



# neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

October 2024

[bluemontcivic.org](http://bluemontcivic.org)

## In This Issue

Upcoming Meetings	1
Vote: 2024 Elections	1
Come Ring Our Bell!	2
BCA Runs Neighborhood Survey	2
Lacey Woods Park Plans	3
Help Distribute the Newsletter	3
Changes Proposed to Custis Trail	4
Come See Us at the Bluemont Halloween Parade!	4
Be Careful on the Roads!	5
BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the April 2024 Newsletter	6
Connect with Bluemont	8
Join or Renew Today!	8

## Upcoming General Membership Meetings

Civic association meetings are a great way to meet your neighbors and learn about important issues. All meetings are in the library of Key Escuela Elementary (855 N. Edison) and on ZOOM, except for the June meeting, which will be in the Lubber Run Community Center, and on ZOOM. Free Parking is available at both locations. The next three meetings will be October 30, November 20, and December 18.

In October, members of the Insight Property Group will come to discuss and answer questions about their planned development of the site of the Macy's in Ballston. In addition, representatives of Penzance Property will discuss plans to redevelop the Ballston One office building at 4601 N. Fairfax Drive. In November an officer of the County Police will come to discuss crime trends in our area and answer questions. If you have any questions for the police, please send them to [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).

Also in October members will vote on a proposed motion to designate a property at the intersection of Harrison St. and 9th road, next to the I-66 sound barrier, as a park. The text of this motion. The text of the motion is in the article on "Actions and Resolution" under September.

Before each membership meeting, the Executive Board meets at 7 PM. All are welcome at Executive Board meetings.

## The 2024 Elections: When, Where & How to Vote



Elections matter, and your vote in the 2024 elections is important! Election Day this year is Tuesday, Nov. 5. The polls will be open that day from 6 AM to 7 PM.

Unsure about your polling place? The Bluemont Civic Association encompasses four different voting precincts: Ballston, Arlington Forest, Ashlawn and

Westover. To find your Election Day polling location (and to check on your voter registration status), visit the [Virginia Department of Elections website](http://Virginia Department of Elections website).

But Arlington voters aren't limited to voting on Election Day. They can vote by mail-in ballot or by visiting one of the County's in-person early voting locations.

(cont'd on p. 2)



**Please join the  
Civic Association.  
A form for joining  
or renewing your  
membership  
is on p. 8.**

## The 2024 Elections (cont'd)

You can obtain a mail-in ballot application from <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Vote-by-Mail> **Arlington County Office of Voter Registration (OVR)**. Applications can be obtained online, by email, via mail or in person. Your application must be received by OVR no later than 5 PM, Oct. 25. For your absentee ballot to be counted, it must be postmarked on or before Nov. 5 and received by OVR by 12 PM, Nov. 8.

Perhaps the easiest way to vote is by dropping by one of Arlington County's early in-person voting sites. This year, voters can vote at Courthouse Plaza (2200 Clarendon Blvd.) and the Long Bridge Center (333 Long Bridge Dr.) from Sep. 20 through Nov. 2, and at the Madison Center (3829 N. Stafford St.) and Walter Reed Center (2909 16th St. S.) from Oct. 16 through Nov. 2. You should note that the exact early voting days and hours vary throughout this period, so please consult OVR's early voting website for the most up-to-date information.



## Come Ring Our Bell!

Come to Constitution Gardens, the corner of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive, at noon on Veteran's Day Monday November 11 and ring the bell. This bell ringing will include CUPCAKES and books for the kids. Neighbors join the Bluemont Civic Association in ringing the bell at noon on every national holiday. Everyone, kid or adult, gets to ring the bell. It's fun for the entire family!

Also mark your calendars for bell ringings on Thanksgiving (Thursday November 28), Christmas Day (Wednesday, December 25) and all federal holidays!



## BCA Runs Neighborhood Survey

The Bluemont Civic Association recently sent out an Internet survey to get Bluemont residents' thoughts on issues the neighborhood faces and on BCA activities. The BCA provides a forum for its members to respond to local issues of common concern. The survey answers will help us respond to those issues and to further the interests of the neighborhood. We also conduct several social activities. Responses will help us determine if our activities are serving the needs of the neighborhood and how these activities could be improved.

The survey asks about many different types of issues: zoning, traffic stormwater, public safety, parks tree canopy, county governance, school district boundaries, County governance, County taxes and expenditures, and noise from I-66. In addition, it asks about our social activities, bell ringings and Family Fun Day, and about interest in various possible speakers for our meetings.

The link to the survey was sent to everyone on our email distribution list. If you did not get the link to the survey but would like one, please let us know at [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).

## Renovations Planned for Lacey Woods Park

Arlington County plans to renovate the northern portion of Lacey Woods Park. The project scope includes the restrooms and picnic shelter, multi-use court, multi-use court lighting, and athletic field. It does not include the playground or the wooded area.

Joshua Serck a Landscape Architect with the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation, who is in charge of the project, spoke at BCA's September 25 meeting. He described the plans that are being developed for the park and answered questions from the audience.

The basketball court will be widened, so it will be the regulation size for high school games. All the extra width will be on the George Mason side of the court, to preserve the trees on the Frederick Street side. A fence will be put between the picnic shelter and the basketball court, so an errant ball doesn't hit anyone's picnic. Primarily because of the expansion of the basketball court, the park's impervious surface area will increase by 1,400 square feet. Some seating will be added to the George Mason side of the court.

