



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

April 2024

bluemontcivic.org

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Upcoming Presentations at the General Membership Meetings

NOTE: All Meetings are in the library of Key Escuela Elementary (855 N. Edison) and on ZOOM, **except for the June 26 annual meeting**, which will be in the Lubber Run Community Center, and on ZOOM. Free Parking at both locations. Membership meetings are at 7:30 PM on a Wednesday.

April 24: Caroline Haynes Park Steward for Mary Carlin Woods, will speak about the recently adopted Forestry and Natural Resources Plan. (She co-chaired the commission advisory group that oversaw the development of the plan.). She will also speak about the City Nature Challenge.

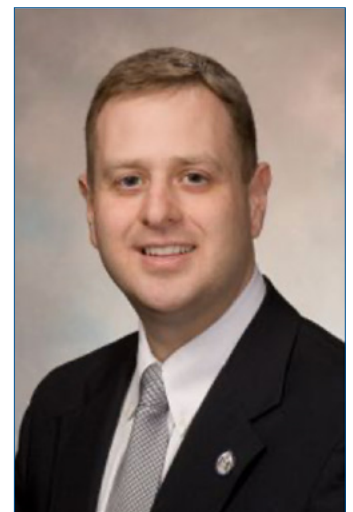
May 29: Vice-Chair of the Arlington County Board Takas Karantonis. We will send Vice-Chair Karantonis a list of questions our members would like to have addressed before the meeting. If you have any questions you would like to submit to Mr. Karantonis or Mr. Hope, please send them to exec@bluemontcivic.org.

June 26: Delegate Patrick Hope, who represents our neighborhood in Richmond. We will also send Delegate Hope questions our members would like to have addressed before the meeting. If you have any questions you would like to submit to Mr. Karantonis or Mr. Hope, please send them to exec@bluemontcivic.org.

Before each membership meeting, the Executive Board meets at 7. All are welcome at Executive Board meetings.



County Board Vice-Chair Takis Karantonis (above);
Delegate Patrick Hope (right)



Call for Nominations

Have you wondered how to get more involved in our Bluemont community? Are you interested in learning more about how to improve our neighborhood? If so, consider running for a position with the Bluemont Civic Association.

Each year, the Bluemont Civic Association invites members to run for BCA office. These volunteer positions require about 3-10 hours of your time each month, depending on the position. This time includes attending the monthly meeting. Your BCA membership must be current.

You are welcome to run for a BCA office as a "newbie." All volunteers bring their organizing skills, caring team spirit, and desire to meet Bluemont's needs. BCA leaders work collaboratively, sharing information and points of view in order to effect action.

Positions are described in the [BCA Bylaws](#). The positions are president, first vice president, second vice president, treasurer, secretary, Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee Rep, Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee Alternative Rep, Civic Federation Delegates (there are 4), and Civic Federation Alternate Delegates (there are 4).

Want to know more? Send questions to the Nominating Committee at nominating@bluemontcivic.org.

Want to run? Submit your name, email address, and the position you seek to the Nominating Committee, nominating@bluemontcivic.org. The committee will present a slate of nominees at the BCA membership meeting on May 24. Nominations will also be accepted from all members at that meeting. Elections will be held at the BCA annual membership meeting on June 28.



Come Ring Our Bell!

Neighbors can join the Bluemont Civic Association in ringing the bell in Constitution Gardens, the corner of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive, at noon on every national holiday. Everyone, kid or adult, gets to ring the bell. It's fun for the entire family! The next bell ringing is Memorial Day, Monday, May 27.

Also mark your calendars for bell ringings on Juneteenth (Wednesday June 19), Independence Day (Thursday, July 4), Labor Day (Monday September 2), Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day (Monday, October 14), Veterans Day (Monday, November 11), Thanksgiving (Thursday November 28), Christmas Day (Wednesday, December 25) and all federal holidays!

Save the Date for the Annual BCA Family Fun Day 2024!

