



Williamsburg Civic Association Newsletter

OCTOBER 2012

WWW.WCA-ARLINGTON.ORG

WCA President's Message

Hi Neighbors,

I hope that you and your families have enjoyed a very hot summer. For Arlington County officials and our Civic Association, this summer has been a very busy one. The County staff and members of the community have collaboratively worked on several key issues, including the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Plan, and the new County sign ordinance. The County Board's adoption of the CIP sets the priorities for the County's investments and will result in several bond questions on the November 2012 ballot. These bond questions will address metro and transportation, parks and recreations, community infrastructure, and public schools.

The County Board also adopted the new sign ordinance, which includes the hotly debated illuminated roofline signs. The Board approved roofline signs, but limited the hours for the signs facing National Park Service lands. The Board also reduced the luminance of signs facing residential and mixed use areas, and adopted new lighting standards. The use of A-frame signs placed in medians by Civic Associations remains an unresolved issue. The County staff and the Civic Federation will continue to work this issue to ensure that civic associations will be able advertise their meetings and other events.

The results of the WCA Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Survey and the recommendations by the WCA Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee to mitigate issues documented in the survey were provided to the Arlington County Police Department and to the Deputy County Manager and several County staffs. Many of the recommendations were adopted and the measures were implemented by the County. This is a great example of how your inputs and involvement help make our community a safer place for all of our residents. Thank you!

General Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 25

7:30-9:00 PM

(Halloween costumes encouraged!)

**Nottingham Elementary School
Multi-Purpose Room
5900 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22207**

Topics:

**A Neighborhood Conversation with
Arlington County Board Chairman
Mary Hynes**

**English Ivy Control Program
Mary McLean
Master Naturalist Volunteer, Arlington County**

**Update on Biking in Arlington
Zanna Worzella
Bike Arlington Coordinator**

We welcome to our upcoming meeting the Honorable Mary Hynes, Chairman Arlington County Board. In 2012, the Board launched [P-L-A-C-E](#), or *Participation, Leadership and Civic Engagement*. This is an initiative to provide opportunities for Arlington residents to talk directly with a Board member on Monday evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at various locations around Arlington County. As a complement to this initiative, we will invite members of the Board to our WCA meetings.

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 Oct 25! (And we're serious about the Halloween costumes!)
--Ruth Shearer

Plans for New Elementary School Developing Quickly

Arlington Public Schools (APS) has decided that it will build a new elementary school on the Williamsburg Middle School (WMS) site and has set an aggressive schedule to have the school ready for the first day of school in Fall 2015. The WMS site is just outside of the Williamsburg Civic Association boundary, but it is likely to have a significant impact on our neighborhood and children. This article broadly describes the issues presented by this project and the process underway to plan for the school. But to receive the most current information and announcements from your neighborhood representatives, please sign up for the WCA's listserv (a link can be found at the WCA website at <http://www.wca-arlington.org>).

The new school is part of APS's More Seats for More Student initiative to deal with the projected shortfall of approximately 1,885 elementary school seats by the year 2017. The APS decision to build a new elementary school came after months of study, community meetings, and debate. The need for greater elementary school capacity will be met with a combination of renovations and additions to several existing schools and the construction of two new elementary schools. The WMS site was selected because it is one of the only sites owned by APS large enough to build a new elementary school. Purchasing private property in Arlington County was just too expensive a proposition for APS.

The impact of this new school on the WCA falls broadly into two categories. First, where exactly will the school be built on the WMS property and what can be done to plan for the increased traffic and parking needs? Second, how will the new school be designed to meet the children's educational needs and safety? Responsibilities for these issues fall between the County and the APS.

In order to use its WMS property to construct and operate a new elementary school, APS must first seek the County's approval of a new site plan – the design and construction plan for the new school. The County has appointed a Public

Facility Review Committee (PFRC) to advise APS as it develops its site plan proposal. This is the committee dealing with how the school location and design will affect the neighborhood (including parking and traffic flow). Our WCA representatives on that committee are Paul Cullen (graceld99@comcast.net) and Jim Lunson (annandjiml@aol.com). These representatives' job is to represent the neighborhood's views on the committee. Please feel free to send them your comments and concerns.

No decision has yet been made on where the school will be built on the WMS property. Every option is on the table for now, but APS hopes to complete its site selection process by this November. Traffic flow and parking have been the dominant issues at the two PFRC meetings thus far. Two other significant issues being discussed are preserving the existing mature trees and recreational fields to the maximum extent possible, and not building the school in a manner that has an imposing physical presence near neighbors' homes (trying to preserve the neighborhood atmosphere). Agendas and minutes of the PRFC meeting may be found on the County web site (search for PFRC).

