



Williamsburg Civic Association Newsletter

OCTOBER 2015

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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.

Particularly noteworthy is the work of the Williamsburg Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP) Committee. As you know, we initiated the revision of the NCP earlier this year. The first phase was the design and distribution of the WCA NCP Survey that many of you took the time to take and return to us. The survey results are the foundation of the NCP, so I sincerely appreciate your efforts and participation. The next step is the analysis of the survey results and the writing of the NCP.

Since our last WCA meeting, we have had several additional members contact me to help out on the WCA NCP Committee---but we can use a few more volunteers. The WCA NCP is critically important to the WCA since it captures our vision of what our community will be in the future. It is 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 ensuring that we maintain the beauty and appeal of our community, and continuing to positively influence future development in our community. So please consider participating in the Williamsburg

General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, November 5, 2015
7:30-9:00 PM**

**Nottingham Elementary School
Art Room – Room 152
5900 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22207**

**Topics:
Neighborhood Conservation Plan
WCA Officers**

**Arlington's Tree Canopy and
Tree Planting/Preservation Efforts
Vincent Verweij, Urban Forester
Arlington County Department
of Parks & Recreation**

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, 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 November 5th!

--- Ruth

Neighborhood Conservation Plan Survey Completed, Volunteers Needed to Write, Edit, and Produce Final Report for Arlington County

As many of you know, the Williamsburg Civic Association decided last year to update its Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP). The NCP is a written document that sets forth the Civic Association's vision for future development and makes specific recommendations for implementing that vision. Most important, the NCP provides the basis for various Neighborhood Conservation funding projects approved by the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee. The Committee meets monthly and nominates plan-based improvement projects to the County Board for funding. The nomination process gives priority to neighborhoods with new or updated NCPs. The program has become a model for communities throughout the country and represents a unique opportunity for residents to enhance their quality of life.

Where Are We Now with the NCP Revision

During the winter and spring of 2015, Civic Association volunteers drafted and circulated a survey to assess neighborhood assets, needs, and objectives. We received more than 180 completed surveys — a respectable response rate of 18 percent. The survey gathered demographic data and explored residents' views on such topics as overall neighborhood likes and dislikes; local schools and commercial establishments; land use and development; traffic and pedestrian safety; local parks and recreation; and neighborhood beautification desires; among other issues.

Our planning committee has analyzed some of the data and expects to conclude its analysis before the November meeting. At the meeting, we hope to provide a brief overview of the data.

What Needs to Be Done

Although we have gathered much of the data necessary to draft the NCP, considerable work remains and we need the assistance of other volunteers.

We still need to:

- update our neighborhood history;
- complete an inventory of existing conditions and neighborhood infrastructure needs (curb, gutter, sidewalk, drainage and lighting), and confirming the accuracy of the County's own Neighborhood Infrastructure Plan for our Civic Association;
- draft the relevant sections of the NCP — neighborhood goals, land use and zoning, street conditions, transportation/traffic management, housing, public facilities and services, commercial/business areas, historic preservation, urban forestry, other challenges and opportunities (e.g., aging in place).

Fortunately, the County makes staff available to assist the Civic Associations in collecting data and in satisfying the elements of the NCP. In addition, many recent NCPs are posted on the County's web-page and serve as useful models for our efforts. Nevertheless, the task is a formidable one and we ask you for your help. If you're interested in neighborhood history; have any experience with drafting, editing, layout and production; have an interest in or experience with any of the specific topic areas explored in the NCP; or simply have time to invest in your neighborhood's improvement, please let us know.

Jonathan Levine is the project editor and would love to hear from you. Please contact him at jonathanlevine@verizon.net.

78% of WCA Residents Expect to Remain in their Home over Next Several Years

How many neighborhoods can say that 78% of their residents plan to remain in their home for the next several years? That was a finding of the recent Neighborhood Conservation Survey, completed by 18 percent of WCA residents this past summer. A small percentage (6%) said they plan to move away, while 16% said they don't yet know. With results like that, one can only assume that neighbors are indeed happy about where they live. According to the survey, that seems to be the case.

In addition to citing the WCA neighborhood's convenient proximity to Washington, D.C., the Metro, I-66 and shopping, survey respondents said they enjoy the walkability of the neighborhood, quality of the schools, urban/suburban vibe, friendliness of their neighbors, and low crime. What they dislike are commuter traffic, "McMansions," the cutting down of trees (mostly a result of the building of new houses on small lots), and some dangerous crosswalks. Or said differently, they'd like to see less commuter traffic, a slow-down of the building of large homes on small lots, more green space, a better canopy, and traffic lights at dangerous intersections.