This year's Family Fun Day will be held on Saturday, May 18 from 10 AM to 4 PM at Lacey Woods Park, which is on Washington Boulevard between Frederick St. and George Mason Drive. We have reserved the front pavilion by the basketball court. Please stop by and say hello! Like last year, we plan to have kid's games, tree walks in the Park, and are also looking for food trucks to stop by! We would love to have more people help us plan the event. If you would like to help, please email us at exec@bluemontcivic.org.

It is sure to be a great event, and we look forward to seeing everyone!



Safety on North Carlin Springs Road



Our Association has been pushing for increased traffic safety on N. Carlin Springs Road. As part of the push for increased safety, Arlington County apparently will reduce the speed limit on this road between N. Glebe Road and N. George

Mason Drive from 30 miles per hour to 25. Our Association previously asked the County to make this change.

County traffic engineers acknowledged three reasons for speed limit changes along this segment: the relatively high number of daily pedestrian and bicycle crossings at uncontrolled intersections, the presence of on street bike lanes necessitating slower speeds for safer multimodal use, and relatively high crash rates along the N. Carlin Springs Road corridor.

The County Board is scheduled to make a final decision on the speed limit change on April 20. The County is also considering a similar change in speed limit on N. George Mason Drive between N. Carlin Springs Road and Arlington Boulevard (US Route 50).

In addition, at the May 29th meeting the N. Carlin Springs Road Task Force will be requesting an update on the Carlin Springs Corridor Study from Takis Karantonis. The study is slated to begin in 2025 and will be studying Carlin Springs Road from N. Glebe Road to the county border at Columbia Pike.

arlington arts

LUBBER RUN AMPHITHEATER

Concert Series Needs Volunteer Ushers

Arlingtonians have been enjoying free summer concerts at the nearby Lubber Run Amphitheater (200 N. Columbus St.) since 1969! Sponsored by Arlington County with assistance from the non-profit Lubber Run Amphitheater Foundation (LRAF), the concert series features performances from a wide variety of genres including big band, blues, soul, and orchestral music.

To keep this tradition alive, the LRAF is seeking volunteer ushers to hand out programs at each performance. If you're interested in helping out, [please contact David Van Wagner](#) (an LRAF board member and Bluemont resident).

You can find out more information about the concerts, including a schedule to download, [here](#).



Celebrating the USA's 250th Birthday

Arlington, Virginia will commemorate the 250th Anniversary of our country as part of the [Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission \(VA250\)](#). VA250 aims to educate Virginians about their history and civic duty and share diverse narratives that capture Virginia's complete story and role in shaping the nation.

[The Arlington Historical Society \(AHS\)](#) is the lead organizer of the county-wide effort. Multiple activities are being planned for 2026. The Bluemont Civic Association, along with thirty other organizations and civic associations, has a representative on the Arlington VA250 Committee. We will provide information on the celebration as it becomes available.

BCA Learns About Deer Overpopulation



Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resources Manager and head of Arlington County's deer management team, presented information at the February BCA general meeting about the deer population in Arlington.

Mr. Abugattas said that while white-tailed deer play an important role in Arlington's ecology, high deer population densities can harm local ecosystems. Deer eat key native plants faster than they can regenerate. Deer will destroy the habitat, harming not only a forest's ability to regrow, but also other animals that rely on the plants for food and cover.

Mr. Abugattas showed an image of Lacey Woods Park, which is mostly untouched by deer and where the forest is healthy and robust. Alongside was an image of Barcroft Park, showing forest that is mostly eaten by deer. He emphasized that, without healthy forests, our larger ecosystems fail.

In response to years of anecdotal evidence of deer over browsing in the county's parks and forested areas, Arlington County conducted aerial drone surveys in April 2021. The surveys found that 12 out of 12 surveyed parks showed damage from deer overpopulation. The surveyed parks had an average deer density of 124 deer per square mile, while research recommends no more than 15-20 deer per square mile. Deer densities were 1.9-17 times the recommended levels in 11 of the 12 surveyed parks.

Options for reducing the deer population in Arlington include sharpshooting and surgical fertility control along with some hybrid combination of controlled archery hunting, fencing, and repellents. Abugattas shared pros and cons of each approach as well as outcomes of programs using these options in neighboring jurisdictions (DC, MD, and Fairfax). Programs using sharpshooting have met with greatest success in reducing deer populations and restoring vegetation.

