



# Williamsburg Civic Association Newsletter

OCTOBER 2018

[WWW.WCA-ARLINGTON.ORG](http://WWW.WCA-ARLINGTON.ORG)

## WCA President's Message

Hi Neighbors,

I hope that you and your families have enjoyed the summer. For our Civic Association, this summer has been a very busy one. Members of our community have worked in earnest on several key issues, including the Sycamore Street Project, the Dawn Redwood tree preservation effort, traffic and pedestrian safety improvements, and aircraft noise abatement.

I am very proud to report that the Sycamore Street Project, an important component of the WCA vision for more than a decade, is finally complete! The goals of the Sycamore Street Project included the reduction of traffic speeds, an improvement in pedestrian safety, renovation of the bus stops, overall beautification, and enhanced storm water management. I believe the Project has achieved all of these objectives. In addition, Sycamore Street now resembles a neighborhood street that blends in with the surrounding community. The renovations, from the intersection of 26th Street North to the Williamsburg Circle, truly enhance the beauty of our community and I am very pleased that it is finally complete.

The Sycamore Street Project originated from a proposal made by the WCA and funded through the Arlington County Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC). We are again seeking your ideas for capital improvement or beautification projects for the Williamsburg Civic Association. These can include ideas to improve our parks and green spaces, sidewalks, streets, and street lighting. The WCA Neighborhood Conservation Plan, updated and accepted by the County Board last year, provides a good overview of the Civic Association residents' views and opinions about neighborhood infrastructure and amenities and is a great resource for ideas about neighborhood improvements.

On a sad note, our heroic effort to preserve the majestic

## General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, October 25, 2018  
7:30-9:00 PM**

**Nottingham Elementary School  
Library  
5900 Little Falls Road  
Arlington, VA 22207**

### Topics:

**County Update  
The Honorable Erik Gutshall  
Member, Arlington County Board**

**Neighborhood Conservation  
Jonathan Levine  
WCA Representative to the Arlington County  
Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee**

**Restructuring of Arlington County Police Dept.  
Corporal Beth Lennon  
ACPD**

Dawn Redwood tree located at 3260 North Ohio Street was not successful. The tree was cut down in early September. The overwhelming response of the members of this community, as well as hundreds of other Arlington residents, urging the County Board and the County staff to use every available mechanism to preserve the tree may pay dividends, however. We are hopeful that this exercise has influenced the way our community, the County Board, and the County Staff regards our trees—their presence offers much more than just aesthetics. Many notable trees — the Dawn Redwood in particular — carry a special significance to the neighborhoods in which they are located.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Civic Association Loses Battle to Save State Champion Dawn Redwood Tree

Despite vigorous efforts by the Williamsburg Civic Association, the Arlington Tree Action Group, the Arlington Urban Forestry Commission, and the pleas of more than 1,000 residents of North Arlington, in late August developers cut down a State Champion Dawn Redwood located at 3260 Ohio Street. When last measured by Arlington County, the tree — the largest of its kind in Virginia — stood 114' high with a circumference of 185 inches. It had been recorded — for a decade or more — on Arlington's registry of Notable Trees. Notable Trees are those selected by Arlington County because of their maturity, uniqueness of species, and special significance to their neighborhood, among other qualities.



The tree was removed to facilitate redevelopment of the lot to house (eventually) two six-bedroom six-bathroom homes.

The WCA and others had pointed out that the tree was not only a State Champion and Arlington Notable Tree, but was located within the only Resource Protection Area (RPA) within the Civic Association. RPAs are established and maintained to protect stream quality, the quality of the Chesapeake Bay, and prevent soil erosion generally. Mature trees are particularly critical to the success of RPAs. The Civic Association felt strongly that the removal of the tree would represent a significant loss for both the neighborhood and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It also pointed out that the WCA's recently updated Neighborhood Conservation Plan had specifically highlighted the unfortunate decline of the tree canopy within local neighborhoods and the need for the County to engage in early discussions with developers to preserve, rather than replace, mature trees.

Nevertheless, the County granted the developer's construction permit in late August and the tree was cut down four days later. According to the County, developers have considerable discretion to redevelop and subdivide private property and the developer was legally entitled, in this instance, to remove the tree. The County did, however, indicate that it will be launching a community process to update Arlington's Urban Forest Master Plan and Natural Resources Management Plan. As part of those updates, the County indicated, it will explore "new administrative and legislative tools to protect and enhance Arlington's tree canopy." We urge neighbors to participate in these processes as they move forward.

### *President's letter, continued from Page 1*

Continuing our tradition of engagement with the County Board members, the Honorable Erik Gutshall, Arlington County Board Member, will join us at our October meeting. He was elected to the Arlington County Board in 2017, and is committed to strong engagement by the residents of Arlington. He is also an ardent advocate for planning that ensures that development contributes to the community mitigates any potential negative impacts. He has served on the Transportation and Planning Commissions.

