



The Arlington Forester

Vol. 64, Number 3

Arlington, Virginia

November 2022

Virtual AFCA Meeting—Funding for Arlington County Stormwater Management

AFCA invites you to join our monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 16, at 7 p.m. A representative from Arlington County Environmental Services will join us to speak about a county plan to shift from funding Arlington's stormwater management program through a sanitary district tax based on a property's real estate assessment to a stormwater utility fee based on the amount of impervious surfaces (like roofs and driveways) on a property.

To join the meeting, you can come in person to the Hickory Room in the Lubber Run Community Center

or you can participate through Zoom by entering the following URL into your browser between 6:50 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16: <https://tinyurl.com/yeykfkfb>. (If you have never used Zoom, you can view a short tutorial at <https://zoom.us/resources> by clicking on Joining & Configuring Audio/Video.) Alternatively, you can dial in to the meeting at 301-715-8592, where you will be prompted to enter meeting number 857 0727 7460 and passcode 854351. You might also be prompted to hit the # sign one or more times. This call-in number will be active starting at 6:50 p.m.



Call for Dues

Your annual AFCA dues help get this newsletter delivered to your door as a service to you and the entire neighborhood. Dues also pay for tree grants to residents and donations to our neighborhood schools. Dues support the AFCA website (www.arlingtonforestva.org), which contains a detailed neighborhood map, a history of Arlington Forest, back issues of this newsletter, and more.

COVID has limited AFCA's ability to raise funds in other ways, so please pay your dues today. You can pay online through the AFCA website or clip out the coupon on this page and deliver it with a \$10 check to your section representative in the enclosed envelope. Add an optional donation if you can—every little bit helps! If you include your email address, you will be added to the AFCA listserv, which sends a few messages per month with news of neighborhood interest.

AFCA MEMBERSHIP DUES ANNUAL DUES \$10 PER HOUSEHOLD

Deliver this cutout and your check payable to "AFCA" to your respective AFCA section representative.

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Northside: Joel Yudken, 104 N. Columbus St. 22203

Southside: Sean Lyons, 34 S. Park Dr. 22204

Dues: _____ Donation: _____ Total: _____

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AFCA Hybrid Meeting 7 p.m. November 16, Zoom or in Person

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The Arlington Forester is the official publication of the Arlington Forest Citizens Association, Arlington, VA. A nonpartisan, nonsectarian publication serving the residents of Arlington Forest, the *Forester* welcomes articles, newsbits, letters, and photos focusing on noncommercial events or issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish eight times per year (Sep to Nov and Jan to May). The deadline for submissions is the first of the month. Email your submission of up to 400 words—less, if you include a photo—to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.

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AFCA October 2022 Meeting

On October 19, 2022, AFCA President Esther Bowring convened the AFCA meeting with about 25 people in attendance, all online except for two at the Lubber Run Community Center, along with the invited speaker, Dave Schutz. Dave is part of the Task Force in Government Election and Reform (TiGER), named by the Arlington County Civic Federation in October 2020 to study the prospect of ranked-choice voting for Arlington. The Virginia legislature passed a bill in 2020 authorizing localities to use ranked-choice voting instead of the current winner-take-all system, in place in Arlington since 1938. The goal of ranked-choice voting is to give less well-represented groups a voice in governance. The current system allows a fraction of the population to determine board membership, reducing the breadth of representation. The task force's main recommendations to the county include adopting ranked-choice voting; expanding the Arlington County Board to seven members (to reflect the growth in county population since the five-member board was established in the 1930s); and holding county board elections at 2-year intervals, with three board members up for election in one cycle and four members in the next. The task force also made corresponding recommendations for the Arlington School Board.

A planned discussion of a proposed new county stormwater utility fee system was postponed to a future meeting. The new fee would be based on the amount of impervious surfaces on a property, replacing the current utility bill structure. The county's website indicates a county board vote in April 2023 on the utility fee proposal. Esther noted that the new foot bridge over Lubber Run is now scheduled to be installed in the second quarter of 2023. She also mentioned the damaged foot bridge over Arlington Forest Branch between Southside and Barcroft, noting that the county supports replacing it if we can get agreement from Dominion Power and adjacent property owners. Esther mentioned that Sparrow Pond restoration will begin in 2023. Esther extended thanks to Sue Huff, Cheryl Roessel, and others for their work on the Northside traffic circles, aided by a \$500 grant from Earth Sangha matched by \$500 from AFCA for purchasing native plants. Esther thanked Joan Blake for managing the distribution of *The Arlington Forester* by teens paid to deliver the newsletter. She also thanked Allison Kennett for volunteering to help Joan. Finally, Esther followed up on last month's discussion of AFCA hiring a lawyer to explore the implications of the Arlington Forest restrictive covenants (posted online on the AFCA website). Esther discovered that AFCA cannot be the client; it has to be a property owner or group of owners, so the proposal is moot. The AFCA Holiday Party is currently scheduled for December 9 at the Lubber Run Communication Center, with updates to follow.

