



The Arlington Forester

Vol. 65, Number 3

Arlington, Virginia

November 2023


AFCA Meeting—Arlington's Forestry and Natural Resources Plan

AFCA invites you to join our monthly Zoom meeting on Wednesday, November 15, at 7 p.m. We will discuss the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan that Arlington County has proposed (for an overview of the plan, see the article on page 3). David Howell, who lives in Arlington Forest and has worked with the county on the plan, will present it to us.

To join the meeting, enter the following URL into your browser between 6:50 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday,

November 15: <https://tinyurl.com/36kjp4rp>. (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 833 7797 7793 and passcode 231584. 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, with information on trees and parks, trails and bridges, the Lubber Run Amphitheater, traffic and pedestrian safety, and more. Dues also pay for tree grants to residents and donations to our neighborhood schools. Dues support the AFCA website (www.arlingtonforest-va.org), which contains a detailed neighborhood map, a history of Arlington Forest, back issues of this newsletter, and more. COVID limited AFCA's ability to raise funds in other ways, so please pay your dues today. You can use PayPal on the AFCA website or clip out the form on this page and deliver it with a \$20 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 \$20 PER HOUSEHOLD

Deliver this form and your check payable to AFCA to your respective AFCA section representative:

Greenbrier: Tom Smialowicz, 26 N. Granada St. 22203

Northside: Liz Grossman, 128 N. Columbus St. 22203

Southside: Julie Kirchhoff, 4828 Arlington Blvd. 22204

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AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. **November 15** Through Zoom

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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 and photos focusing on issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish monthly from September to November and January to May. The deadline for submissions is the first of the month. Email your submission of up to 400 words—preferably with a photo—to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Articles on controversial issues are welcome but do not necessarily reflect the views of AFCA and will be marked as opinion.

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AFCA October 2023 Meeting

On October 18, 2023, AFCA President Esther Bowring opened the monthly AFCA meeting on Zoom. About 15 people participated. Esther thanked Alex Miner for volunteering to audit AFCA's books this year. She also noted that AFCA's expenses have exceeded revenues in recent years but that the shortfall would vanish if just half of our neighborhood's households paid their annual AFCA dues. AFCA is also conducting fundraising activities, such as a benefit pizza night at Bricks Pizza on October 19. The single greatest AFCA expense is the neighborhood newsletter, partly because printing costs went up last year. After two volunteers looked into ways of offsetting or reducing newsletter costs, AFCA decided on a modest increase in monthly advertising rates in line with industry standards. In addition, AFCA decided to cut back the length of more newsletter issues from 16 to 12 pages to save costs. The volunteers recommended staying with the current printer, Minuteman Press, for reasons of price, quality, reliability, and convenience for newsletter pickup.

Bev Johnston spoke about safety issues at the intersection of N. George Mason and N. Park Drives. She reviewed a letter of concern that she and Laura Strine recently sent on behalf of AFCA to county officials (see the article on page 6). The county replied that it is working across department lines to prepare a response. At the meeting, someone suggested improved lighting at the intersection crosswalk to make it easier for drivers to see people crossing when visibility is poor, particularly at night. AFCA encourages Foresters to express their traffic safety concerns at the Arlington County Board's Monday open-door meetings or through Vision Zero stakeholder groups. Neighbors can contact Vision Zero Project Manager Christine Sherman Baker at 703-228-3780 or Public Engagement Manager Nate Graham at 703-228-3112.

AFCA Corresponding Secretary Janet Irwin summarized Arlington's Deer Management Project, launched in spring 2023. The county has solicited public input and gathered information on the abundance of deer in Arlington and management options for protecting deer, parks and other natural areas, and other wildlife that depends on habitats affected by deer. This winter, a contractor will report on its findings for managing deer, including possible recommendations, which will then go through a round of public review.

