



# Williamsburg Civic Association Newsletter

OCTOBER 2014

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

## WCA President's Message

Hi Neighbors,

I hope that you and your families enjoyed the summer and are settling back into the fall routine. Throughout the year, representatives of the WCA have continued to coordinate with the County staff on several key initiatives that affect our community. I commend and sincerely appreciate those that volunteered to lead or participate, because these efforts will help shape the future of our community.

As you may know, the County Board approved the new noise ordinance earlier this year. As the communities of Arlington evolve, it was clear that the County's ordinances needed to be revised. Although Arlington is vibrant and growing, we also needed to ensure that we preserve the qualities of a peaceful, family friendly community. Our friend and neighbor, John Seymour, played a key role in the development of the new ordinance and continues to champion our community interests.

Following a packed house at our last WCA meeting held in March following the tragic death of our neighbor, Jennifer Lawson, in front of Nottingham Elementary, our Traffic & Pedestrian Safety (T&PS) Committee kicked off its Phase II. I am pleased to report that the membership continues to grow, and now includes the County Staff, the Arlington Police Department, Arlington Public Schools, and several civic associations for which we share borders. We are currently working closely with the County staff on possible mitigation measures for specific problematic locations in our community.

Also, we initiated the revision of the WCA Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP). The NCPs are very important.....they capture our vision of what our community will be in the future. They also are key in securing funding for community capital improvement programs. The current WCA NCP, last revised in 2001 is credited with numerous successful improvement initiatives. I share your interest in

## General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, October 30, 2014  
7:30-9:00 PM**

**Nottingham Elementary School  
Multi-Purpose Room  
5900 Little Falls Road  
Arlington, VA 22207**

### Topics:

**Neighborhood Conservation Plan  
Jonathan Levine  
WCA Rep to the Neighborhood  
Conservation Advisory Committee**

**Minor Hill Solar Panel Proposal  
John Morrill  
Arlington County Initiative to Rethink Energy**

**A Conversation with Jay Fisette  
Chairman, Arlington County Board**

ensuring that we maintain the beauty and appeal of our community, and continuing to positively influence future development in our community. To that end, we are updating the Williamsburg Neighborhood Conservation Plan! We cannot do this without volunteers, though, so please consider participating in the Williamsburg Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee. A small amount of your time will ensure that our community continues to be a beautiful and safe place for our families.

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 30th! --- Ruth

# Sycamore Street Median Delayed Until 2016

Construction on the median to be installed on Sycamore Street between the Williamsburg Circle and North 26<sup>th</sup> Street has been delayed until at least 2016.

Installing a median on Sycamore that reduces the lanes of traffic from two lanes to one each way was the No. 1 neighborhood conservation project voted on by members of the Williamsburg Civic Association, as such a median will help to slow traffic speeds and increase pedestrian safety. It also will assist with storm water management and be aesthetically pleasing.

The Arlington County Board approved \$1.2 million in funding for the median in October 2013, and even sought WCA member feedback on its construction at a 2013 WCA meeting. Construction was to begin this year.



Arlington Co. planners share Sycamore Street design with WCA members at Nov. 7, 2013, Williamsburg Civic Association meeting.

In a recent development, County staff informed the WCA that similar to other projects that have been delayed, construction likely won't begin until the spring or summer of 2016, and even then there are no guarantees.

Specifics for the delay were not provided. Potential reasons outlined in an email from County Staff referred to the fact that there are a lot of variables that go into such projects. Among them: staffing of design engineers in the Department of Environmental Services; changes in approvals related to new state requirements for permits related to changes in total pervious area; the "brutal winter" of 2014, which delayed the start of the construction season; and more.

WCA representatives will continue to monitor the process and keep members apprised of future developments.

## WCA to Update Neighborhood Conservation Plan

The Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan serves as the WCA's vision for future development and improvement of the neighborhood and makes specific recommendations on implementing that vision. The NC Plan typically forms the basis for the various NC capital improvement projects funded by Arlington County. Examples of such improvements are sidewalks, street lighting, traffic and pedestrian safety measures, park improvements and renovations, and other beautification projects.

The NC Plan takes into consideration aspects of our community that residents wish to keep, and those that residents wish to change. The WCA's NC Plan was last revised in 2001. The current plan can be found at: [http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/02/NC\\_Williamsburg\\_Plan.pdf](http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/02/NC_Williamsburg_Plan.pdf)

Ruth Shearer, John Seymour, Jonathan Levine and Brian Stout are leading the updating effort, and the input from the entire WCA community is not just welcome, but essential to this process.

