle Housing Study Task Force to establish a **page on the BCA website for Missing Middle Housing Study** information. The web page will have appropriate disclaimers to ensure the BCA is not endorsing any information provided by third parties, and not endorsing any positions other than those voted on and approved by its members.

BCA Annual Elections on June 30th Nominees Being Sought NOW!

Come join the team and help guide your civic association! We are seeking nominees NOW for the following positions:

Voting Members of the Executive Board: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) Representative; and Non-Voting Advisory Members of the Executive Board: 4 Civic Federation Delegates, 4 Civic Federation Alternate Delegates and the NCAC Alternative Representative.

If you are interested in these positions, please contact David Hughes at dzzard@aol.com by NOON on May 25, 2020.

Nominations will be announced at our May 26 General

Membership meeting where additional nominations can be made from the floor, including members nominating themselves. The slate of nominees set out at the May 26 General Membership meeting will be announced on www.bluemontcivic.org, our e-mail distribution list, and on the [Bluemont Civic Association Facebook page](#). If any position(s) lack a nominee after the May General Membership meeting, nominations for those positions may be made from the floor at our June 30 Annual meeting.

Our annual elections will be conducted via zoom at our Wednesday, June 30th Annual General Membership meeting, which begins at 7:30 pm.

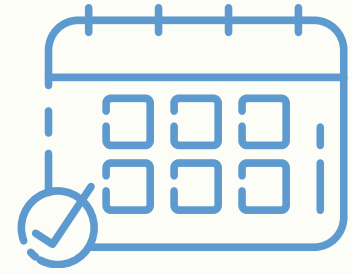
Please see www.bluemontcivic.org for election updates.

When and Where Do We Meet?

Until public health conditions permit, we are meeting only via Zoom, which can be accessed via computer with or without a Zoom account, or via phone. If you are not on our e-mail distribution, please contact exec@bluemontcivic.org for the link to our monthly meetings, and monthly updates on neighborhood news. If you lack access to e-mail, please write the **Bluemont Civic Association at P.O. Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205** for information to phone into meetings, including any votes by BCA members.

Generally, BCA meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month (Executive Board at 7:00 pm and General Membership at 7:30 pm). All are welcome to attend the Executive Board meeting. We may move meetings to other dates and locations to avoid holidays and other conflicts. Meeting date changes/cancellations are posted to www.bluemontcivic.org, and the "Bluemont Civic Association" Facebook page:

Mark Your Calendar!



Upcoming Meetings

- **April 28** Exec Board, General Membership
- **May 26** Exec Board, General Membership
- **June 30** Annual General Membership Meeting
- **July 28** Exec Board (public welcome)
- **August 25** Exec Board (public welcome)
- **September 29** Exec Board, General Membership
- **October 27** Exec Board, General Membership
- **November 17** Exec Board, General Membership
- **December 15** Exec Board, General Membership

<https://www.facebook.com/bluemontcivic/>.

Come Ring The Bell!

At noon on every federal holiday, and Juneteenth, BCA hosts ringing the bell at Constitution Gardens (corner of George Mason and Wilson by Fire Station 2.) You and your children can ring the bell! We follow public health guidance on social distancing and facemasks and provide hand sanitizer.

Mark your calendar for: Memorial Day, May 31, Juneteenth, June 19, Independence Day, July 4th, Labor Day, September 6, Columbus Day, October 11, Veterans Day, November 11, Thanksgiving, November 25, Christmas Day, December 25, New Year's Day, January 1 and all Federal holidays.

YOUR Bluemont Civic Association

Bluemont is one of the largest neighborhoods in Arlington County. It comprises nearly 6,000 people and includes Arlington Traditional School, Lacey Woods Park, Mary Carlin Woods, Fields Park, Balls Crossing, West Ballston, and the Custis, Bluemont Junction and

Washington and Old Dominion Trails. It lies along Bon Air Park (including the Rose Garden) and Bluemont and Bluemont Junction Parks.

The Bluemont Civic Association serves as an important communications link between our neighborhood and the County government.

Please join us! We welcome your membership, participation and ideas! Dues are \$15 per household for the calendar year. Visit our website for more information: bluemontcivic.org, and follow "Bluemont Civic Association" on Facebook for regular updates.

Connect with Bluemont!

Facebook: Like our Bluemont Civic Association page at [Facebook.com/bluemontcivic](https://www.facebook.com/bluemontcivic) for regular updates on news of interest to Bluemont, and

civic association activities.

BCA website:

www.bluemontcivic.org for BCA meetings and official information.



BCA e-Mails: Neighbors who provide their e-mail address to exec@bluemontcivic.org receive e-mail reports roughly monthly on issues affecting Bluemont residents, and civic association activities.

Contact the Executive Board: BCA welcomes comments, suggestions and questions from members. Contact us at exec@Bluemontcivic.org.

Nextdoor.com is a free, private social network where you can connect with people who live nearby. BCA posts announcements on Nextdoor.com. Sign up at <https://nextdoor.com> by providing your name, address and email address.

Executive Board

BCA Officers & Reps

President

Laura Kirkconnell
President@bluemontcivic.org

First Vice President

Henry McFarland

Second Vice President

Kate Mattos

Treasurer

David Van Wagner

Secretary

David Hughes

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Representative

Nick Pastore

Alternate

Christopher George

Civic Federation Delegates

Allen Norton, David Hughes, Christopher George, Bruce Leighton

Alternates: Mark Haynes, Margot Thomas, Shakti Shukla, Laura Kirkconnell

Non-elected position

Liaison for Parks

Hugh Robinson

Join or Renew Today

Keep Your BCA Membership Current

Complete the following to Join or Renew:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

Mail this information with a check for \$15 to "Bluemont Civic Association" to BCA Treasurer, P.O. Box 5134, Arlington, VA, 22205. All information is for BCA use only.