Esther reported that the county manager is meeting with neighborhood association presidents to discuss next year's county budget. Proposed budget cuts of about 7% across county departments are likely, as are increases in property tax rates and home assessments, due to a plunge in property tax revenues expected from Arlington's declining commercial real estate sector.

Arlington's Draft Forestry and Natural Resources Plan

By Hutch Brown

Arlington County uses a Comprehensive Plan with multiple components to set county priorities and guide investments. One component, the 2019 Arlington County Public Spaces Master Plan, recommended that two subplans—the Urban Forestry Master Plan and the Natural Resources Management Plan—be updated to reflect accomplishments and new perspectives on Arlington's natural assets. In 2020, the county initiated a multiyear process of combining the two subplans into a single Forestry and Natural Resources Plan for conserving and managing trees, forests, and other natural resources in Arlington County. In early 2022, the county announced that the new plan would become the 12th component of the Comprehensive Plan.

The 170-page draft plan is now posted on the county website. The plan takes a holistic approach to natural resource management based on “biophilic” principles following Arlington's decision in 2020 to join the Biophilic Cities Network. A biophilic city makes its natural systems accessible to citizens through parks, urban wildlife, walkable environments, and more. Biophilia is also about the spirit of a place—a community's emotional investment in conserving nature in urban environments.

The draft plan starts by outlining Arlington's natural history (the evolution of our landscapes over time). Next, the plan projects a vision of “natural and built environments” managed “holistically as an integrated urban ecosystem,” with the benefits of a healthy environment made available to everyone. The plan outlines core principles, such as the inherent value of nature and the dependence of “human health and vibrant communities” on natural systems. The plan also describes Arlington's 20th-century transition from rural to urban landscapes, resulting in degraded streams, high population densities, few remaining natural areas, and an inequitable distribution of trees and other benefits from nature among Arlington's neighborhoods. According to



the plan, public surveys have suggested six “areas of action for community engagement,” such as protecting biodiversity and improving tree-planting practices.

Most of the plan is dedicated to delineating four “strategic directions” (goals), along with the “actions” and “action steps” (programs, initiatives, and policies) for achieving each goal. The four goals are (1) conservation; (2) climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience; (3) biodiversity; and (4) operational effectiveness. For example, the conservation goal is to “increase and protect tree canopy, natural areas, and biophilic features throughout the county;” one corresponding action is to “sustain Arlington's tree canopy and

natural areas,” partly by maintaining 40% tree canopy cover countywide, making 70% of Arlington's canopy trees native to our area by 2035, and preventing further loss of natural areas in Arlington.

The draft plan—like other components of Arlington's Comprehensive Plan—is aspirational in nature, with no specific projects proposed. As the plan puts it, “the strategic directions are a roadmap to a greener future where Arlington's ecosystem thrives and the benefits of nature are available for all our residents and visitors.”



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Sad News

By John Naland and Esther Bowring

Longtime resident and neighborhood champion Chris Scheer died suddenly on October 8, 2023. He and wife Karen moved from Atlanta to Arlington Forest (Southside) in 1984 with their infant daughter Rachel for Chris's new job as public affairs director for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In 1988, when their son Jonathan was born, they relocated to a larger home in the 200 block of North Granada.

Chris was the consummate volunteer who never said no to requests for help. Need someone to organize and run AFCA's Holiday Party? Chris and Karen did that for more than 20 years. Need someone to manage *The Arlington Forester*? Chris, assisted by Karen, edited the newsletter and oversaw its production, distribution, and ad sales for an unmatched 22 years. The Scheers organized and ran AFCA's annual May picnic for 20 years, with master grill-er Chris providing burgers and hot dogs with his trademark smile. Chris also helped to organize AFCA's annual May yard sale. Chris strongly supported the Lubber Run

Amphitheater, attending many county board meetings to help rescue our beloved theater in the woods. When the amphitheater was reestablished, Chris assisted the Lubber Run Amphitheater Foundation in many ways, including ushering at performances and writing thoughtful thank you notes to donors.