The first, and easiest part of the process, forming a planning committee, has been completed. The planning committee is in the process of formulating a survey to be distributed to WCA residents. This survey is the backbone of the NC Plan. The planning committee is determining the contents of the survey, the distribution manner, and how to extrapolate data from the survey. It is the planning committee's hope that that the survey will be distributed in the fall of 2014. Please keep an eye out for it, and please participate in the survey. The WCA is made up of nearly 1,000 households, so an NC Plan that represents the true vision of the WCA depends on widespread participation.

NC Plan writing will begin right after survey tabulation. The planning committee will also undertake walking tours and seek comments from residents to assist in the writing process. The goal is to submit a plan to the full Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee for approval by mid-2015. In advance, we welcome your support and invite you to engage in a dialogue with us on the NC Plan at the October 30 meeting.

## With County's Help, Neighbors and Bishop O'Connell Reach Accommodation on Noise

Noise from the Bishop O'Connell High School athletic fields has been a long-standing problem for some members of the Williamsburg Civic Association. Residents of streets adjoining the school, in particular, have found that athletic field noise has increased substantially in recent years. The 2012 renovation of the school's athletic fields, together with the installation of synthetic turf and the partnership agreement with Marymount University for baseball games, has extended the athletic season and increased the number of athletic events taking place. At the same time, both Bishop O'Connell and Marymount University habitually play electronically amplified music for long periods to excite both athletes and spectators.

Fortunately, early this year Arlington County enacted a new noise ordinance. The ordinance imposes strict decibel limits on nearly all noise-emitting sources – including Bishop O'Connell. It establishes a daytime decibel level of 60 decibels and a nighttime limit of 55 decibels measured at the curb nearest the noise source or any property that receives the noise.

In response to neighborhood concerns and in light of the new ordinance, the County – at the joint request of both the neighbors and Bishop O'Connell – has undertaken noise monitoring on the streets adjoining O'Connell. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, staff of the County's Code Inspection Division visited the school and measured sound from both the O'Connell sound system and the portable sound system used by Marymount University. The goal of the County was to determine sound levels from the amplifiers that would comply with the Arlington Code. The measurements would also help Marymount engineer its permanent sound system – to be installed at the baseball field in the near future.

O'Connell and Marymount have agreed to maintain their sound systems so that amplified noise complies with the Arlington Code. The affected neighbors have expressed their appreciation to County staff and to Bishop O'Connell for helping to address this difficult and recurrent issue without the need for an enforcement action. The agreement reflects, the parties believe, an unusually collaborative effort by the County, the schools and the neighbors to build civility and to improve community/school relations.



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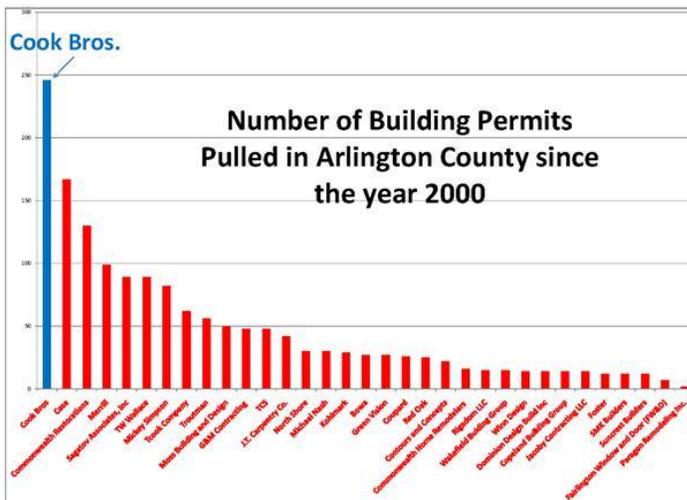
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## Dominion Virginia Power Proposes Solar Demonstration Project for Minor Hill

Minor Hill, the highest point in Arlington and a Confederate outpost during the Civil War, has been identified as a site for Dominion Virginia Power solar panels. If approved, Minor Hill would be the first of a number of Demonstration project sites to be proposed for Arlington County as part of Dominion Power's Solar Partnership Program, a project that authorizes the power company to construct and operate up to 30-megawatts of company-owned solar facilities on leased rooftops or on the grounds of commercial businesses and public properties throughout Virginia.

