



March 2012

Arlington Ridge Civic Association

P.O. Box 2443, Arlington, VA
Website: www.arcaonline.org

ARCA MEMBERSHIP MEETING, THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 7PM
Aurora Hills Community Center

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 1

- ♦ *County Board Elections*
- ♦ *County Budget*
- ♦ *23rd Street Bus Stop*
- ♦ *Nominating Committee*

Page 2

- ♦ *Development Updates:*
CCCRC, Crystal City
PenPlace

Page 3

- ♦ *Schools Update*
- ♦ *Arlington Villages*
- ♦ *Open Door Sessions*
- ♦ *PEG Grants Update*

Page 4

- ♦ *ARCA Meetings*
- ♦ *ARCA Points of Contact*
- ♦ *Calendar of Events*

*Wakefield's Winning
It's Academic Team*



VOTE MARCH 27 FOR A NEW COUNTY BOARD MEMBER

Candidates are Audrey Clement (Green Party); Libby Garvey (D) & Mark Kelly (R)
Find out more about where the candidates stand on the issues by visiting their websites: Audrey Clement: <http://www.audreyclement.org>;
Libby Garvey: <http://www.libbygarvey.com> and
Mark Kelly: <http://www.kellyforarlington.com>

2013 ARLINGTON COUNTY BUDGET

The proposed 2013 budget restores the midweek day to all six Arlington branch libraries, and the public is encouraged to write to the County Board in support of this move. The County is also proposing a ½ cent real estate tax increase.

Email: countyboard@arlingtonva.us,

Mail: County Board, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201

Public Hearing: Tuesday, March 20, 7pm. County Board Room

Public Tax Hearing: Thursday, March 22, 7pm. County Board Room.

RELOCATION OF METRO BUS STOP ON 23rd STREET

Arlington County is planning to construct a bus stop shelter in front of single-family homes at 603, 605 and 607 S. 23rd St. just west of 23rd and Fern. This is being done without notification or involvement of the immediately affected neighbors or civic association. This type of construction in front of a single family home will set precedent of concern to ARCA and it threatens to blur the Crystal City BID boundary, which was set to protect the residential nature of mid and upper 23rd Street. Finally, it will cost these homes their street parking spots and threatens their property values. This project was first raised in 2010 when a neighbor questioned a County worker on the street and learned of the County plan. Neighbors sent e-mails in protest, and ARCA and AHCA went on record in opposition. Arlington County did not respond to these concerns and all involved believed the project to be a non-starter. This month, neighbors again learned through the appearance of County workers that a contract had been signed and the project had been scheduled for construction. A meeting with County Board Chair Mary Hynes revealed that WMATA had misplaced all 2010 inquiries and objections from neighbors.

Currently, there are 17 bus stops on 23rd Street. Neighbors affected by this shelter are requesting that the County consider alternate locations, and/or elimination of this one single stop. If you would like to support your neighbors in their efforts, please e-mail the Arlington County Board at countyboard@arlingtonva.us.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2012-13 ARCA BOARD

At the March meeting ARCA is supposed to elect a nominating committee of 3 regular members to propose a slate of officers for 2012-13. Please let us know if you are interested in working with a dedicated group of neighbors, who combine a passion for their neighborhood with a sense of humor. We promise you won't be bored. We also have open slots for volunteers in many different capacities. Let us know if you are interested at arcaneighbor@gmail.com.



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DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

CRYSTAL CITY CITIZENS REVIEW COUNCIL (CCRC)

On February 15, ARCA, AHCA, and Crystal City representatives on the Council met with Arlington County staff to discuss what community services and amenities would be important to making Crystal City "a complete community." The sector plan had included a list of such services as a community center, educational facilities, EMS/fire station, childcare facilities, etc. A LEEDS neighborhood development list catalogued additional needs and services: a library, senior care, medical and dental services, and more. The discussion was generally about how to usefully expand or modify the list. For example, members noted that more than one kind of grocery store is desirable—for smaller shopping trips or specialty needs—and ready access to big-box stores, like Costco, although they are not located in Crystal City, is important to many residents. Additional needs were suggested: hardware, office supply, tool rental, music, books, repairs, and others. Developers expect resident demands to create a market for particular goods and services, but the process of making that happen will need support. There was also discussion about the extent to which residents within the wider 22202 area share services and amenities with Crystal City, and are potential customers for what it may have to offer; it was often noted that needs and expectations will change over time, and that part of the Council's job is to track how well these needs are met.

A NEW BUILDING FOR CRYSTAL CITY'S SKYLINE

On February 21st, the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) of the County Planning Commission met to consider the first redevelopment proposal under the Crystal City Sector Plan approved by the County Board a year ago. Vornado is proposing to demolish an existing structure located on Crystal Drive between 18th and 20th streets, and replace it with a new, 24-story office building, totaling 743,000 square feet, that would, at 340+ feet in height, tower over every other Crystal City structure. This proposed structure would be the largest in Northern Virginia. With two members on the CCRC, ARCA has a "seat at the table" during the SPRC's consideration of Vornado's proposal, as well as future proposals to redevelop Crystal City consistent with the County's Sector Plan. Thus, while ARCA representatives will have the opportunity to offer suggestions about the size, height, location, design and utilization (e.g., office, residential, hotel, retail, etc.) to the Planning Commission and County Board, it remains to be seen what influence ARCA will have in the redevelopment of Crystal City over the coming years.