Chris was a member of the Air Force and retired from the reserves as a lieutenant colonel. In retirement, Chris became a substitute teacher in Arlington Public Schools. An avid fitness advocate (running, cycling, swimming, and working out), he loved biking to elementary schools and interacting with the children, especially at Ashlawn, where he developed a special bond with the PE teachers.

Over many decades, Chris poured his time and talent and his love for Arlington Forest into many different projects and activities. He was always doing something positive for the neighborhood. As one *Forester* put it, Chris was "the face of Arlington Forest." We will remember Chris's terrific smile and good cheer, seeing him in his garden or talking with neighbors. Chris was a fantastic husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed.

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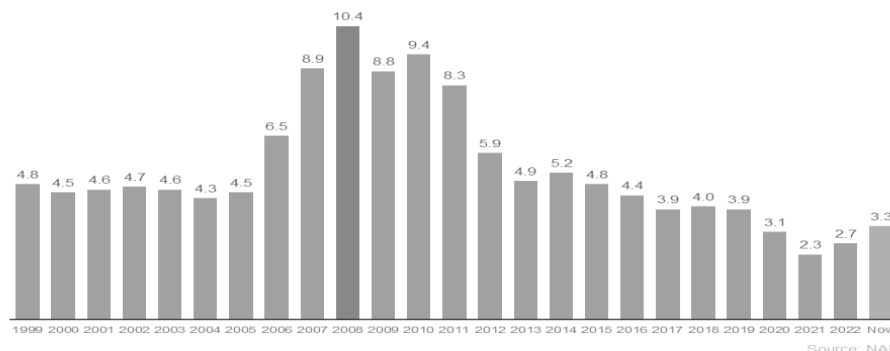
Ahhhs

Financial: Good Habits to Have (Financial Help Book)

For the housing market to crash, there would have to be too many houses for sale, but the data doesn't show that happening. Although housing supply did grow compared to last year, it's still low. The current months' supply is below the norm. The graph below shows this more clearly. If you look at the latest data, compared to 2008, there's only about a third of that available inventory.

Average Annual Inventory of Homes for Sale

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Dangerous Intersection

The piece is based on reporting in ArlNow on October 2 and a followup letter from AFCA to Arlington County's Transportation Division and Vision Zero Project.

On October 2, two separate car crashes with injuries occurred at the busy Northside intersection at N. Park Dr. and N. George Mason Dr. (adjacent to Barrett Elementary School and the Lubber Run Community Center). The intersection has stop signs on N. Park Dr. and pedestrian-activated flashing beacons on N. George Mason Dr. The beacons give pedestrians added protection in crossing the road, but limited sight visibility for drivers trying to cross or enter the four busy lanes of N. George Mason Dr. has led to many accidents over the years, and activities at the community center have made the intersection busier than ever. The two most recent incidents bring the total number of "reportable accidents"—ones resulting in injuries, deaths, or at least \$1,500 in damage—to three so far this year. The intersection has averaged three to four such car crashes annually since 2017, leading the county to conclude last year that four-way stoplights are needed. However, the stoplights could take up to 3 years to install. A county spokesperson told ArlNow that the county has yet to earmark funds from the Capital Improvement Program for the needed traffic signal.



On behalf of AFCA, Bev Johnston and Lora Strine of the AFCA Pedestrian Safety Committee wrote a letter of concern to Arlington County officials. "Two reportable accidents in one day are too many," the letter began, also referring to the many "unreported near-miss accidents with cars and pedestrians." The authors urged the county to move "faster and differently" to improve safety until the traffic signal is installed. They invited county officials to join our neighborhood in exploring such interim options as "improved travel lane signs and markings, speed feedback indicator signs, a traffic circle, and speed limit reduction" and in monitoring the intersection to enforce the speed limit and ensure that cars stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

The letter concluded by asking county officials four key questions: (1) What are the schedules for securing funding, developing engineering plans, and installing the traffic signal at N. George Mason Dr. and N. Park Dr.? (2) What is the schedule for installing a speed enforcement camera on N. George Mason Dr. near Barrett Elementary School? (3) What actions have the officials taken to communicate and coordinate traffic enforcement in our area with the Arlington County Police Department and what response have they received from police? (4) What are their plans for working with our community to take interim steps to reduce the risk of accidents at the intersection while we wait for the planned traffic signal?