WCA executive committee members recently were briefed on this proposal by John Morrill, energy manager for the Arlington County Initiative to Rethink Energy, part of the Arlington County Department of Environmental Services. The benefits, thus far, appear to be a positive in that they promote energy sustainability and reduce air pollution.

How would it work?

Minor Hill is administered by Arlington County and serves as an important storage facility for Arlington County's drinking water supply. The water storage tanks buried under Minor Hill hold up to 24 million gallons of drinking water. Minor Hill also contains a large concrete structure that serves as the roof to two of the underground water storage tanks. The roof formerly served as outdoor tennis courts. The tennis courts were removed in the last decade and the roof is now vacant. Dominion Virginia Power's preliminary design proposes to install 2,000 solar arrays horizontally (nearly flat) on the concrete roof. Once installed, the arrays would generate from 500 to 600 kilowatt hours (equivalent to the daytime needs of approximately 200 homes).

An engineering feasibility study is currently underway. If the site is found to be appropriate and suitable for a Demonstration

project, Dominion Virginia Power would enter into a lease with Arlington County for an initial term of 15 years, with a 5-year renewal option.

According to Morrill, electricity generated by solar power is clean and produces no local air pollution or greenhouse gases. The array has no moving parts and operates silently. Installation would, the committee was advised, take several months and involve very modest construction activity. One of the principal goals of the project is to ensure that the installation of solar panels has no adverse effect on the public water supply or the grounds of Minor Hill.

Morrill has agreed to present on the solar panel proposal at the October 30 WCA meeting. We hope that Civic Association members living closest to Minor Hill will attend and participate.



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All proceeds go to Doberman Assistance, Rescue, and Education, a nonprofit all-volunteer local Doberman Pinscher rescue group, whose mission is to educate the public about Dobermans, assist owners in placing unwanted Dobermans, provide foster homes and veterinary care for rescued and relinquished Dobermans, and place Dobermans into loving homes through an adoption program. DARE's primary concern is the health and well-being of the Dobermans, and as such, the organization provides support, consultation, and camaraderie to the adoptive families--not only through the adoption process but also throughout the lives of our Dobermans.

## Arlington Named No. 3 Spot to Live in U.S.

Arlington has been named to the top 10 of the Top 100 Best Places to Live from Livability.com. More than 2000 cities were evaluated for the study, which analyzed communities on data points ranging from economics and housing to education and health care. Arlington took the #3 spot in the nation and was ranked higher than any other jurisdiction in the DC Metro region.

## Even So, Crime Unfortunately Exists

While it would be great to say that our region is completely crime free, sadly, a number of our neighbors have experienced burglaries in just the past few months. Arlington County reminds us all to be vigilant about safety. While away, do whatever you can to make it appear as if someone is home. Invest in security systems. Put lights, radios and TVs on timers. Make sure your house is lit all the way around. If you go on vacation, ask a trusted neighbor to pick up any leaflets, mail or newspapers outside your home. And don't post on Facebook that you're going to be out of town. If you do come home and suspect a burglary has occurred, don't enter your home. Call Arlington County Police at 911 immediately.

## Photo IDs Required to Vote

If you're registered to vote in Virginia and plan to vote in the next election, be sure you bring a photo identification with you to the polling center. A new Virginia law now requires that all voters show a government issued i.d. with a photo on it. This can be your driver's license, a U.S. passport, or other government issued photo i.d. IDs with expiration dates must be current or not expired more than 12 months before the election.

## Arlingtonian Opens Two the Moon

Arlington resident Johanna Braden is pleased to announce the September 2 opening of Two the Moon, a new gift shop in the Williamsburg Shopping Center. The shop, decorated in a French farmhouse theme, features a number of unique items created by Arlington artists and vendors, as well as other talented artisans from across the United States. Braden recently retired from Virginia Hospital Center following a 38-year career as a nurse. Her dream had always been to own a gift shop, and that dream has now come a reality. Visit the shop and take advantage of the 10% off coupon on Page 5 of this newsletter.

## WCA Officers

President: **Ruth Shearer**  
 Vice President: **Eleanor Smith**  
 Secretary: **Jim Lunson**  
 Treasurer: **Jim Toronto**  
 Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Rep: **Jon Levine**  
 Newsletter Editor: **Sonia McCormick**  
 At-Large Rep: **Ellen Jones**  
 WCA Webmaster: **Mark Moran**  
 Delegates to Arlington County Civic Federation:  
**Rick Barry, Herschel Kanter, Anne Rudd & Eleanor Smith**

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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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- Working on conservation plan projects     Organizing social events     Helping with the newsletter