PENPLACE PROPOSAL MOVES TO REVIEW PROCESS

The development of PenPlace is moving forward without County response to neighborhood concerns. Questions submitted by ARCA in November, 2011 on behalf of our membership have still not been answered in spite of repeated reassurances by County staff.

On February 13, 2012 developer Vornado and County staff presented to the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) a proposal for development of PenPlace that was the highest and densest of the massing study options offered last summer to the Long Range Planning Commission. The plan presented is a 5 building complex of 2.1 million square feet of commercial space. There is no mixed residential use in the developer plan for this parcel. This proposal requests the County Board grant an extraordinary exception from current zoning for this site; an exemption the Board has indicated it is tempted to make in order to receive millions in developer proffers for Long Bridge Park swimming facility, the Columbia Pike Trolley, and to a lesser degree, affordable housing. Under current zoning Vornado is only allowed (by right) to build 930 residential units and a hotel with approx. 582 hotel rooms. If the extraordinary exception is approved the County Board will grant Vornado the right to:

Building heights of 330 feet total elevation. This is twice as high as the neighboring office buildings and the Marriott Residence Hotel already on that block, and equivalent to building heights more commonly associated with Rosslyn.

1,809,000 square feet of office space (over half of which is DoD secure office with 82' security setbacks). This is more office space than exists in Mark Center, the secure office complex at the intersection of I-395 and Seminary Road.

They will convert hotel use to office, which will increase traffic and per square foot, actually generate less revenue for the County than office.

ARCA is concerned that if this extraordinary exception is approved, **it will set a precedent allowing Vornado to redevelop other parcels** they recently acquired in Pentagon City, including the 81 acre River House land.

And most alarming, **they will be granting 2,265 parking spaces** which result in 4,500 trips per day to and from the site. As with all development proposals, the developer is required to submit a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA). The TIA submitted by Vornado is insufficient for a project of this scope; while the site sits almost directly on I-395, and proximity to I-395 is a major justification for the developer for the increased density, the study does not include an analysis of I-395 and the capacity for the on and off ramps that lead to the site; and another significant concern is the data utilized is more than 2 years old and predates the Brac moves to the Mark Center that added additional strain on the I-395 corridor; and the data was collected in the first 2 weeks of January when traffic is light, thereby under-representing the current congestion; lastly, a separate neighborhood study leans heavily on County data that claims traffic on Arlington Ridge Road is actually lighter now than in 1970. As was learned too late when Mark Center was built, a flawed traffic study that underestimates the amount of traffic can jeopardize the commute for hundreds of thousands of commuters.

Please call or email the County Manager, Barbara Donnellan at 703-228-3120, countymanager@arlingtonva.us, and the Arlington County Board at 703-228-3130, countyboard@arlingtonva.us, to express your concern over the lack of a rigorous and comprehensive transportation impact analysis, accompanied by a concrete mitigation plan designed to prevent impact on the surrounding community.

SCHOOLS UPDATE

March 21, 7:30pm More Seats for More Students: School Board Work Session. Kenmore Middle School. 703-228-6004.

OAKRIDGE

Thursday, April 12: Gala Fundraising Auction, Doubletree Hotel, Crystal City.
OakridgePTA@gmail.com

WAKEFIELD

Wakefield It's Academic Team 4th in State!

Congratulations to the team, who came 4th in the entire state behind Thomas Jefferson, Maggie Walker (Richmond) & Western Branch (Chesapeake).

Technology Expo April 21: Wakefield boasts a state-of-the-art technology center, and each spring they host a Tech Expo where students provide examples of their work to be judged by members of the professional community.

PEG GRANTS INSTALLATION UPDATE

Prospect Hill: Improvements have started with tree pruning; County staff is working with park naturalists to evaluate the site for bat houses.

1-395/Ridge Road: Final section of the ground cover is underway with bids for installation/landscaping requested by the County.

Fort Scott Park: Preliminary boulder placements have been marked to optimize pedestrian safety while controlling erosion and not impacting tree roots. Installation will be at the end of March.

EADS PARK RENOVATION

Major renovations are complete, including turf replacement, irrigation, retaining wall and paths. Due to weather related delay of sod placement, the Bermuda grass has not rooted sufficiently, and fields will not be playable until Aug/Sept. 2012.

See arcaonline.org for more information on all articles contained in the Newsletter.