While location is a plus, traffic and pedestrian safety remain a concern. Speeding was cited in the NC survey as the top concern, with 55% saying it is a problem. When asked in an open ended question where speeding is the biggest problem, more than 20 respondents said it is students and adults entering and leaving Bishop O'Connell High School. The streets cited as the ones where speeding most often takes place are Williamsburg Blvd, Sycamore Street, Little Falls Road and John Marshall Drive.

Traffic volume also poses a challenge. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents expressed concerned about residential streets being used as commuter cut-throughs, while traffic around all of the schools was cited as a concern. With four schools situated in or near the Williamsburg Civic Association boundaries, our neighborhood experiences some unique challenges in the areas of traffic and pedestrian safety, litter, noise, crowds, nighttime disturbances and more. Nottingham Elementary School received the highest percentage

Survey Results Continues on Page 4



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of responses for concerns about pedestrian safety (67%) and traffic (60%), with Bishop O'Connell a close second on traffic (49%). Residents also indicated that Bishop O'Connell poses challenges in the areas of nighttime disturbances (92%), noise (88%), litter (80%) and crowds (76%). Parking creates problems at all four of the schools in our community. According to the survey results, Bishop O'Connell has the most parking issues (56%), with Nottingham (44%), Tuckahoe (38%) and Williamsburg (22%) not far behind. (Keep in mind that respondents could check all that applied.)

The two local shopping centers in the WCA received mixed reviews. The majority (60%) said their needs are met by the commercial establishments, but 34% said they are not and 6% said they had no opinion. When asked what types of retailers residents might like to see in the future, neighbors had a number of ideas, including a coffee shop, bakery, neighborhood bar, family eatery, or a specialty grocery store.

Overall, residents expressed satisfaction in most of the categories in which they were surveyed. While a number cited suggestions for beautification and traffic calming improvements, an overwhelming majority were satisfied with the neighborhood's low crime rate, noise levels, lack of health hazards, low levels of litter and graffiti, and challenges associated with pets (although there were several comments about a need for dog owners to clean up after their pets and for barking to be controlled). County services also were rated highly, with libraries being rated No. 1, followed by public schools, fire/ambulance, police and trash pick-up.

A more comprehensive analysis of the results is being tabulated by WCA officers and some of the data will be presented at the Nov. 5 WCA meeting. Thank you to all who took the time to complete the survey, which will provide the basis for an in-depth Neighborhood Conservation Plan that will help us determine the future of our neighborhood.

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Update on Sycamore Street Project

The timeline of construction on the median that will be built on Sycamore Street between the Williamsburg Circle and 26th Street starting in 2016 has not changed, but there is a new wrinkle that needs to be ironed out. This issue has to do with the property lines of the Birch-Payne cemetery located on the corner of 28th St. and Sycamore. According to County staff, the property lines currently extend into the street such that the existing sidewalk, curb and gutter, and a portion of the traveled asphalt road is located on private property. The County's records for the cemetery, including who currently owns or is responsible for the cemetery, and who is buried in it and where (possibly under the sidewalk?), are sparse. The file history, which is from 1970, indicates that the grave markers/stones had been looted and the location of the burial sites was unknown at that point. The owner is a tax-exempt charity, so there is no tax bill to find contact information. County staff are not optimistic about their ability to efficiently legalize this use, as it could take years and involve the courts. One option is to skip any construction on the private property portion. If anyone has any information on who owns or maintains the cemetery, please contact Jonathan Levine at jonathanlevine@verizon.net.

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Meet Vincent Verweij, Arlington Urban Forester

Vincent Verweij, one of Arlington's urban foresters, has accepted our invitation to attend the Nov. 5 WCA meeting. He will share his extensive knowledge about the value of trees in a suburban setting; the struggle in Arlington to preserve and enhance the tree canopy in the face of developmental pressures; partnerships with the Arlington Tree Stewards and others to promote tree stewardship; laws and regulations governing the planting and replacement of trees in Arlington; tree maintenance and hazard response; and the role of Arlington's urban foresters, among other topics.

Mr. Verweij, who holds a master's degree in natural resource management from Virginia Tech, has been an urban forester for three years. In that brief period, he has issued a large number of fact sheets and guidance documents dealing with urban forestry. All of these can be found on the Dept. of Parks and Recreation web page at environment.arlingtonva.us. In light of the increasing number of tear-downs and in-fill development in Arlington in general and within our own civic association, we particularly look forward to hearing Mr. Verweij's views on tree preservation and maintenance requirements during development.

Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation Memorial 5K & Fun Day to be held November 21

The inaugural Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation (JB-LF) Memorial 5K and Fun Day will take place on Saturday, Nov. 21 at the Knights of Columbus in Arlington. The goal is to attract 1,500 runners and raise \$100,000 to fund pre/post natal wellness and healthcare for economically vulnerable mothers and babies in Arlington County.