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Barcroft School News

By Samantha Bell

The PTA hosted a Parent and Caregiver Listening Session in English and Spanish on October 19. Leaders from VOICE, Barcroft parents, and PTA members joined at a round table to discuss substance abuse and behavioral health and hear related thoughts and concerns. On October 27, the PTA also hosted an outdoor movie night at the school. The school recognized bullying prevention month with a spirit week during the week of October 30. Students dressed up in pajamas, hats, sports gear, mismatched clothes, and Barcroft Blue. The school counselors delivered lessons about bullying awareness. Barcroft held its schoolwide Halloween parade, an annual tradition.

Upcoming events include Thanksgiving Break (November 22-24); a restaurant fundraiser at Ledo Pizza, 1035 S. Edgewood St. (November 28, 11 am-10 pm); and Winter Break (December 21-January 1). You can support the Barcroft PTA by linking your Harris Teeter card (www.harristeeter.com/together-in-education); the Harris Teeter Barcroft code is 4238, and you need to relink every year. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @BarcroftEagles and on Facebook at Barcroft Elementary School PTA. You can contact barcroftptapresident2024@gmail.com if you would like to support the PTA or have any questions.

Community Calendar

Next AFCA meeting: Wednesday, November 15, 7 p.m.

Invasive weed removal, Lubber Run Park: Saturday, December 2, 1-3 p.m.

Holiday Party: Friday, December 8, 7 p.m., at Barrett Elementary School

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup: A Saturday in April 2024

Annual AFCA Picnic: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Annual Yard Sale: A Saturday in May, 2024

Turnaround Day: A Saturday in June, 2024

AFCA Meetings

Topics are tentative.

November 15, 2023: Forestry and Natural Resources Plan

January 17, 2024: Neighborhood issues (damaged bridges and more)

February 21, 2024: School issues

March 20, 2024: Native trees and gardens

April 17, 2024: Pedestrian/traffic safety

May 15, 2024: Neighborhood traffic



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County News

Hearings on Draft Forestry and Natural Resources Plan

On December 4, the Arlington County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP), a new core element of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan. On December 16, the Arlington County Board will consider adoption of the FNRP, which sets forth ways of sustaining trees and conserving Arlington's natural assets in the spirit of biophilia (see the article on page 3).

Revised Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

Following a hearing by the Arlington County Planning Commission on October 30, the Arlington County Board held a meeting on November 11 on whether to approve an update of the Historic and Cultural Resources Plan (HRCPP), a core element of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan. First adopted in 2006, the HRCPP guides Arlington's historic preservation goals and actions. The updated plan establishes five main focus areas—community engagement; incentives; partnerships; regulations; and technology, information, and tools.

Crime Rates Up

According to an annual report by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the rate of crimes such as assault, burglary, and auto theft in our area rose from 16.8 per thousand people in 2021 to 18.3 in 2022. Arlington County's rate rose from 15.9 crimes per thousand people in 2021 to 19.7 in 2022, making it higher than the regional average but lower than elsewhere in the urban core, which also includes Alexandria (20.8 crimes per thousand people) and Washington, D.C. (40.6 crimes per thousand people).

Missing Middle Court Case

Last March, Arlington County issued a new zoning ordinance allowing the construction of multifamily housing with up to six units in single-family residential neighborhoods like ours. In response, 10 Arlington homeowners filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction against the new zoning ordinance for violating state law. In a hearing on October 19, a judge rejected Arlington County's request to dismiss the lawsuit. On November 16, the parties will meet with the judge to schedule a trial date.