PLACE INITIATIVE, OPEN DOOR SESSIONS

The new 2012 PLACE (Participation, Leadership and Civic Engagement) is well underway. The "Open Door Monday" sessions have begun and at the first Gunston event County Board chair Mary Hynes heard neighbors' issues, which included parking and safety at the top end of Arlington Ridge Road, PenPlace development density, long-term traffic and

transportation initiatives, the proposed 2013 budget, restoration of library branch hours, and tree canopy management. The next Gunston "Open Door" is scheduled for April 9 at 7pm.

Another focus of PLACE is to reach out to all community groups (civic/condo associations, senior groups, clubs, non profits, church groups etc) to ensure they are identified on the civic map and linked in an effort to promote enhanced working relationships with each other and the county. Five open house sessions will be held March 15/17 to kick-off this effort and all interested are invited to attend. For additional information on PLACE or to sign up for the Open House go to <http://arlingtonplace.us/>

ARLINGTON VILLAGES PROJECT

The "Wisdom Works" team of Arlington County's Dept. of Parks and Recreation is developing a conceptual framework for creating aging-in-place villages in neighborhoods across Arlington. These are neighborhood-helping-neighbor support groups for seniors, a volunteer network (a "village") that works cooperatively with County agencies and non-profits to provide such services as transportation, assistance with home maintenance, and daily check-in contact, the services that could enable many seniors to remain comfortably and securely in their own homes as a viable alternative to institutional care. By attracting volunteers of all ages, a neighborhood village provides a framework for strengthening the intergenerational ties in a community and builds a system for meeting the needs not just of today's seniors, but also tomorrow's. Currently villages exist in neighboring jurisdictions--such as DC's Capitol Hill Village and Dupont Circle Village--but none in Arlington. For a copy of a fact sheet on *Developing Villages in Arlington*, please email arlingtonvillages@gmail.com.

ARCA WELCOMES FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORS

On March 6, the Arlington Civic Federation approved the motion to include the Forest Hills Community Association in ARCA. These neighbors have worked with ARCA for many years and we welcome them as official voting members.

DO YOU HAVE THE GARDEN OF THE YEAR?

Rock Spring Garden Club will hold its 2012 Garden of the Year competition for Arlington's best residential garden. Gardens can be nominated by a homeowner, neighbor or friend. Applications at <http://rockspringgardenclub.org>

ARCA MEETINGS

All meetings are held at Aurora Hills Community Center, 735 S. 18th Street and begin at 7pm.

March 15, ARCA bi-monthly meeting, 7pm**Agenda:**

Arlington Bike Presentation

PenPlace

Nominating Committee for 2012-13 Officers

March 14, Aurora Highlands Civic Assn. Meeting

7pm, Aurora Hills Community Center

Civic Federation Representative Martha Moore will discuss Edge Planning.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thru March 18 The Magical Lamp of Aladdin. Arlington Children's Theatre. Kenmore Middle School. Age 4 and up. <http://www.encorestage.org>

Thru March 25 Light in the Darkness: Synetic Theater presents the Czech theatre company Tantehorse's production that combines poetry, physical theatre and modern dance. 1800 S. Bell St., Crystal City. <http://www.synetictheater.org>

March 30 – April 28 On the Waterfront: American Century Theater. Gunston. <http://www.americancentury.org>

April 7 – 27 Crystal Run 5K Fridays: Run a professionally timed and certified course along a fast and fun route through Crystal City. Fridays at 6:30pm. 2121 Crystal Drive. <http://pacersevents.com/crystalrun5Kfridays/index.html>.

April 7 Brahms Sonatas for Violin and Piano: National Chamber Ensemble, Rosslyn Spectrum. <http://www.nationalchamberensemble.org>

April 9 County Board "Open Door" Session at Gunston Community Center, 7 – 9pm. Meet with the County Board in an informal session.

Through April 15 Brother Russia: A Rock Musical. World premiere at Signature Theatre. <http://www.signature-theatre.org>

SIGN UP FOR OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

Email: arcaneighbor@gmail.com

ARCA OFFICERS & CONTACTS

President	Katie Buck	703-271-0208
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Vice President	Molly Watson	703-549-6457
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Treasurer	Paul Hammer	703-981-1294
NCAC Rep	Natasha Pinol	703-920-9423
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Pen Place	Nancy Swain	703-684-7830
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Beautification	Bonnie Flynn	703-920-1157
Beautification	Chick Walter	703-519-9487
Schools	Laura Stone	703-685-4371
Webmaster	Chris King	703-931-4842

We would love to hear from you!

Please send comments and questions on the contents of this newsletter to ARCAnighbor@gmail.com

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Want to make your house more energy efficient? Arlingtonians can apply to receive cash rebates for home energy improvements through the Home Energy Performance with EnergyStar program, supported by the EPA and US Dept. of Energy, and sponsored by Virginia based Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP). You can reduce energy use and costs by improving insulation, air sealing, efficient lighting, upgrading appliances and receive low interest financing. More information at <http://leap-va/nova>.

DISPOSE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Saturday, April 7, Thomas Jefferson School 8:30am – 3pm. Bring in computer monitors, TVs, small metal items, clothes, linens, electronics, eyeglasses and serviceable bikes.