The Animal Welfare League of Arlington has taken the position that "killing deer is wrong for our community and will not solve the problems the County wishes to address." Their reasoning is stated on their [website](#).

The County's efforts at information gathering and sharing are ongoing. Eventually, recommendations will be made to the County Manager. The County invites citizens' participation in upcoming engagement events. For more information and to receive updates, see the [Arlington County Deer Management Project Page](#).

The slides used by Mr. Abugattas in his presentation can be found [here](#).



BCA Brings Complaints About Parking Garage to County

At a recent meeting, a number of BCA members complained about the Ballston Parking Garage. Arlington County manages the garage through a private contractor. The BCA sent a letter summarizing members' complaints to the county official responsible for the garage.

Members complained that signs were unclear. Signs would publicize the parking app but not the option of using the kiosk. Moreover, the signs did not make it easy to find the kiosks or provide clear instructions on how to use them.

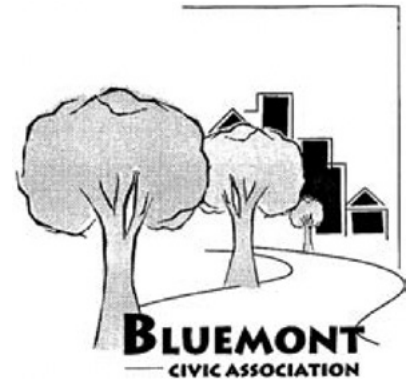
Many complaints focused on the parking app. The app was very slow to load, particularly because Wi-Fi coverage in the garage is inconsistent. The app did not send the user a clear signal that their payment has been accepted. People complained of multiple "zero" charges before the correct charge/payment appeared in the app. Moreover, it was not clear if people needed to be registered at Parking.com to use the app.

Lighting at the kiosks was viewed as insufficient, which made the kiosk harder and not as safe to find and use. There is no clear information about whom to contact if there is a problem. As one member asked, "If the kiosk eats my card, what do I do?"

The BCA later noted that one member had received a parking ticket for non-payment less than three minutes after he had parked and one minute after he had paid at a kiosk.

In response, the county promised to improve signage in the garage. Signs at entry and floor lobbies would be updated. The County is working on ways to better describe payment choices and steps for each payment type.

Kiosks were located where the old kiosks used to be because that's what the electrical conduit allowed. The new kiosks have been moved inside the climate-controlled, brightly lit elevator lobbies on each level.



Executive Board

BCA Officers & Reps

President	Henry McFarland president@bluemontcivic.org
First Vice President	Matt Harrison
Second Vice President	Carla Conover
Treasurer	David Smith
Secretary	Laura Kirkconnell

Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF)

Delegates	David Hughes, Allen Norton, Shakti Shukla, David Smith
Alternates	Laura Kirkconnell, Chris Kuhman, Kate Mattos, Kathleen Reilly

Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ArNAC)

Representative	Christopher George
Alternate	Nick Pastore

Watershed-Based Stormwater Initiatives In The County

The Arlington Department of Environmental Services (DES) continues to take a proactive role in working to mitigate stormwater issues in Arlington County. DES is currently focused on mitigation measures in several key watersheds:



Residents standing on top of the vault at Westover Days (Sept 2023)

- **Torreyson Run Watershed (near Westover)**

In 2023, the County completed a first-of-its-kind stormwater **detention vault project** for Arlington. This new vault, underneath a Cardinal Elementary School playing field, can hold just over 4 million gallons of stormwater and will provide excellent flood mitigation in the Westover area of Arlington and for residents downstream. Recall the storm of 2019 that hit Westover. Excavation started in March of 2022, and site restoration was finished in February of 2023 (11 months). While bordering neighbors had initial concerns, the final vault is undetectable and the community in Westover and downstream now have world-class stormwater protection and new student and resident recreation space.

- **Spout Run Watershed (near Clarendon)**

The County is actively working to reduce flood risk in the Spout Run watershed area by acquiring and removing residential properties in flood prone areas to create stormwater overland relief. This acquisition is on a voluntary basis. At present, four homes have been acquired. See more information [at this link](#).