Finally, I would like to encourage each of you to subscribe to the WCA listserv. It is the primary way that we are keeping each other aware of breaking news and important information about our community. Visit our website, [www.wca-arlington.org](http://www.wca-arlington.org), to learn how to subscribe to the Yahoo group and stay informed.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at the WCA meeting on Oct 25!

-- Ruth

## Please share your Neighborhood Conservation Ideas with WCA

The Williamsburg Civic Association is soliciting ideas for a Neighborhood Conservation Program (NCP) project to propose to the Neighborhood Advisory Conservation Committee (NCAC). Examples of NCP projects are beautification projects, residential intersection improvements, curb extensions, missing sidewalk segments for three properties or less, trail connector improvements, or modest DPR park and playground installations.

We are looking for ideas about ways to improve things like our parks and green spaces, sidewalks, streets, and street lighting. There are limited funds available from the County through the NCP. Funding for the entire NCP was recently reduced from \$12 million to \$5 million for the upcoming 2-year bond cycle, so project budgets will be capped at \$500,000.00.

These types of projects start with proposals from each civic association. These proposals are called priority projects, which are submitted first to the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, where they are put in a queue and go through a process where the civic association seeks to obtain the NCAC's recommendation that the County Board

approve the project. It is a fairly long process, but the NCAC is currently looking at certain reforms to improve the process. It is important, however, to get our priority project in to the NCAC queue.

The WCA currently does not have any priority projects in the NCAC queue, and has not had one in the queue since the Sycamore Street Project. The WCA would like your help to come to a consensus on a priority project and submit it to the NCAC by Nov. 15, 2018. In order for a priority project to be eligible it has to have been contemplated in the WCA's Neighborhood Conservation Plan. The WCA's current NC Plan is found at: <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/neighborhood-conservation/nc-plan-program/nc-plans/> There are numerous specific ideas in the NCP and broader goals that may spark an idea. Examples are beautification projects in Minor Hill Park, Sharp's Park and possibly the Birch-Payne Cemetery. More information on NC projects and the NCAC is found at: [https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/02/NC\\_2014NCProgramGuide.pdf](https://arlingtonva.s3.dualstack.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/02/NC_2014NCProgramGuide.pdf)

Please join at the Oct. 25 meeting to discuss your ideas.

## Market Update for Williamsburg Civic Association

Address	List Price	Close Price	Close Date	BD	BA	DOM
3507 Kensington St	\$1,597,665	\$1,685,042	7/6/18	5	3	224
6546 28th St N	\$845,000	\$850,000	7/9/18	4	2	8
6586 Williamsburg Blvd	\$785,000	\$785,000	7/10/18	3	2	37
6558 28th St N	\$819,000	\$800,000	7/10/18	3	1	41
6549 35th Rd N	\$1,249,000	\$1,240,000	7/19/18	5	4	73
6000 Little Falls Rd	\$1,095,000	\$1,065,000	7/19/18	3	4	48
6600 Williamsburg Blvd	\$1,350,000	\$1,318,000	8/2/18	5	4	49
3313 Pocomoke St	\$1,699,900	\$1,650,000	8/10/18	6	5	148
6318 31st St N	\$1,695,000	\$1,665,000	8/24/18	5	4	99
3325 Kensington St	\$1,950,000	\$1,940,000	8/29/18	7	7	143
6301 27th St N	\$1,049,000	\$1,037,500	9/4/18	4	3	50
3107 John Marshall Dr	\$1,650,000	\$1,600,000	9/19/18	5	4	91
3200 Trinidad St	\$1,799,000	\$1,780,000	9/27/18	6	5	23





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# Construction Continues at Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School

During 2018-19, the Diocese of Arlington will continue with its ongoing project — expected to be completed in 2020 — to improve facilities at Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School. The School was originally constructed in the mid-1950s in the then-popular modernist International style. The School was built with two wings: girls were educated by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in one wing while boys were taught by the Christian Brothers in the other. When this co-institutional model was discontinued and the School wings merged, the floor plan remained inconveniently separate.

The School has embarked on an ambitious facility master plan to modernize and better integrate school classrooms and administrative and public spaces. The remaining Sisters were moved to a new home near the School in 2018 and the original convent is being demolished. It will be replaced with a 3-story building housing flexible academic space on the upper two floors and a 180-seat chapel that emerges from the building to face Trinidad Street. (See

photograph below). The architects have designed a chapel in keeping with the rural Irish heritage of Bishop Denis J. O'Connell, the seventh bishop of Richmond and the School's namesake. The stone walls, high peaked ceilings, and Gothic windows will have a distinct Irish aesthetic. The new building and chapel are expected to be completed in August 2020.

