



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

April 2025

bluemontcivic.org

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Upcoming Presentations at the General Membership Meetings

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 30: Nick Giacobbe, vice president of the Civic Federation Aurora Highlands Civic Assn. will speak about zoning issues. All are welcome at Executive Board meetings.



May 28: Matt De Ferranti, Vice-Chair of the County Board, will speak at our May 28 meeting. We will send him a list of questions a few weeks before the meeting. If you have any questions you would like to submit to Mr. De Ferranti in advance, please send them to exec@bluemontcivic.org

June 25: Speaker to be announced.

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

Bluemont Community Spring Yard Sale

You will have a great opportunity to declutter and sell unwanted items. The BCA will sponsor a Bluemont Community Spring Yard Sale on Saturday May 3 from 8 AM to 1 PM. (If it rains that day, the rain date is Sunday May 4.) The event will be open to all residents of Bluemont. Residents may host their sales from their own yards or driveways, or they may bring items for sale to a central sales location at "The Rocks," which is off the Bluemont Junction Trail just east of the entrance to the Mary Carlin Woods.

There is no sign-up and no fee to join. Simply set up your items for sale on the event days. We will have a list of participating sales locations on our web page. (We will only list locations for people who specifically ask us to.) More information about this event will be on our Facebook page and in the Neighborhood News emails. (If you do not receive these, please send a request to be included to exec@bluemontcivic.org.) If you have questions about the yard sale, or want to express a desire to participate, please email bluemontyardsale@bluemontcivic.org.



**Please join the
Civic Association.
A form for joining
or renewing your
membership
is on p. 9.**

NEEDED: A New "Keeper of the Clapper"

Gathering with neighbors to ring the bell at our firehouse is a popular tradition in Bluemont, as described below. More and more children are showing up on national holidays, eager to pull the rope on the clapper at 12 noon, learn about the history of the day, share cupcakes, and receive a tiny holiday swag bag.

The volunteer who has been caring for the center piece of the bell known as the "clapper" for over 20 years now must pass the torch to a younger generation. Would you consider holding onto the clapper at your home between holidays and bringing it to Constitution Gardens (at the corner of George Mason Dr. & Wilson Blvd) just before noon on national holidays?

The clapper weighs 45 pounds, and you must be able to lift and hang it inside the bell each time. It comes in a wheeled cart. The keeper of the clapper does not have to attend every bell ringing. Substitute volunteers can be found when needed.

Meeting neighbors, building relationships, and sharing great conversations are meaningful, fun, and too rare in this day & age. Please consider caring for the clapper and joining us on federal holidays. Please email president@bluemontcivic.org.



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 26.

Also mark your calendars for bell ringings on Juneteenth (Thursday June 19), Independence Day (Friday, July 4), Labor Day (Monday September 1), Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day (Monday, October 13), Veterans Day (Monday, November 11), Thanksgiving (Thursday November 27), Christmas Day (Thursday, December 25) and all federal holidays!

The BCA Needs You

Have you wondered how to get more involved in our Bluemont community? We have several volunteer opportunities. We are preparing for the annual election of the new Executive Board. If you are interested in learning more about how to improve our neighborhood, please run for a position with the Bluemont Civic Association. (We also need a clapper keeper as noted.)

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 to take effective action on behalf of our neighborhood.

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 28. Nominations will also be accepted from all members at that meeting. Elections will be held at the BCA annual membership meeting on June 25.



Rescuing Trees from Invasive English Ivy

Volunteers from BCA and the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists cleared English Ivy from 43 trees in Mary Carlin Woods on February 27. English Ivy, an invasive species, climbs trees, flowers, and produces seeds that spread throughout the nearby area. Left alone, the vines eventually smother and kill the trees they climbed.

To save the trees, the volunteers cut the ivy vines from around the bases of the affected trees and removed as much of the vines' root systems as possible. The remaining vines in the trees will slowly wither and fall off. When you are in the park, you may see the dying or dead vines in the trees and ivy roots piled or hung on branches, off the soil so they die and do not re-root.

The Park Stewards plan to meet every fourth Thursday of the month from 10:00–11:30 AM to pull invasive plants from Mary Carlin Woods, enjoy being in the park, and plan for future restoration plantings. Meet at the Bluemont Junction Trail and N. Jefferson Street. Bring gloves, clippers/loppers and a filled reusable water bottle. (They will have some extra gloves and clippers for those that need them.) Everyone is welcome to help at these invasive species removals.