- **Lubber Run Watershed (within Bluemont)**

As mentioned in our fall 2023 newsletter, the County completed the ribbon cutting of the **Ballston Wetland Park** restoration project. The former 'Ballston Pond' had become a silted-in stream and, as observers had noted, a collection point for plastic waste that had been discarded on the streets of neighboring communities. There was significant community concern about the impact the restoration would have to the local flora and fauna, but by the ribbon cutting it was clear to observers that the new park was teeming with wildlife and invasive species had been replaced with native flora.

Ongoing Concerns in Bluemont and Neighboring Areas

DES is considering how to improve the stormwater posture of the Lubber Run watershed. Initial review of the watershed indicates that Woodlawn Park may be an ideal location for a detention vault because it has a large open grassy ball field that a vault could be buried under, similar to the vault near Cardinal Elementary School. Given the density in Arlington, it is a significant challenge to find open spaces where a vault can be placed without impact to utilities or mature trees.

A detention vault is desperately needed in the Lubber Run watershed for several reasons:

- 1) Crushing new costs to homeowners. FEMA has recently re-classified many home sites in Bluemont as within the 100-year flood plain. This reclassification has caused immediate costly impacts to those residents including increased flood insurance rates, possible property value loss, and possibly loss of their homes should the County begin a procurement campaign similar to Spout Run.

- 2) Continued erosion and wildlife loss. Stormwater mains (pipes) in Waycroft-Woodlawn, Ballston, Bluemont and northward, help to accelerate stormwater into the open channel of Lubber Run within Bluemont and beyond. As a result, residents have reported significant stream bank erosion and undermining of mature tree roots. The devastation can easily be observed in Lubber Run Park which has lost many mature trees (and bridges) in recent years due to erosion. This erosion

(cont'd)

Watershed-Based Stormwater Initiatives In The County (cont'd)

is also harming wildlife in the area. For example, a streamside fox den that hosted many generations of fox families was destroyed. If the County does not take immediate action to rectify this problem, further damage to our mature tree canopy and wildlife will occur.



Erosion along Lubber Run impacting mature tree canopy.

3) Waycroft-Woodlawn (our neighbors to the North) have experienced significant flooding events from recent storms. While there has been a call in Waycroft-Woodlawn for bigger stormwater pipes to fix the problem, that solution, on its own, only further accelerates stormwater-related tree and wildlife destruction in Bluemont, Arlington Forest, and beyond.



Green lines represent stormwater mains which help locally but serve to accelerate water to downstream residents. See GIS maps.

Stormwater Utility Fee

Bluemont residents have likely heard of the new Stormwater Utility fee, which will soon appear on their yearly tax statement. This fee replaces a similar fee that was previously part of the sanitary district tax that we have been paying since 2008.

The County [website](#) indicates that we will see this stormwater utility bill in May 2024. The new stormwater utility attempts to charge residents for their impact to stormwater issues in the County, and it is based upon the amount of impervious/hard surfaces each property has. For the author of this article, the overall stormwater tax appears to be increasing from \$169 (\$0.017 per \$100) in 2023 to an estimated \$248 (per the County's estimator found at the link below) in 2024.

The County has aimed to use a more transparent system and directly address the ongoing and future stormwater issues faced By The County. BCA continues to closely follow this issue.

What Can You Do?

If you have stormwater issues or want to get involved, we encourage you to contact the Bluemont Civic Association at exec@bluemontcivic.org.

For more information on how to reduce your flood risk, visit [this county webpage](#), which includes tips on reducing your flood risk and provides a home flood-prevention checklist.

Energy Consumption, Rooftop Solar, and Canopy Trees

Reducing household energy consumption will save you money and help the environment. [The Tree Stewards of Arlington](#) have advice for people who want to reduce energy consumption. Specifically they advise energy audits, more use of solar panels, and canopy trees.

To reduce the use of fossil fuel energy in your home, the first step is to conduct an energy audit to see if you can realize savings from better insulation and updated appliances. The [results of the audit](#) will provide information before you pay to add solar panels.