At the same time, breezeways currently connecting the main wing and Trinidad wings of the School will be replaced with a new atrium-style main entrance. The entrance will connect to a new glass-enclosed main corridor that will serve as an indoor artery for school traffic on both the first and second floors.

Finally, the construction will include the creation of a pedestrian plaza in the center area of the lawn along Little Falls Road. The Plaza will provide a more welcoming flow of foot-traffic into the buildings and will serve as a gathering space for students before and after school in good weather.

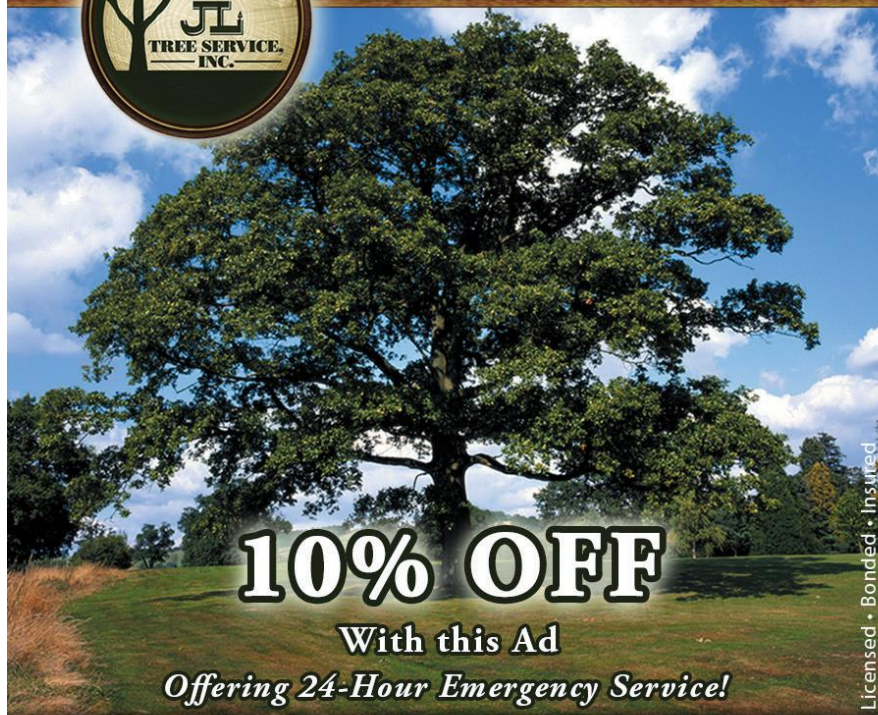


Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School is undergoing a renovation that will include, among other improvements, a chapel whose architecture reflects the rural Irish heritage of Bishop Denis J. O'Connell, the seventh bishop of Richmond and the School's namesake.





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## **WCA Revives Holiday Tree Lighting Tradition**

Last year — with the help of the Arlington/Falls Church Fire Departments — the Civic Association revived its tradition of lighting the American holly tree located at the Williamsburg Circle. For many years during the 1970s and 80s, some of the trees located in the Circle (the small patch of County land formed by the intersection of Sycamore, Little Falls, and Williamsburg Boulevard) had been lighted for the holiday season. As the trees grew and lighting became more difficult, the tradition was abandoned.

With the advent of LED holiday lights that draw little power and can be attached in long rows of multiple strings, the WCA last year sought to light the largest of the trees on the Circle — an American holly. (The lights were provided through the generous donations of the Williamsburg Shopping Center and

McEneaney Associates Realtor). The Arlington/Falls Church Fire Departments kindly made their ladder truck available and provided fire personnel to help with the lighting. We quickly learned, however, that the ladder truck was not the ideal equipment to use to light the tree. The truck was huge, and relatively unwieldy, and could not easily move around the tree.

This year, however, we approached a local tree service company — JL Tree Service — that had provided similar holiday services to another Arlington non-profit citizen association. JL Tree Service offered the Civic Association a highly discounted price for the holiday lighting. Currently, Civic Association volunteers and JL Tree Service arborists plan to light the tree on the day following Thanksgiving and remove the lights on or about January 6th — the day following the traditional “Twelve Days of Christmas.”

# Sycamore Street Project Finally Complete

The Sycamore Street Project is complete! Okay, there are still some punch-list items to finish, but the median is in, the grass and more than 40 native trees are planted, and the road is striped and smooth. Many of us in the Williamsburg Civic Association have been waiting a long time for this moment to arrive, and we are thrilled that it is here. The Sycamore Street project has been part of the vision of the WCA for more than a decade, and has resulted in renovations between 26th Street North and the Williamsburg Circle (by the CVS), including reducing the lanes of traffic from two lanes each way to one lane each way and installing a median on that stretch of Sycamore Street.