The 2026 County Budget and Proposed Property Tax Increase

The Bluemont Civic Association has frequently expressed concerns about rising taxes. At a recent meeting with the County Manager, the Association President described how residential property taxes have risen steadily for a long period of time. For example on one home in our neighborhood the tax rose by over 40% from 2016 to 2024, an increase of over 4% a year. Our Bluemont neighbors include many senior citizens who want to stay in their homes but are on fixed incomes and fear they will have to sell if taxes keep going up. Our neighbors also include many young families who see a large tax burden being added to housing costs that already are very high.

Residential tax assessments went up 3.5% this year, and if the tax rate does not fall, that would result in another large increase in taxes. The Association asked that the tax rate be decreased or at least not increased this year. We appreciate having Arlington as a community with excellent services, particularly schools, police, fire and other emergency services, and parks. We also understand that the County needs to commit significant resources to dealing with stormwater, a problem that is likely to get worse over time. Nonetheless, to make it possible to hold the line on taxes, the Association urged an extensive review of county expenditures to find ways to save money.

At the February 22 board meeting, County Manager Mark Schwartz presented a \$1.69 billion budget with a proposed 2.1% percent expenditure increase over the 2025 budget. He did not request a real estate tax rate increase, leaving the rate at \$1.033 per \$100 of assessed value. The board worries cuts in federal funding and declining commercial property tax revenue could lead to a budget shortfall in 2026.

On February 25, the Arlington County Board voted to advertise an increase in the residential property tax rate to \$1.043 per \$100. If the board confirms this preliminary step, it will have raised the property tax rate two years in a row. Those increases coupled with rising assessments would accrue to a 51% climb in residential property taxes since 2016.

(cont'd on p. 5)

Stormwater Issues and Our Neighborhood

Watershed-Based Stormwater Initiatives in the County

An article in last spring's newsletter gave a rundown of stormwater-related initiatives in key watersheds in Arlington, including the Lubber Run watershed which runs through Bluemont. Since that time, the Arlington County Department of Environmental Services (DES) has completed several stormwater-related maintenance projects across the county, with a notable completion of the work to restore Sparrow Pond, which is just to the south of Bluemont beside the W&OD trail. The work removed sediment and deepened the pond, which helps to maximize downstream water quality and slow down stream flow. Related drainage work will also help reduce nearby ponding and icing.

Progress has continued between the Arlington DES and FEMA to adopt a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) submitted by Arlington County on behalf of residents in Bluemont. The LOMR aims to revise the 100-year flood plain for a few dozen homes along Lubber Run. Progress by FEMA and DES on the approval of the LOMR has been slow but is still ongoing.

Last fall a Lubber Run watershed meeting was called by DES to provide a briefing on their study findings and potential paths forward. The meeting was scuttled to allow County time staff to deal with issues raised by some of our neighbors in Waycroft-Woodlawn. We are hoping for a reschedule of that briefing sometime soon.

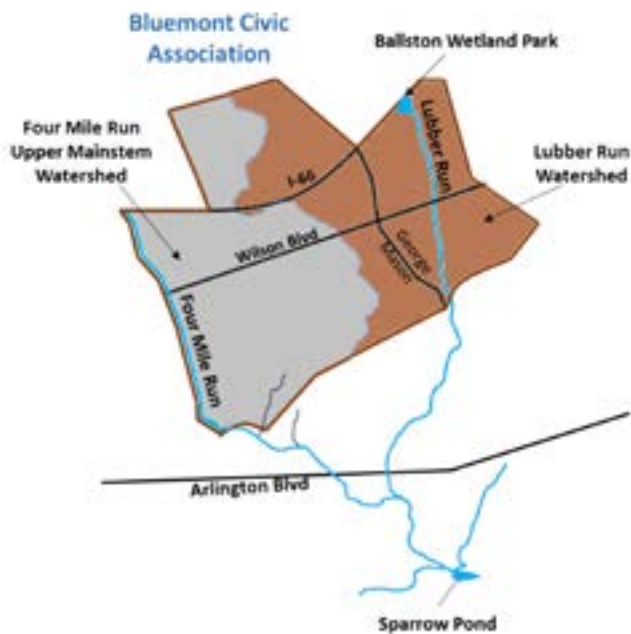


Figure 1: Bluemont Civic Association with Watershed Overlay

Risk Assessment and Management Plan

In April 2024 DES published the Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) to help predict and plan for flooding in the County. The RAMP assesses risk within each of the critical watersheds, to include Lubber Run and Four Mile Run watersheds, which run through Bluemont. The RAMP calls out mitigation strategies for Lubber Run.

Volume 1: RAMP Executive Summary and Watershed Fact Sheets

Volume 2: RAMP Summary Report

Volume 3: RAMP Appendices and Technical Memoranda

Climate Action Resolution

In February 2025, the Arlington County Board approved a new [Climate Action Resolution](#) which ultimately sets up County support to develop a comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CAP). It is unclear what the final CAP will encompass, but it likely will cover approaches for the County to become carbon neutral by 2050 and to prioritize and mobilize the County for climate protection and resiliency efforts, with improvement to 'stormwater management' cited in the goals.