A potentially important way to reduce your home's use of fossil fuel energy is to install rooftop solar panels. Reducing fossil fuel pollution from electricity generation is another important environmental goal. The potential benefit of rooftop solar for your house can be assessed [here](#).

Trees play a significant role in our environment. A large canopy tree will sequester carbon; provide stormwater mitigation through avoided surface runoff and rainfall interception; remove air pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, ozone and more; create energy savings from shade in summer and wind break in winter; and provide safe shelter and food for birds and wildlife. You can quantify the value your trees provide [here](#).

Some fear that canopy trees will obstruct solar panels and prevent them from producing sufficient energy. But rooftop solar panels and trees can coexist. The newer, more efficient rooftop panels can work more efficiently with reduced diffuse light so you can retain the tree with little reduction in solar energy output. This is especially important for canopy trees shading your roof in the morning or late afternoon.

A Tree Steward member had to interview three solar panel installation companies before finding one that didn't want to remove the northern red oak in his front yard. The chosen company noted that the tree would reduce electricity generation to some extent, but the system would still pay for itself. Since installation, the homeowner had an arborist trim a few small limbs that were threatening to grow directly over some panels, but the trimming was less than 1 percent of the tree. After the oak drops its leaves, the panels generate more power than the house uses, and the tree steward gets a credit toward future electric bills. This is a win-win: lower utility bills and birds still nest outside their window!



Tree Stewards recommend the following steps:

1. Perform an energy audit of your house first to help identify the greatest energy and environmental impact.
2. Interview several solar panel installation companies to find one that is willing to discuss the pros and cons of any large trees affecting energy production, as well as other tree benefits, such as mitigating stormwater and air pollution.
3. Have a qualified arborist (found through www.treesaregood.org/treeowner) assess trees that might impact panels and prune as necessary. If the arborist determines a tree is damaged and should be removed, plant another in a better location. In Arlington, you can obtain a free tree through www.ecoaction.arlington.org/trees.
4. If your home is not a candidate to have solar panels installed, or you don't want to prune or remove a tree, you can participate in a [Community Solar program](#) to purchase electricity from sustainable sources.

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2023 Newsletter

More information on civic association meetings, including the full text of resolutions, are in the minutes posted at www.bluemontcivic.org.

October 2023

The Arlington County Police Community Engagement Team made a presentation. They discussed crime trends in Bluemont over the past two to three years. Bluemont's crime numbers are higher than neighborhoods to the north where there are no businesses. With a mix of businesses and residences, comes larceny and trespassing at stores. Crime, including violent crime, is up, but that is not specific to Arlington. Crime in Bluemont is often opportunistic, e.g. unlocked cars. There are a high number of larcenies at Bluemont's Safeway and Target.

Fraud and identity theft is big for Bluemont. The Team brought information on how to protect against such crimes and encouraged people to take the information to their neighbors. Bluemont also has a large number (87) of crimes classified as "other," e.g. people undergoing mental health crises needing temporary detention orders so they can be taken to a hospital for evaluation, juvenile infractions, noise, accidents. There are a lot of suspicious circumstances for Bluemont, which is a good sign because the community is letting the police know of suspicious activities even when there is not a crime, e.g. the light being on in the home of a neighbor known to be away from home.

The Team explained how to report crimes and suspicious activities, including the police non-emergency number (703-558-2222), reporting online, texting or calling 911. People can contact the Department of Human Services instead of the police about an issue related to somebody with a mental health crisis. They said that if you see a crime in progress, or a person could get away, call 911. When in doubt, call 911. It is now easy to send or text photos to 911.

Police reviewed ways to avoid preventable crime, and left printed information to be shared with neighbors, including about the 9 pm check to make sure cars and doors are locked, things are put away, etc. Other examples include paying attention, not being on the phone or using headphones. The police offer assessments for any type of residence or business to help reduce the risk of crime. Bluemont was getting a lot of car thefts and break-ins. The police did an operation where they saturated this area and arrested car thieves who were from outside Arlington. They asked them why they came here to steal cars and were told because "Arlington people don't lock their car doors."