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Around the Forest

Holiday Party

Allison Kennett is leading a team in arranging the annual neighborhood Holiday Party. This year, the party will be on Friday, December 8, at 7 p.m. at Barrett Elementary School. (The party is normally held at the Lubber Run Community Center, but Fridays in December were already booked.) If you have questions, contact Allison at allison.kennett@gmail.com.

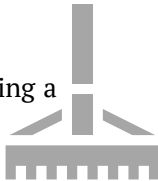


AFCA Acts to Cut Costs

AFCA is working to trim costs and bring expenditures in line with income, partly by raising annual household dues from \$10 to \$20 per year. Other steps include reducing the length of this newsletter to save printing costs and raising prices for newsletter ads to help offset an increase in printing costs last year.

Volunteers Needed to Pull Invasive Weeds

Stephanie Martin of Greenbrier is leading a team of volunteers to help make Lubber Run Park free from plant invaders so that our native species can thrive. Volunteers will meet at the Lubber Run Amphitheater and work from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 2. To register, contact Stephanie at stephmartin60@aol.com.



Protecting Lubber Run Park

A team of three volunteers organized by the Arlington Master Naturalist Program turned out on a pleasant September afternoon to pull invasive weeds in Lubber Run Park. The park is mostly free of invasives, thanks to volunteers in the past, but untreated gaps remain and patches of nonnatives still crop up. The volunteers cleared an area of Japanese hop, an aggressive nonnative vine, along with Asiatic dayflower, with its tiny blue blooms. Next, they pulled invasive porcelainberry and wineberry near the foot bridge over Lubber Run. They ended the day by pulling English ivy near the trail leading from the foot bridge up to N. George Mason Dr. The volunteers filled nine big trash bags while also leaving English ivy draped over branches to die. Many passersby thanked the volunteers for their work.


Fall Leaf Collection


Northern Virginia is reaching peak fall foliage, so Arlington County's annual leaf collection service will soon begin. Crews will make two passes through neighborhoods in November and December. The first pass through Arlington Forest will be on November 22-27 (but not on Thanksgiving), the second on December 13-16.

Southside Bridge Removed



A short trail leads from S. Aberdeen St. in Southside across Arlington Forest Branch to Barcroft, a handy cut-through for school children and for people on neighborhood walks. A storm in May 2022 heavily damaged the foot bridge over the brook. In mid-October, Arlington County finally determined that the bridge could not be repaired and had to be removed; within a week, the bridge was gone. The county estimated that installing a new bridge will take at least 6-12 months.

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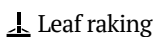
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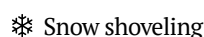
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Dylan Heinrich		831-620-9742	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	Odd jobs
Ethan Heinrich		831-238-8475		✓		✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Amy Mashkuri		571-643-5883	✓	✓							
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Niittisha Choudhary	Niittisha@gmail.com	703-981-1229	✓			✓		✓			Tutoring
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Evie Price		703-402-5138	✓	✓		✓*		✓	✓	✓	
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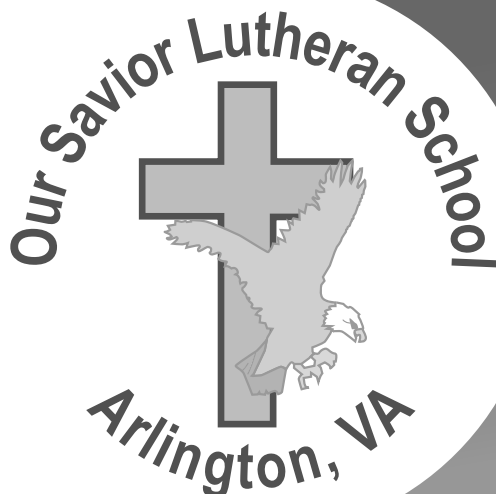
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