At a recent Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) [working session](#) with the Arlington County Board, David R Smith, one of our ACCF delegates and BCA Secretary, supported a panel to discuss climate action. David advocated for BCA/county residents experiencing stormwater issues and also asked the County Board about how the CAP intersects with the RAMP (above). Susan Cunningham

(cont'd on p. 5)

Stormwater Issues (cont'd)

(County Board Member) confirmed that the proposed Manager's budget includes continued stormwater funding. Takis Karantonis (County Board Chair) noted that stormwater mitigation is more expensive than prevention. We agree! We hope that the County stays focused on helping to resolve stormwater issues in Bluemont as well as the other critical watersheds.

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.



Snow Removal Issues

After the January 6 snowstorm, several residents contacted the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) to say that their streets had not been plowed. County snow removal takes place in phases. Residents reported that their streets were unplowed even after Phase 3, when all residential streets should be cleared. Several residents said their areas are often left unplowed.

Bluemont residents found it frustrating that they could not report that their streets had not been plowed until the County reached Phase 4, which the County described as the "clean-up" phase. Residents who tried to report their unplowed streets during earlier phases found that the system would not accept their reports, and did not explain why the reports were not accepted. They did not see any indication that reports would be accepted in Phase 4, and gave up mistakenly thinking the County did not want to hear from them. Or, if they were able to send a report to the County, they did not realize that the report would not be considered until Phase 4.

BCA reported these problems to County staff. We suggested that better communications could alleviate this situation. We asked questions concerning the snow removal effort and made suggestions for improving communications with residents.

The County staff's response was thoughtful and constructive. They agreed to make some changes in how they would communicate during snowstorms and are reviewing other changes we suggested. After a subsequent smaller snowstorm, several members have told us that snow removal was better on some previously missed streets.

2026 County Budget and Proposed Property Tax Increase (cont'd)

If you missed your chance to speak at the County Board's March 25 budget or March 27 tax-rate hearings, you can still register your opinion on Arlington's spending and tax plans at the Board's "Open Door Mondays" or by emailing board members before they vote to adopt the budget at their April 9 meeting. You can learn how to reach out to a board member [via the Arlington County website](#). Register for Open Door Mondays [here](#).

BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2024 Newsletter

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

October 2024

The Executive Board discussed the results of a survey of the membership. Responses indicated strong support for protecting green space and trees. Stormwater and limiting traffic increases were also important. Bike safety came up in the comments. There was concern about increased crime. Responses showed interest in a social event, not necessarily family focused. The results of the survey can be found [here](#).

The membership discussed complaints about the intersection of Carlin Springs and George Mason Drive. The problem was discussed with County staff, which is investigating possible solutions.

A motion was passed to recommend designating the Arlington County owned land parcels 13006068 and 13012043 located between the intersection of North Harrison Street and 9th Road North and the North Jacksonville Street dead end at the Route 66 sound barrier as a County park.

Representatives of Insight Property Group discussed their planned development of the Macy's site. Demolition, which started in late January 2025, will take 5-6 months. Then they will start site work and excavation. After that construction will take about 31 months. The building will have two towers of rental apartments. Units will range from studios to 3 bedrooms.

In addition, representatives of Penzance Property discussed plans to redevelop the Ballston One office building at 4601 N. Fairfax Drive. They have submitted an application to amend the site plan. They are not rezoning. They want the site plan to allow a multifamily building. They plan a 7-story building of 328 apartment units varying in type.

A motion was passed to support the installation of a left turn signal at the intersection of Wilson Blvd. and N. George Mason Drive.

November 2024

The President stated that he would speak at a hearing run by Metro concerning the possible addition of a West Entrance to the Ballston Metro Station. The BCA has long advocated for such an entrance.

Officers Grant Markwell and April Robinson of the Arlington County Police reported on crime in our neighborhood. While not

trouble free, our neighborhood is generally safe. They also answered pre-submitted questions followed by a general Q&A.

A final vote was taken on the motion asking for left turn arrows on Wilson Boulevard at the intersection with George Mason Drive. The motion passed unanimously. A letter asking for those arrows to be installed was sent to the County Manager, the County Board, and some staff members of the county Department of Environmental Services, which is responsible for the intersection.

December 2024

The President reported he had spoken at the Metro hearing about the proposed west entrance to the Ballston metro center. He also submitted a written statement from the Bluemont Civic Association supporting the entrance. All the speakers at the hearing favored the entrance.