The team recommended people follow them on social media, Arlington Alert.

The President reported on his response to County Parks Department official Lyndell Core's query about putting metal jimmy rail near neighborhood homes in a park in Bluemont. The President provided Mr. Core information on past neighborhood opposition to replacing wooden fencing with metal split rail, noting that people remain opposed.

The President announced that BCA member Caroline Haynes has been named Park Steward for Mary Carlin Woods and will schedule quarterly events for the community to help improve and protect the natural environment in the park.

The President will continue to press the concerns of Bluemont residents living near a section of noise wall that was not improved. These residents experienced substantially increased noise after all the surrounding walls were raised and improved.

The President reported on the County Manager's Round Table with Arlington County Civic Federation, civic and condo association leaders. The President raised concerns of BCA members, including rising taxes pushing people out of their homes, storm water, the need for more police, the need for a study of lot coverage, and the joint concern of the Bluemont and Arlington Forest Civic Associations for a safety study of N. Carlin Springs Road.

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2023 Newsletter

The President reported on his informal walk-around with County Board member Matt De Ferranti, who asked to be informally shown EHO sites in Bluemont.

The Treasurer, in his role as head of the Lubber Run Stormwater Working Group of neighboring civic associations and the Civic Federation reported on the ribbon-cutting for the stormwater detention vault at Cardinal Elementary School. You cannot tell that the vault is under the field at the school. It will hold 4 million gallons of water, and cost \$18 million.

BCA's Arlington County Civic Federation delegate David Hughes reported on their October meeting, which featured panels on their visions of Arlington in 2040. Despite his raising the question, none of the presenters provided any idea of what size population Arlington would have in 17 years. The report on the Civic Federation meeting is at www.civfed.org.

BCA's Expanded Housing Options Committee reported that the County has received 32 EHO permits, one permit was withdrawn, 18 permits were approved, 14 are under review. Three permits were approved in Bluemont: 5630 8th Street, N; 4611 N. Carlin Springs Road; 735 N. George Mason Drive. Once a permit is approved, a person can use the permit number to get additional information, but it is very hard to do so. The County is working on a dashboard.

The membership then considered the redrawing of boundaries between Kenmore and Swanson middle schools. The membership voted that all Ashlawn Bluemont planning units should be split as is done now or rezoned to the same middle school.

After discussion it was agreed to start a committee regarding rising property taxes, particularly to brainstorm ideas on savings, economizing County spending.

November 2023

Mr. Chuck Mitchell, who is a trustee and chair of the building committee at Mount Olivet, explained that the church is reaching out to all its neighbors, including the civic associations, about redeveloping its parking lot at 16th Street, N and Glebe Road. The church is investigating the possibility of what they could do with this highly underutilized property. He said their approach was driven by values, such as the need to serve the community, and be part of the community. Possible activities in line with the church's mission include affordable housing, senior housing, and day care that includes grants and subsidies to bring people into market rate daycare. One challenge is that many in the congregation depend on cars to get to services, so redevelopment must include places to park.

President Henry McFarland reported on an informal walk-through with other civic association presidents and County Board members De Ferranti and Takis Karantonis. They looked at sites outside Bluemont and pressed the need for the County to increase the priority it is giving its planned study of lot coverage. President McFarland previously raised the need to prioritize the lot coverage study with the County Manager.

The President said he had sent the School Board a letter with BCA's resolution on proposed changes to the school boundaries for Kenmore and Swanson. He said this issue seems to have been put on the back burner by the School Board.

As a BCA Civic Federation delegate, and leader of the Lubber Run Watershed working group, David Smith shared slides from the great briefing given by County stormwater officials at the November 14 meeting of the Arlington County Civic Federation.

EHO Committee member Kate Mattos reported on the BCA Committee on Expanded Housing Options (EHO).

BCA'S Arlington Neighborhood Advisory Committee (ArNAC) representative Chris George discussed the ArNAC meeting for its fall funding round. At the meeting, he confirmed that BCA's first priority project remains the intersection of Wilson Blvd and N. Lexington Street.