Homegrown National Park: Northside's Traffic Circles

By Sue Huff



Some years ago, Arlington County created four traffic circles along N. 2nd St., with the understanding that their upkeep would be the responsibility of the community, entirely dependent on volunteers. Although the circles have had varying degrees of success in slowing traffic, they have hosted a tangle of vines and noxious weeds, along with a few native plants entwined with the invasives. The dense growth has become dangerous by obstructing drivers' view.

Earlier this year, a group of neighbors started an email discussion and then met on the Abingdon St. circle in early March. We agreed to follow the Master Gardener plan to avoid tilling; instead, we put down layers of newspaper topped with mulch from the county. Ultimately, we hoped to be able to plant native forbs, sedges, and grasses directly into the prepared soil. Turnout and enthusiasm from neighbors were spectacular! It was exciting to have so many people show up week

after week for this project. We first removed a number of plants based on size or low ecological value. We cut back bermuda grass and laid down our newspaper and cardboard, then added a thick layer of mulch. Over the following weeks, we repeated the process in the other circles. Volunteers have kept up with several circles, and they are now ready to plant; unfortunately, we didn't remove enough invasives from the Abingdon circle, and we have to start over there.

This summer, AFCA President Esther Bowring and I submitted a proposal to Earth Sangha—a nonprofit public charity based in our area—to secure a matching grant of \$500 worth of seedlings. They accepted our bid, and the AFCA board approved our share in the budget. We now need to make plant choices from the list that Earth Sangha has offered us. We hope that some of these will coincide with seedlings that Arlington Forest gardeners may have in their own gardens and be willing to share. We are focused on choosing native plants that attract insects and on enriching the soil and creating habitat for pollinators and birds. We are also limited to plants that grow no more than 3 feet tall for visibility across the circles. Since the circles will continue to battle longstanding weed seeds, we will likely choose plants with vigorous root systems, such as wild ginger and golden ragwort. If you would like to help plan the selection or join our ongoing efforts, please email me (sue.huff139@gmail.com).

If you have knowledge of native plants, please share your expertise and thoughts! You don't have to help with the planting, but of course we will be looking for volunteers for that. It will be important to maintain our seedlings through the winter. Maintaining the circles will clearly be an ongoing challenge, but by regularly weeding, we will create a pollinator corridor through Arlington Forest as part of Dr. Douglas Tallamy's Homegrown National Park—a very rewarding achievement, and perhaps an inspiration to Foresters planning their own gardens. Cheers, and thank you to our wonderful volunteers! Last spring, I was certified as an Arlington Regional Master Naturalist; though still a novice, I'm more than ever convinced of the importance of adding native plants to attract and interact with insects, birds, and other critters, the keystone to nature's extraordinary tapestry. Happy gardening!

Volunteers Needed

Our long-time newsletter volunteer who picks up *The Arlington Forester* from the printer and coordinates delivery needs help. We need a volunteer responsible for three newsletter issues per year. Your time commitment would be 4 to 5 hours per issue. To volunteer, please

contact Joan Blake at joanblake43@gmail.com. Also, Joan is retiring next summer, so we need someone to take over primary responsibility for newsletter delivery beginning with next September's issue. Please let Joan know if you're interested!

Arlington Should Adopt "Missing Middle"

By the NAACP Arlington Branch

(letter to the Arlington County Board, May 23, 2022, slightly abbreviated)

Arlington's shameful history of racist, exclusionary zoning policies needs reforming, and we urge the county board to adopt the Missing Middle Housing Study phase 2 draft framework. The framework is a first step in a series of necessary actions to reverse the damage done to Black and Brown residents by governmental and nongovernmental acts designed to segregate and disempower. ... The recommendations successfully balance the needs of existing single-family-home residents by keeping design standards the same while opening previously closed single-family-home neighborhoods to diverse residents ... in R-5 to R-20 zones. ... [The] 70 percent of Arlington's residential land reserved for single-family homes will potentially provide desperately needed housing to many more residents. We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of eightplex units because these will be the most attainable for residents making the area median income. ... The proposed zoning changes could result in additional housing attainable to up to 39 percent of Black households, 39 percent of Latino households, and 60 percent of Asian households in the Washington metro area, according to county staff analysis.