Concern was expressed regarding white flags by the rocks. The county plans on straightening the feeder trail onto the bike paths. The Department of Environmental Services is supposed to contact us before construction begins. Construction won't start until spring.

Most of the meeting was a discussion of the survey BCA conducted to learn how to better serve our neighborhood. Notice about the survey was in our newsletter, which goes to over 2000 homes, and our list serve, which has over 400 email addresses. 111 people responded. Half were BCA members.

In the area of zoning, BCA has three main activities. We comment on zoning issues,

BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the October 2024 Newsletter

such as lot coverage and middle density rules. We review large projects in or near our area, like the Holiday Inn or Macy's sites. Also we are notified about small projects in our area, those involving a single house or small building, but generally we leave these to the County, which notifies the people in the area, and only get involved if nearby neighbors ask us to. The survey showed the zoning issues people were most concerned about were preserving trees and promoting green space.

The survey also supported continued involvement with issues involving stormwater. For a discussion of stormwater issues, see an article in this newsletter.

Survey respondents put high priority on parks, tree canopy, and limiting taxes. The results of the survey can be found [here](#).

January 2025

There was a presentation by representatives of Two Birds, a childcare facility proposed for 1100 North Glebe Road. It will be on the first floor of the building, will have a large staff, and will have room for a hundred children.

Several members raised objections to late night noise at the Safeway on Wilson Boulevard. When they were here, the police told us that they could not enforce the Noise Ordinance as they were required to have both a Sound meter and a Wind meter—and had never been given Wind meters. The President agreed to write a Letter of Inquiry about the Noise Ordinance test equipment requirements.

Members also discussed problems with communication cables dangling from utility poles. Some are so long that they are a safety hazard. The President agreed to write to the Presidents of neighboring Civic

Associations and ask if they have the same problem. These issues also can be reported on the [County website](#),

February 2025

Macy's demolition has started and will likely last to Mid-August. Builders have agreed to use the Fairfax Drive Route when there will be a large volume of trucks, such as when hauling demolition debris or dirt from excavating the foundation.

The County will proceed on the lot coverage study but now will focus only on impervious surfaces without regard to whether they involve an excavation.

The president said he had a meeting scheduled for that Friday with County Staff to discuss problems with the noise ordinance.

Jeremiah Howard, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the Arlington County Board voted 4:1 to advertise an increase in the tax rate. He noted that there continues to be interest in discouraging a tax rate increase. In addition, Jeremiah encouraged residents to attend the March 25 budget hearing and March 27 budget hearing on this tax rate increase. Information about these hearings will be on the Arlington County website.

A motion designating improving the streetlighting on the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of North Illinois Avenue as BCA's second priority project for the Arlington Neighborhood Program was accepted for publication and final vote at the March meeting.

A proposal for a community yard sale was discussed. Austin Anton presented a well-thought-out proposal that he had developed. See the article above on the planned yard sale.

Nora Palmatier of the Tree Stewards presented a description of their work as well as tips for keeping trees healthy. Graphics will be provided to the BCA. Visit [Treestewards.org](https://www.treestewards.org) for more information.

March 2025

The Executive Board approved funding for signs for the upcoming yard sale. (See the article above.)

Improving the streetlighting on the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of North Illinois Avenue was designated as the Bluemont Civic Association's second priority project for the Arlington Neighborhood Program

The President reported that he had met with Shahriar Amiri, the

BCA Actions and Resolutions

Chief Building Official and Inspection Services Director for Arlington, Arlova Vonhm, the Zoning Administrator, and Chief of Police Andy Penn to discuss problems with the noise ordinance. Chief Penn recommended that we give him contact information for the neighbors who have the problem. He would then have one of his engagement officers talk to them and then to Safeway to work things out. With those neighbors' permission, the President gave Chief Penn their information. The neighbors reported that the noise from the delivery trucks and lot sweeping late at night has stopped. Also Safeway cleaned the parking lot of the food, trash, etc. They are very pleased with the efforts of the Civic Association and the Arlington Police.

The President also reported that he went to Open Door Monday hosted by Chair of the County Board Takis Karantonis. The President spoke about the Association's concerns about the tax rate and the Lubber Run watershed.

Wendy Klancher, Arlington County Bureau Chief of Commuter Services along with David Moskovitz and Judah dal Cais gave a presentation on Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) and the Shared Micro Mobility Device (SMD) program. The slides they used in the presentation can be found on the [association website](#).

Kate Mattos, our representative to the site plan review committee for the Ballston One project, described the project's status and the response of the County staff to the project. The project proposes to replace the office building now at 4601 Fairfax Drive with an apartment building. (See the note above about our October meeting.)



Executive Board

BCA Officers & Reps

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

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

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.

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.