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2023 Newsletter

Allen Norton, a BCA Civic Federation Representative, and representative to Arlington's committee for participation in Virginia's American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250), reported on the first meeting of the Arlington committee. The Virginia state legislature created the 250 Commission to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the independence of the United States.

There was a discussion of changes to parking at the Ballston mall (or Ballston Quarter) garage under the County's new contractor. Another article in this newsletter discusses this issue.

December 2023

Margaret Fisher, Outreach Coordinator for the Plant NOVA Natives campaign, gave a presentation about an all-volunteer campaign to plant native plants in northern Virginia. Plants that do not naturally occur in northern Virginia displace the native plants that 90 percent of plant-eating insects depend on, which depletes the food supply for native birds. The loss of native plants, including for nesting, is reducing the number of birds in northern Virginia, and reducing the number of butterflies. Non-native invasive plants change the landscape, interfering with the absorption of stormwater causing flooding and increasing sediment in the Chesapeake Bay.

On stormwater, David Smith reported that the County's Department of Environment Services submitted the Letter of Map Revision (LOMAR) to FEMA's new flood map affecting Bluemont residents along N. Abingdon Street and part of Wilson Blvd. If FEMA accepts the revision, most of the homes will be moved out of FEMA's

recently declared 100-year flood plain. Another article in this newsletter discusses this issue.

BCA member Jerry Howard explained the work on BCA's Committee on efficiencies on County spending. He noted that Board Member Christian Dorsey had said property taxes might increase, and new Board Member Maureen Coffey said Arlington County was undertaxed compared to other jurisdictions.

January 2024

Brian Shelton, Planner, Active Transportation for Arlington County on made a presentation on the Shared Streets Program and the plans for N. Wakefield St. He reviewed the County's public engagement about N. Wakefield Street, showing that people feel unsafe along this narrow yield street without sidewalks where significant numbers of drivers exceed the speed limit. A top request from those who answered the County survey was for a sidewalk, including requests to remove some parking to allow for a sidewalk. Mr. Shelton reviewed the challenges for placing a sidewalk along this section of N. Wakefield Street, including that the County would need an additional six feet of width. He showed depictions of a couple of options for the street, noting that these were not design drawings, but meant to give people an idea of possible options, so they could provide feedback. He stressed his slides were not engineering drawings, nor a final design.

The President reported on the response he received a response to the letter that BCA sent to the County regarding problems at the Ballston Quarter County parking garage. Another article in this newsletter discusses this issue.

The First Vice President announced plans for Bluemont's Family Fun Day on May 18 at the front pavilion in Lacey Woods Park. The Executive Board authorized \$500 to support the event. He invited people to join the Family Fun Day organizing committee by contacting exec@bluemontcivic.org

February 2024

Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resources Manager and head of Arlington County's deer management team, discussed the overpopulation of deer in Arlington and policy options for dealing with it. The main options are sharpshooting, surgical sterilization, controlled archery, fencing, and deer repellent. Another article in this newsletter discusses this issue.

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2023 Newsletter

President Henry McFarland reported that he had sent a letter to the County Board on the budget. He and other Civic Association leaders met with Arlington County Board members Suzanne Cunningham and Maureen Coffey and asked them to put priority on the lot coverage study. The board members expressed support for the study but did not commit to a resolution.

Henry also described the February 5th, Arlington 2050 kickoff. The event included a panel discussion on emerging trends with experts in business, climate change, demography and education. Postcards were provided to BCA meeting attendees that they could use to document their view of Arlington in 2050.

William Barratt presented a proposed resolution on property taxes. A motion was made to advertise the proposed resolution for a vote at next month's meeting. The motion passed 11 yea, 0 nay, 1 abstention.

The President discussed the accident data he had distributed to BCA members and other Bluemont residents prior to the meeting using the BCA email list. The data show that after the County's restriping on Wilson Boulevard, accidents increased at the intersection of George Mason and Wilson and in the section of Wilson immediately west of that intersection.

In response to the data, which covered a period of about a year and a half after restriping, the County said it likes to have five years of data. The President understood but said the County should not wait five years to address this. The County admitted they had noted increased problems at George Mason and Wilson Blvd since the re-striping and are considering what to do about it. The President asked that the County include BCA in these considerations.

