

AFCA April 2021 Minutes
April 21, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

Esther Bowring (President) called the meeting to order.

No section reports.

LRCC will open in July.

April 24 is AF park cleanup day

Guest Speaker: Samia Byrd, Arlington County Chief Race and Equity Officer

Ms. Byrd discussed this new County position and her goals in the role. She explained that the purpose of the position is to move Arlington beyond diversity (representation) and inclusion (participation) to equity. Equity is not equality (which would be applying the same approach to different people, expecting the outcome to be the same, which assumes everyone has access to the same things in the same ways); rather, equity assumes a different starting point, that lack of access is due to the system, not individuals. Specifically, racial equity is closing the gap so that race is no longer a predictor of one's success.

As one example, a recent study showed there is a 10-year difference in life expectancy by race/community within Arlington County (people of color make up 38% of the County's population, an increase from 21% in 1980). Ms. Byrd also noted that nearly all white workers in the County earn at least \$15.00 per hour, but this is not true for Arlington residents who are Latino or Black.

Ms. Byrd said that issues related to race/racism are the root of structures on which this country and its government were founded. Thus, racism is always the elephant in the room. It is hard and uncomfortable to discuss, but being specific matters. She explained that because of the construct of race, centering race is primary in identifying how to resolve other areas of intersection and that targeting efforts to promote equity, developing models and strategies that can be used for marginalized populations, will actually improve outcomes for everyone. The plan is to identify where systemic issues exist and where government perpetuates them, and then determine how to help dismantle them in partnership with the community. This is why the County adopted an Equity Policy, and Ms. Byrd's role is not just to ask the questions but to embody them. Each department is in the process of establishing an equity team and an action plan, but it is important to remember that racism has been an urgent issue for 400 years, and it won't be solved overnight.

Neighborhood attendees asked questions regarding climate equity and Arlington's tree canopy; where structural change may be necessary within County government to promote equity; how the County can better address issues of equity with accessibility, particularly for people of color who have disabilities; Arlington's history of segregation and the impact on housing and

educational inequity; and how the County Board and School Board can work together better to promote equity and what Arlington residents can do. It was suggested that one way AFCA and AF residents can make a tangible difference on equity is to more closely connect conceptual support of these goals to how we specifically approach the policy issues that we weigh in on as a community and neighborhood association. Meeting attendees expressed interest in discussing this idea further.

Ms. Byrd and her team can be reached at RaceAndEquity@arlingtonva.us.

Guest Speaker: Duke Banks, Arlington County Civic Federation

Mr. Banks requested AFCA support of the Friends of Gulf Branch as well as Long Branch Nature Center. [I don't have the specifics recorded; he was going to send materials to Esther directly]

Duke Banks, Vice President of the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center, spoke about the nature education and conservation programs and services that Gulf Branch and other Nature Centers in Arlington County provide and the continued support these Nature Centers have received and need from the County. Mr. Banks requested Arlington Forest's support to encourage the County Board to provide funding in future Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) when it votes in June/July 2021. Mr. Banks advised that he would send a letter to AFCA President, Esther Bowring, requesting AFCA's support for County funding in the CIPs for Arlington's Nature Centers. The AFCA President will share this letter with Arlington Forest residents via the AFCA Listserv and then AFCA will conduct a resolution vote on this topic during AFCA's May meeting.

Civic Federation Report (Sal D'Itri)

At its most recent meeting, the CivFed heard a presentation on the Police Practices Working Group report published in February. Attendees discussed community relationships with the Police Department.

Sal D'Itri, Arlington Forest's CivFed Representative, provided a summary of the April 20th meeting of the Arlington County Civic Federation (CivFed). The meeting included presentations by several speakers on Data Privacy, Civic Data Aggregation, Data Security, the Current Status of the Police Practices Group, a Revenues & Expenditures Draft Resolution on County Fiscal Oversight and other topics. A resolution by CivFed's Revenue Committee for increased funding for the County Auditor's position to improve its audit function was voted on and passed unanimously at this meeting.

These presentations as well as video and audio recordings of this meeting are available at www.civfed.org

Traffic (Liz Kauffman)

Liz has been in discussion with the Bluemont neighborhood about Carlin Springs Road and concerns about more cut-through traffic.

Neighborhood Conservation Plan (Hutch Brown)

All aspects of the draft plan are completed and ready to be approved.

The Arlington Forest Neighborhood Conservation Plan (AFNCP) coordinator, Liz Kauffman, and editor, Hutch Brown, are reviewing the County's requirements in order to finalize the Plan for presentation to Arlington Forest residents and a final vote in September. If supported by Arlington Forest residents in September, then it will be submitted to the relevant Arlington County staff for review and feedback. This feedback will be incorporated into the AFNCP before the Plan is submitted to the County Board for approval.

We encourage you to read the AFNCP at <http://www.arlingtonforestva.org/Conservation.html> and provide your comments to and provide your comments to Liz Kauffman and Hutch Brown at lizkauffman@yahoo.com and hutchbrown41@gmail.com.

May 19 Meeting Plans (Esther Bowring)

The group discussed that it did not seem advisable yet to gather in person, even spread out at the Lubber Run Amphitheatre. Esther will consider how to conduct the vote for AFCA officers electronically. Natalie Roisman volunteered to help coordinate family-friendly fun neighborhood activities to take the place of the picnic this year.