For those not familiar with Jennifer, she is the 39-year-old who tragically lost her life on Little Falls Road in February 2014 as she was dropping her kids off at Nottingham Elementary School.

If you would like to register for the race, visit <https://vhcf.ejoinme.org/JBLF5K>. If you'd like to become a sponsor, please visit <https://vhcf.ejoinme.org/sponsorJBLF>.

To learn more about the foundation, please visit www.jenniferbushlawsonfoundation.org

VA Power, Arlington County Cancel Solar Demonstration Project for Minor Hill

Last fall, as many residents may recall, Arlington County and Dominion Virginia Power were exploring the feasibility of installing solar panels on Minor Hill. As part of a partnership with the county, Dominion Virginia Power proposed to construct and operate a solar panel array that would generate 500 to 600 kilowatt hours daily (equivalent to the daytime needs of approximately 200 homes). The solar array would be located on the roof of the underground water reservoir tanks currently located on Minor Hill. At our Winter 2015 civic association meeting, representatives of Arlington County and Dominion Virginia Power discussed the proposal and described the ongoing feasibility study.

John Morrill, energy manager for the Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) recently informed us that Dominion Virginia Power has raised concerns about water ponding/puddling on the flat roof of the tanks and also with the extent of the tree canopy surrounding the roof, which could limit the productivity of the panels. It estimated that the available rooftop area would not be large enough to generate the necessary energy.

While the project may not be viable as a Dominion Virginia Power project, Mr. Morrill did advise us that the county does have some interest in installing its own smaller solar system. Any decisions on such a project are at least two to five years in the future, however.

Interestingly, as part of the Williamsburg Civic Association's recent resident survey, respondents were asked whether they supported Dominion Virginia's proposal to install solar panels on Minor Hill. More than two-thirds supported the project (68%), with only 15% opposed. (Approximately 17% had no opinion.)

Minor Hill Water Main Capital Improvement Project Continues

The water main project that started on Williamsburg Blvd. to the east of N. Harrison St. has now made its way to the Minor Hill reservoir. The capital improvement project includes the installation of new 20" and 24" Ductile Iron Pipe water mains to interconnect four existing underground storage tanks.

After completion, this project will provide a back-up supply main to the Minor Hill reservoir site and the ability to circulate water in and out of the underground storage tanks in a more efficient manner. As a result, the water quality from the Minor Hill reservoir site will improve due to reduction in the water age.

Several trees had to be removed to connect the pipes but the County has communicated that it will plant a total of eight new trees at the Minor Hill site after the construction of the project is completed.



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E-CARE Event Rescheduled to Oct. 31

The E-CARE event that was scheduled for Oct. 3 but canceled due to inclement weather has been rescheduled to Oct. 31 at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School. E-CARE allows residents to safely dispose of household materials and recycle bikes, small metal items, shoes, clothing and much more. Due to the inconvenience, the County will waive the \$20 recycling fee for televisions and the \$15 recycling fee for computer monitors. For more information, visit www.arlingtonva.us/recycle or call (703) 228-6832.

EFC Metro Bike & Ride Facility Expected to be Completed by End of 2015

WMATA expects to complete construction of the Bike and Ride facility in the Kiss and Ride lot of the East Falls Church Metro Station by late 2015. The facility will house up to 100 bikes in an enclosed space with steel mesh walls, bright lighting, and multiple security cameras. It will be similar to a Bike and Ride facility already completed at College Park. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Lisa Schooley of WMATA External Relations, at (202) 962-1754, or via email at lschooley@wmata.com.

Beware of Jury Duty Telephone Scam

The Arlington County Police Department and Sheriff's Office are warning the public about a missed jury duty telephone scam targeting County residents. Residents have received a phone call from an individual claiming to be a lieutenant with the Sheriff's Office. The victim is accused of failing to appear for jury duty and a warrant for their arrest is to be issued unless a fine is paid. The suspect asks for a "good faith" payment to be made immediately with a debit card and PIN number. If you receive a call of this nature, immediately hang up and verify the claim by calling the Arlington County Sheriff's Office at (703) 228-4460. If you become a victim, please call the non-emergency police line at (703) 558-2222.

Task Force to Study Fire Station #8 Future

The Arlington County Board voted Oct. 20 to appoint a task force to review viable sites for placing an upgraded and expanded First Station #8, including its current location on Lee Highway and N. Culpepper Street. The task force will review viable sites that would improve fire/EMS response times and would not adversely affect response elsewhere in the county. A recommendation will be due by mid-March 2016.

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