The project was funded through Arlington County's Neighborhood Conservation Program (NCP). The WCA identified the desire for a median on Sycamore Street in our Neighborhood Conservation Plan in 2001. It was not until 2011 that the project really started to gain steam, and the WCA successfully collected enough signatures approving the project to advance it within the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC), the citizens' committee that advises the County Board about whether to fund and approve NCP projects. Due to the size and cost of the project at the time, the decision was made to split the project into two phases, each

costing roughly \$600,000.00. The NCAC ultimately advised the County Board to approve both phases, and the County Board adopted the approvals. The second phase was approved in 2013, and the project was funded at a cost of approximately \$1.2 million.

Construction was initially scheduled to begin in late 2014, but was delayed several times due to design issues and staffing issues in the County's engineering department. Also, due to delays and increased construction costs, the costs for the project increased to just over \$2 million. The County Board approved the cost overrun in 2017. Construction commenced in late September/early October 2017 and remained on schedule, completing in the one-year's time that was anticipated.

Early indications are that the Sycamore Street Project is achieving its goals of slowing traffic speeds, increasing pedestrian safety, beautifying the neighborhood, and managing storm water better. If WCA residents have questions about the construction, please contact the construction manager, Renee Nmair, [rnmail@arlingtonva.us](mailto:rnmail@arlingtonva.us). General information about the project can be found on the County's Web Site here: <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/north-sycamore-street/>.



Northern Red Oak, Valley Forge Elm, Cherokee Sweetgum and Paperbark Maple line the new median.



The reduction to one lane of travel has slowed down cars, and the parking and bicycle lanes were left intact.



## In Brief...

### Lee Highway Planning Process Kicks Off

The County Manager shared with the County Board on Sept. 25 the final scope and charge for the [Plan Lee Highway](#) process, which is anticipated to kick-off in late 2018 or early 2019. The purpose of the upcoming study is to develop a comprehensive vision and policy framework for the future of this important corridor and its surrounding areas. Given the character of Lee Highway and limited planning to date, there is a mounting desire within the community to improve the corridor and consider how future development can transform the character in a positive, rather than reactive, manner. The County has designed a [multi-layered engagement approach](#) that will include broad participation and many opportunities for input from residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders. The County is accepting applications from interested candidates to serve as at-large representatives on the Plan Lee Highway Community Forum. Residents interested in applying for at-large positions on the Community Forum are encouraged to [submit an application](#) by October 31.

### Arlington County to Discontinue Vehicle Decals Effective July 2019

The Arlington County Board voted Sept. 25 to eliminate the requirement to display a vehicle decal on the front windshield beginning July 1, 2019. License plate reading technology will be used to enforce vehicle registration and payment of vehicle personal property taxes.

### Shepherds Center Needs You!

The Shepherds Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, an all-volunteer group that provides rides for seniors in Arlington, Falls Church and McLean, needs your help. If you have an hour a week or more to volunteer to take seniors to doctor's appointments, the pharmacy or the grocery store, please contact Tom Eversole, the executive director, at 703-506-2199 or at [info@scmafc.org](mailto:info@scmafc.org). To learn more, visit [www.scmafc.org](http://www.scmafc.org).



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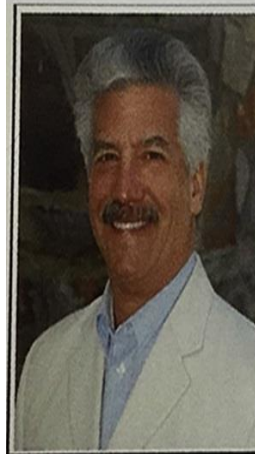
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Newsletter Editor: **Sonia McCormick**  
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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR WILLIAMSBURG CIVIC ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the Williamsburg Civic Association is to promote the welfare of our community and its residents. We do this by holding meetings, issuing this newsletter, and interacting with the Arlington County Civic Federation, Arlington County Board, and a variety of local and regional organizations. You can support our efforts by paying your annual dues of only \$10 per household. Please tear off this sheet and mail it along with your check (made payable to Williamsburg Civic Association) to our treasurer, Jim Toronto, at 3577 Powhatan St., N., Arlington, VA 22213. You also can pay at the general membership meeting. **Please consider adding a donation to your dues, as we rely on dues and limited ad sales to pay for the printing of this newsletter and various other expenses, such as our website hosting fee and our dues to the Arlington County Civic Federation. Thank you for demonstrating your appreciation for our work by adding a small donation!**

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