The proposed zoning changes also would aid environmental justice by allowing more low- and

moderate-income workers to live closer to their places of employment, thereby reducing the negative environmental and social consequences of long commutes. Effects of the proposed changes on tree canopy should be minimal [because] the current pattern in Arlington is for small single-family homes to be replaced by very large homes [with the same lot coverage as the proposed multifamily housing]. Allowing missing middle housing to be developed in R-5 to R-20 zones is a foundational element of improving housing affordability broadly, encouraging greater racial and economic integration, and expanding access to homeownership.

However, this necessary step is not sufficient. ... We strongly urge the county to commit to increased funding for affordable homeownership that targets first-generation homeowners as well as other programs that seek to affirmatively address the past harms of de jure and de facto racial segregation and associated discriminatory policies. The proposed zoning changes in the draft framework, in and of themselves, will not repair the harm done to communities of color in Arlington in the last hundred years. However, the proposed Missing Middle framework is an important first step to addressing the legacy of racial discrimination and segregation in the housing market.



Paul Cachion, MBA

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We Are Now Empty-Nesters!

My wife Sylvie and I just dropped our two daughters off at college (Zoe at San Diego State University and Mia at UVA) and are now empty-nesters. It's exciting, poignant, scary, weird and awesome all at the same time. It is most certainly a big change for us.



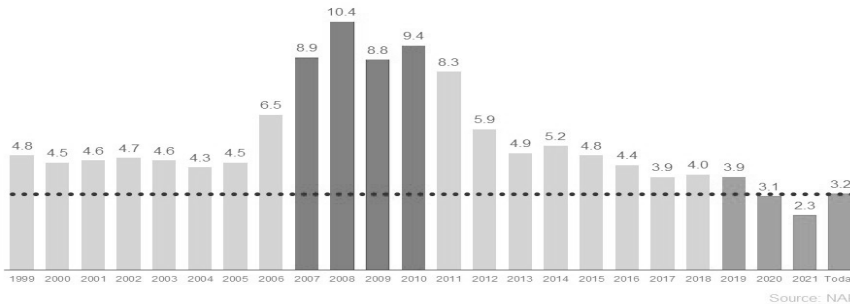
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With all the headlines and talk in the media about the shift in the housing market, some think this is a housing bubble. For historical context, there were too many homes for sale during the housing crisis (many of which were short sales and foreclosures), and that caused prices to fall dramatically. The graph below uses data from the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR) to show how the months' supply of homes available now compares to the crash. Now, unsold inventory is at a 3.2-months' supply at the current sales pace, which is significantly lower than the last time. There just isn't enough inventory on the market for home prices to come crashing down like they did last time, even though some overheated markets may experience slight declines.

Supply of Homes Is Nothing Like Last Time

Annual Average of Months' Supply of Homes for Sale, 1999-2022



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Dental: Something Wicked in the Land of

Ahhhs

Financial: Good Habits to Have (Financial Help Book)

Is "Missing Middle" Sound Policy?

Adapted from a presentation by Michael O'Grady to the Green Valley Civic Association on October 3, 2022. O'Grady, an Arlington-based research economist, authored a recent op/ed piece on the same topic in the Washington Post, online at <https://tinyurl.com/286axwtc>.

Believe it or not, I wish I didn't have to write my recent op/ed in the Washington Post. I wish the county did a proper and thorough analysis from the beginning. The county is applying a very generic economic model of supply and price that hasn't happened in housing for quite some time. Newly constructed housing will always be more expensive than older housing—even if builders build the exact same thing. Ergo, the older housing that would be torn down and replaced under the Missing Middle Housing Study (MMHS) proposal is the affordable housing in Arlington. Getting rid of it will simply raise market prices, which will raise property taxes and rents.

There is also an economic phenomenon known as supply-induced price. In the housing market, we've seen builders dictate that new houses must be McMansions or luxury townhouses and condos. And this will be a take-it-or-leave-it proposition because they know they can sell to someone else—so the price increases even more. Building more high-end units will attract more buyers from out of the area with more money to spend than many current residents. Some of these buyers will pay a lot of money just to have an urban lifestyle, and they don't care about setting down roots. Other buyers are cold, calculating financial firms that want to acquire a property and extract as much money as possible by either flipping or renting it. The MMHS will not solve this. Proponents use words like "could" and "possible" to distract from the fact that there is no reason to believe that builders will do anything different from what they've done for the last 20 years—which is to erode communities with increasingly unaffordable housing.