There is insufficient space in this newsletter to discuss the pros and cons of potential design ideas to address these issues. But ideas that have been put on the table include building a new roadway through the campus or between the field and the mature trees, redesigning existing WMS parking lots and driveways, and constructing additional parking. There is a strong desire by neighborhood representative that a balance be struck so that there is sufficient parking so that the neighborhood is not unduly impacted, but not so much on-site parking that it destroys green spaces and the neighborhood environment. The architects are also considering placing the new school in some proximity to the existing middle school so that if there is a population shift from elementary school to middle school that the classrooms can be reassigned from one school to another.

In this planning and design phase, the architects have also been asked to consider where the WMS

might be expanded to add capacity for 300 additional students in the future. There is no current plan to expand WMS or build such an addition. But the school board is anticipating that the current bump in population in the elementary school age group will soon become the middle school age group. The architects have been asked to consider this question in the design process so that the design and construction of the elementary school does not preclude options for increasing WMS capacity in the future.

To consider how the new school will meet the needs of the children, APS has created a Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC). The WCA representative on that committee is Katherine Schroder (schrodnitz@yahoo.com). This committee has also discussed how the school will be built, but less from the perspective of its the impact of the neighborhood, and more from how its construction will impact the safety and educational experience of the children. Please feel free to contact Katherine with your comments and concerns on these issues.

On September 27, 2012, the County held a meeting at Williamsburg Middle School to begin the process

of redrawing school boundaries to take the new school into account. APS announced that its goal was to complete the boundary redrawing by this February, 2013. APS set such a quick schedule so that the families who fall within the new school's boundaries (the stakeholders) can become engaged at an early stage in the new school construction and planning process.

The school board has identified up to seven elementary schools in the north half of Arlington (including Tuckahoe, Nottingham, and Jamestown) whose boundaries may be adjusted to rebalance the population with the new school. But instead of discussing the redrawing of boundaries, this meeting was focused on how the community would like to interact with APS during the process. Public comment at this meeting identified the need for APS to provide detailed information to the public in a variety of formats. Attendees expressed a desire to engage the school board in a dialogue about the options for redrawing the borders. They did not want to feel as though their comments and suggestions were just politely heard, but not engaged.

Continued on Page 6



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- D. Mills, seller on 27th Street in Williamsburg Civic Association



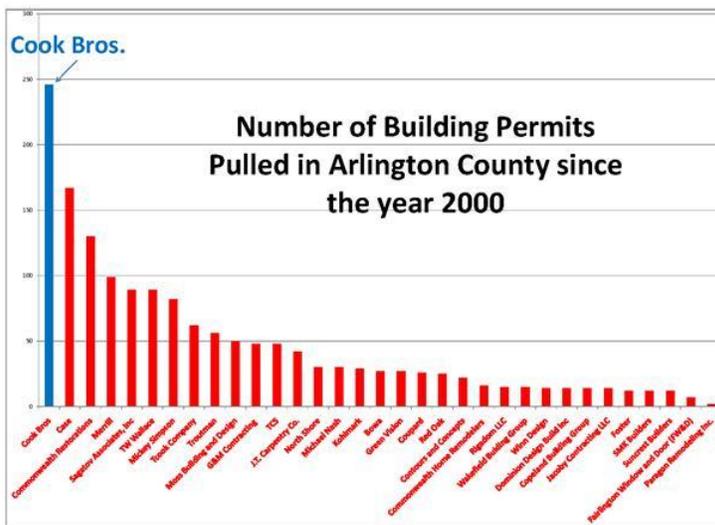
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O'Connell Holds Ribbon Cutting, Opens Track to Neighbors for Personal Exercise

The ribbon-cutting for Bishop O'Connell's new field on August 31st marked the completion of a year-long project that completely renovated the original field, track, and bleachers at the school, which were installed in 1964.

The field renovation project repositioned the rectangular field to allow for a regulation width soccer field, installed a new 6-lane track, and constructed new bleachers and a new press box. As that project drew to completion, work began on the reorientation and overhaul of the baseball field, undertaken in partnership with Marymount University. That project will be completed by mid October 2012. For more information on the field renovation, visit:

<http://www.bishopoconnell.org/page.cfm?p=676&newsid=496&ncat=6>

According to school principal Joe Vorbach, Bishop O'Connell looks forward to sharing its renovated facility with its immediate neighbors and Arlington County Parks and Recreation as much as possible. Here are the guidelines:

During school hours (7:45 a.m.- 3:05 p.m.), neighbors interested in using the track or bleachers must complete an initial registration form at the Attendance Office, and

receive a visitor's pass. The pass must be worn while on school property. Upon departure, one must sign out in the Attendance Office and return the pass.