Membership passed a resolution to send to the County Board saying the following:

"The Bluemont Civic Association appreciates the Board and County Manager's efforts to apprise residents of both the current budget deficit and the likelihood of future deficits exacerbated by the looming collapse in commercial property tax revenue. We previously have informed the Board of the burden that steadily increasing tax bills are for residents. (See our letter of February 28, 2023.)

The civic association urges the board to deepen its communications with residents on property taxes and possible expenditure reductions. Extensive efforts should be undertaken to

find economies before any tax increase is considered.

The Bluemont Civic Association emphasizes its opposition to a default enactment of personal property tax increases through rising assessments to make up for budgetary deficits or commercial property revenue shortfalls. We would hope that when assessments rise, the property tax rate falls to reduce the effect on residents' tax bills."

March 2024

David Pearson gave a presentation about the Arlington Historical Society. He talked about the museum they have in Arlington and how they welcome visitors to the Ball-Sellers house, the oldest house in the County. He also described their project for memorializing the enslaved. The Society has 14 board members, 400-500 members.

Civic Association President Henry McFarland described how he had sent members' questions about the water line inventory to the County. He got a detailed response, which he sent to the membership. As a result of our questions, the County improved the online FAQs.

Henry met with County Board Vice-Chair Takis Karantonis and three other Civic Associations to discuss the lot coverage study. Mr. Karantonis is on board with the study a priority. County Board Chair Libby Garvey was quoted in ARLNow as commenting on this study. Henry noted that we sent a BCA letter to the county board on this topic.

At that meeting, Henry brought up with Mr. Karantonis the traffic study on N. Carlin Springs road. Mr. Karantonis is interested in our thoughts on reducing the number of

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2023 Newsletter

lanes from 4 to 3. Henry told him we supported the reduced speed limit on part of the road.

Henry also proposed a nominating committee, which the membership approved. The search for nominees is described elsewhere in this newsletter.

Treasurer David Smith informed the membership of an upcoming April 10th Lubber Run watershed meeting planned by DES.

ArNAC representative Chris George said the design phase of our funded project on 6th and N. Edison design is almost complete. Work will start this fall. The project to make pedestrian safety improvements at Wilson and N Lexington is beginning preliminary work.

CivFed representative David Hughes described a colloquium on funding in the County. There was no real discussion on funding reduction. There was some discussion about the state giving the county authority to change its form of government. Takis Karantonis and Libby Garvey lobbied against this measure.

The EHO Committee reported that the number of Expanded Housing Option permit applications for the whole County has slowed. This change might be due to the pending lawsuit, as well as confusion over the program. Four such permits have been approved in Bluemont. One of them was later revoked. Of the remaining permits, two deal with the same lot.

Larry Smith, representative to the Ballston Business Improvement District (BID) described future activities planned by the BID.

A resolution was passed that that the Arlington County Board should reduce the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2024 so that once rising assessments are considered, the total amount of real estate taxes paid by homeowners is the same or less than the amount paid in calendar year 2023. The resolution also asked that the Arlington County Board should seek savings in its fiscal year 2025 budget beyond modest cuts and efficiencies, and that in future years, the Arlington County Board should seek to reduce the property tax rate as necessary to offset rising real estate assessments.

Larry Smith discussed a request he made to the County to subdivide a lot he owns into two (roughly) 50-foot lots. As part of the process, Larry is required to announce this requested change to the local civic association. Larry indicated that he will also speak to the nearby neighbors. BCA board and members acknowledged that they understood Larry's requests to the county with respect to the development. No objections came forward at the meeting.

Connect with Bluemont



Facebook: Like our [Bluemont Civic Association page on Facebook](#) for regular updates on news of interest to Bluemont, and civic association activities.

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

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](mailto: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.

Join or Renew Today!

Keep your membership current! Please use this form to join or renew.

BCA Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew your membership at any General Membership meeting, or

Mail this form with your check made out to "Bluemont Civic Association" to
BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington, VA 22205.

All information is for BCA use only.