Arlington County, the NAACP, and others are right to examine how structural racism has influenced our institutions and communities. The biggest barriers to minority homeownership are income inequality and

discrimination by lenders, and the MMHS offers no solutions. It doesn't make sense to cannibalize our existing affordable housing for merely the possibility of newer affordable housing. Although I would agree that housing supply needs to increase rapidly, the numbers offered up don't make sense. To get the claimed supply and prices, Arlington would need to take an area the size of Ashton Heights and Alcovia, demolish all the houses, and build nothing but 400-unit apartment buildings with the density of Rosslyn. If they're building only duplexes and quadplexes, you would need an area about four times this size.

The MMHS is based on a philosophy called New Urbanism, which the overwhelming research has shown is a failed idea. Government can't simply zone its way out of this. The truth is that the Arlington County Board can't solve Arlington's housing problem on its own: they don't have the money and they don't have the influence. Only a regional approach with meaningful cooperation among all jurisdictions—and with state and federal backing—can solve the problem at this point. But the county leaders aren't pushing for this; instead, they've fed themselves and the rest of us this MMHS delusion. If we are to get any good result, we have to be honest with ourselves in Arlington. We must start by setting aside the current charade.


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Correction to October Newsletter

The October 2022 newsletter reported on a discussion about the Missing Middle Housing Study with Arlington County Board members at the September AFCA meeting. According to the report, participants at the meeting commented that the board, in 2005, had approved changes for setbacks in the Arlington Zoning Ordinance. The 2005 ordinance amendment (online at Arlington Zoning Ordinance Amendments) did not mention setbacks, which have remained the same (25 feet in front and back, 8 and 10 feet on the sides) from at least 2002 until today, according to county records.

Instead, the 2005 amendment reduced maximum lot coverages for single-family homes from a standard 56 percent to much smaller sizes, depending on zoning district. For the R-6 zoning district, for example, the maximum lot coverage went down to 40 percent. The 2005 amendment also added a maximum main building footprint and a maximum cap: for R-6, the maximum footprint became 30 percent, with a cap of 2,160 square feet. Accordingly, the 2005 amendment made it more difficult to replace a single-family home with much larger housing, not less so.

However, the amendment also showed that the county has the authority to use lot coverage and other restrictions to reduce the allowable size of new housing in residential neighborhoods like ours without violating private property rights under Virginia law. Perhaps that was the point of the comment.



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County News

Long Branch Nature Center Celebrates 50th Anniversary

On November 5, the Long Branch Nature Center celebrated its 50th anniversary with an open house, including music, a food truck, and speakers. The nature center supports a variety of outdoor and indoor activities related to nature, including activities for kids, birding walks, stream monitoring, invasive plant removals, and classes for the Arlington Regional Master Naturalist program. Located near the confluence of Long Branch with Four Mile Run, it's a great resource for the neighborhood.

Missing Middle Housing Study

In September and October, the Arlington County Board hosted information sessions and community conversations on its plans for changing single-family residential districts like ours to allow for multifamily housing with from two to eight units. The Missing Middle Housing Study is now in its third and final phase, with the board scheduled to release proposed changes to the Arlington Zoning Ordinance in November and to vote on them in December. Find out more online at [Missing Middle Housing Study](#).

Stormwater Utility Fee Coming?

Arlington County is considering a shift in funding for its stormwater management program from a sanitary district tax based on a property's real estate assessment to a stormwater utility fee based on the amount of impervious surfaces (like roofs and driveways) on a property. Properties with more surfaces that contribute more stormwater runoff would pay a higher rate. Find out more online at [Arlington Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study](#) and [Arlington Stormwater Utility Fee Estimator](#).

Ranked-Choice Voting Considered for Arlington

Arlington County is considering a proposal to adopt ranked-choice voting for county elections. Under ranked-choice voting, if a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, the candidate would win. If no candidate receives a vote majority, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and that candidate's votes go to the second choice. The process continues until a remaining candidate gets more than half of the vote. Find out more online at [Arlington County Ranked-Choice Voting](#). For the Arlington County Civic Federation's recommendations on ranked-choice voting, visit <https://www.civfed.org/about-us/committees/tiger/>.

Around the Forest

Scarecrow Making



Three families made Halloween strawmen on October 22 at the Arlington Forest Shopping Center (see photo). Greenbrier resident John Naland led the event for a seventh year.