The track and bleachers may only be used when they are not in use by O'Connell students; neighbors are asked to be considerate of PE classes during the school day.

After school, the track and bleachers may be used except under the following conditions: 1) Whenever an official game is being played; 2) When O'Connell teams are practicing on the track (bleachers may be used); 3) In the spring, during lacrosse practice (safety issue – bleachers may be used). Once O'Connell has officially closed the stadium for the day, the track and bleachers are not to be used.

On weekends the track and bleachers may be used if O'Connell has opened the stadium for practice use.

Neighbors are encouraged to check O'Connell's web page (www.bishopoconnell.org) under athletics for team practice and game schedules. Fall sports include soccer, field hockey and football.

To keep the new athletic complex in excellent shape, the school asks that no one bring gum, bikes, animals, sunflower seeds or bottles of any kind (water Gatorade, etc.).

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One suggestion by a group of Jamestown parents was that APS consider making the new school a middle-middle school of fourth and fifth graders, instead of the neighborhood elementary school. The APS officials accepted that suggestion and said that it was an idea that could be put on the table for discussion. Last, but not least, Arlington County will soon begin a process to name the new school. For now, however, APS is referring people to the school naming policy on its website.

There are many issues involved with creating this new school, and APS is wasting no time in moving this process forward on a schedule to meet the forecasted need for more classroom space. APS has provided us with the following email address that citizens may use to give input on any topic related to the new school:

NewES1.Communications@apsva.us

Please "cc" your neighborhood reps mentioned above on your emails so that they can represent your views at the meetings they attend. Go to the WCA website for links to information about the new school process. And finally, sign up for the WCA listserv where future updates will be posted.

Learn How to Remove English Ivy from Trees

English ivy can choke – and kill – the beautiful trees that give our yards and neighborhoods shade and character. What *looks* like a lovely little green plant can actually strangle trees, accelerate rot, attract mosquitoes and cause mature trees to fall down during storms.

Arlington's Tree Stewards and Regional Master Naturalists are working diligently to communicate the importance of cutting ivy away from trees. They offer these simple steps:

1. Use garden clippers to cut ivy at the bottom around the entire trunk of all infested trees.
2. Pull all ivy vines out of the ground around the base of the tree, making a 2 feet "life saver ring" around the tree. This will protect the tree from future infestations.
3. Once cut, leave ivy on the tree. Do not pull it off because that could harm the tree. Ivy will gradually blend into the tree bark after it is cut.

Learn more at the next WCA meeting on October 25, or visit www.TreeStewards.org or www.ARMN.org.

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Sycamore St. Project to Begin Construction in 2013

The Sycamore Street project is currently in the design and engineering phase. Once a design has been completed, there will likely be a neighborhood meeting to display the design and get public comment and feedback. Construction is not likely to begin until the new year, 2013. While design and engineering for the entire project from 26th Street to the Williamsburg traffic circle will be completed, construction is being divided into two phases. The first phase to be constructed will be roughly the top half of the project – the half that ends at the Williamsburg traffic circle. We will post updates on the Williamsburg Civic Association's listserv. Go to www.wca-arlington.org if you have not yet signed up for the listserv.

Arlington County Improving Water Main

Work continues on Williamsburg Blvd. to upgrade the Water Supply Main to improve the water distribution system's performance and reliability. This is one of two projects approved by the Arlington County Board in July. It is a years-long effort to provide critical back-up to the existing mains with the installation of a new, parallel 36-inch main from the Ethan Allen Pump Station to the reservoir. Once completed, the new main will allow existing pipes to be taken out of service for maintenance and let crews more easily isolate future breaks or leaks without disrupting supply to the reservoir.

WCA Snow Brigade Helps Neighbors in Need

For the past two winters following snow storms, neighbors have been kind enough to help each other in shoveling snow. This "Snow Brigade" was started by WCA resident Ellen Jones in response to the County having passed a Snow Removal Ordinance that requires snow to be removed within 24 hours after it stops falling when accumulations are less than 6 inches, and within 36 hours when 6 or more inches of snow accumulate. Noncompliance may result in a civil penalty of \$50 to \$100. With winter now upon us, it's a great time to volunteers with neighbors who can't clear their snow. If you would like to volunteer to help, or would like to be put on the list of those who need a hand, please contact Ellen at ellenjones6@starpower.net, or at 703-536-7626. She will try to match those who live within a two or three block radius.

WCA Officers

President: **Ruth Shearer**
 Vice President: **Eleanor Smith Tyler**
 Secretary: **Jim Lunson**
 Treasurer: **Jim Toronto**
 Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Rep: **Paul Cullen**
 Immediate Past Pres./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