Leaf Collection

If you leave fallen leaves on the ground, natural processes will take care of them and wildlife will benefit, including insects and birds. However, Arlington County will collect leaves in our neighborhood during Thanksgiving week (November 23-28). On the weekend before, simply rake your leaves onto the curb away from parked cars. Don't use bags; if you want to use bags together with your green cart for routine trash pickup, you can find them at the Long Branch Nature Center at 625 South Carlin Springs Road.

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Community Calendar

The coronavirus pandemic has forced AFCA to limit the number of community events, with some down as tentative—to be held if conditions allow.

Next AFCA meeting:

Wednesday, November 16, 7 p.m.

Topic: Adoption of a stormwater utility fee

Lubber Run Farmers' Market:

Saturday mornings at the Barrett Elementary School parking lot.

Holiday Party:

Friday, December 9, at the Lubber Run Community Center

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup:

Saturday, April 22, 2023 (tentative)

Home and Garden Tour:

Saturday, May 6, 2023 (tentative)

Annual AFCA Picnic:

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Annual Yard Sale:

Saturday, May 20, 2023 (tentative)

Barcroft School News

By Samantha Bell

To recognize Bullying Prevention Month, students and staff had a spirit week at the end of October. Everyone dressed up in their favorite hats, mismatched clothes, and pajamas. The PTA-sponsored Outdoor Movie Night featuring "Hotel Transylvania" on October 28 was a big hit with Barcroft families. The students and staff celebrated Halloween with our annual parade around the school.

There are several school holidays in November and December. Thanksgiving break is from November 23-25. Winter break is from December 19 to January 3. The PTA is planning pop-up morale boosters for the teachers with holiday treats. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @BarcroftEagles and on Facebook at Barcroft Elementary School PTA.



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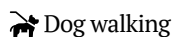
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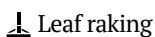
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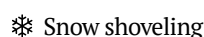
These Arlington Forest youths are ready to help. To be added or deleted, email newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.



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Amy Mashkuri		571-643-5883	✓	✓							
Sabrina Saunders	sabrina_saunders@icloud.com	202-531-2247	✓	✓		✓*			✓	✓	Tutoring
Evan Dempsey	Evan.cw.dempsey@gmail.com	703-559-9690	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Anna D'Itri		703-346-3467	✓	✓		✓*		✓	✓	✓	
Gabriel D'Itri		703-346-3467			✓		✓				Lawn mowing
Julia Green	joangreen32@gmail.com	703-785-4293	✓	✓				✓		✓	
Gavin Kraft	kenneth.d.kraft@gmail.com	314-775-7008	✓	✓						✓	
Madeline Lund	madelinelund11@gmail.com	571-447-6968	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Avery McGrann	snooz_ette@yahoo.com	571-225-2484	✓	✓					✓	✓	Weekends only
Anna McLaughlin	annamc1012@yahoo.com	571-550-1680	✓	✓		✓*		✓		✓	
Ciara McLaughlin	ciarahmclaughlin@gmail.com	703-712-9215				✓*			✓	✓	
Reid Messman		703-469-1988	✓	✓							
Shea Messman		703-469-1988				✓*					
Jacob Nadherny	jacob@nadherny.com		✓	✓						✓	
Matthew Petruccelli	tony.petruccelli@gmail.com	703-629-0425					✓				
Nicky Petruccelli	tony.petruccelli@gmail.com	703-629-0425		✓			✓				Cats only
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Emma Weaver		703-875-8185				✓*					
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Niittisha Choudhary	Niittisha@gmail.com	703-981-1229	✓			✓		✓			Tutoring
Tyler Dinan	chrisbettdinan@aol.com	703-525-5763	✓		✓	✓	✓				College breaks only
Annie Madden	Lacrosse.donuts@gmail.com	703-220-3357		✓		✓*					
Cory Pearl	cory.pearl99@gmail.com	571-447-0852	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓		✓	
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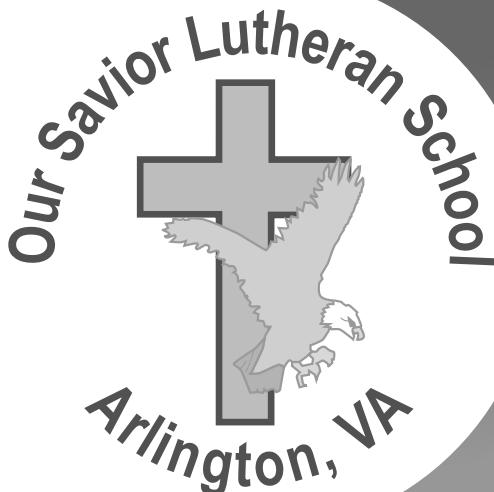
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