The current shelter will be replaced, likely with a prefabricated structure. The picnic table area will continue to be covered by a roof to protect from the rain. The building will have three toilet rooms, an increase from the two there now. All these rooms will have baby changing stations.



The new restrooms will comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). The gate to the park from George Mason Drive will also be brought into ADA compliance. Several people in the audience said it was important for the door to the restrooms to be easily seen from the playground, so they could watch a child safely walk to the restroom while they were watching another child on the playground.

The park's drainage will be improved, and a bioretention area, also called a rain garden will be put between the playground and George Mason Drive. The bioretention area will increase the size of the area that is suitable for salamander habitat. The project will require the removal of 7 trees, but 30 new trees will be planted in their place. The redbuds near the playground will remain.

The current plan calls for construction on the new facility to begin in the summer of 2025. Construction will take about 12 months. The playground will be open for most of that time, but there may be times when it has to be entered through the wooded area.

Mr. Serck noted that residents can learn about the progress of the project at [this website](#). That site also allows residents to sign up for email updates on the project's progress. The slides he used in the presentation are on [our website](#).



### Help Distribute the Newsletter

The Civic Association needs more volunteers to help distribute its newsletter. Every April and October, a small volunteer army of neighbors hand delivers a free Bluemont newsletter to every home and business in our Association's borders. That's over 2000 newsletters. It's a lot of work, and we need more help. If you are willing to help, please email [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).



## Come See Us at the Bluemont Halloween Parade!

The Bluemont Halloween costume parade for children again is being sponsored by Matt and Maria Cochrane of Dovetail Properties & Design. The parade will begin on Thursday October 31 at 5:15 PM at the intersection of the Bluemont Junction Trail and N. Emerson Street, and finish at the rocks near Harrison (down the street from the Arlington Forest Club). There will be treats and cider at the rocks. Drop by the Bluemont Civic Association table for candy, chat about neighborhood issues, sign up as a member, or pay the annual dues of \$15 per household.



## Changes Proposed to Custis Trail

A recent report by County Staff recommended a number of changes to the Custis Trail. The Custis Trail is a 4.5-mile-long bike path that runs alongside I-66 and goes from Rosslyn to a merger with the W&OD Trail about a mile west of our neighborhood.

The report suggests a number of short-term improvements to the trail, which include better lighting and signs and may include public artwork on the sound barrier. Amenities such as benches and water fountains may be put at various places on the trail, such as the entrance to 10th Street just west of George Mason Drive.

The report also recommends establishing a coalition of interested advocates, residents, and volunteers to focus exclusively on the Custis Trail. Such a "Friends Of" group could be a completely new organization or an outgrowth of existing volunteer groups. (p. 49 of the study).

A major recommendation of the report is the widening of the trail from 10 feet to a minimum of 12 feet. In addition, any light posts that are within 2 feet of the trail would be moved to be a minimum distance of 2 feet away. Widening the trail would cost an estimated \$10.1 million, if it is done without replacement of the existing trail. If the existing trail is replaced, the estimated cost would be \$13.9 million.

The report notes that trail widening would have significant environmental impacts that must be considered. Widening the



trail leads to increased impervious surface coverage. That in turn can worsen stormwater runoff and increase the "heart island" effect. Widening likely would also cause a loss of trees. Even trees that are farther than two feet from the trail could be affected, for example by damage to their roots. The report notes that "a 10-inch diameter tree sited 10 feet from the trail has roots that extend under the trail itself" (p. 38) The report does not include a detailed analysis of the effect of widening on trees.

You can see the [full report here](#).

## Be Careful on the Roads!

As you use Arlington's bike paths, sidewalks, and streets, it is important to follow the rules and share the road. Please take extra care (slow down!) around young children, disabled persons, and the elderly.

Below are some of Arlington's and Virginia's safety regulations and guidance from their websites:

- <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Transportation/Scooters-and-Dockless-Bikeshare#section-2>
- <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/travel-traffic/bike-ped/bike-safety/>

**Bikers/E-Bikers/Scooters:** People using these forms of transportation should follow some simple but very important safety rules.

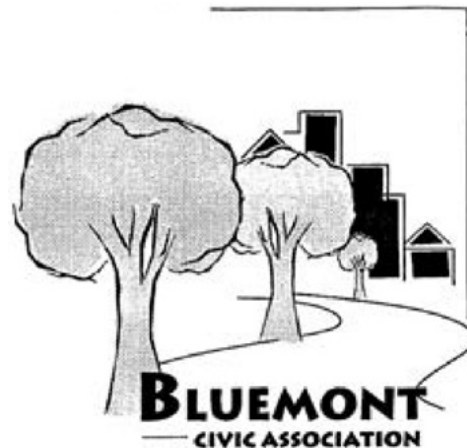
- Follow all traffic laws, including stopping at a red light before proceeding. Obey posted signs and signals
- Ride with the flow and direction of traffic
- When a protected bike lane is available in your direction of travel, e-scooter and e-bike riders must use it instead of the sidewalk.
- Every bicycle ridden between sunset and sunrise must have at least one white headlamp with the light being visible at least 500 feet to the front. The bicycle must have a red reflector on the rear.
- Helmets are required for people 14 years of age and younger.

**Motorists:** Motorists must approach and pass a bicyclist at a reasonable speed at least three feet to the left of the bicyclist. If the lane is not wide enough to allow three feet of space, motorists must change lanes to pass.

Scooters/e-bikes blocking sidewalks, handicapped entrances, and other public pathways—if you come across a scooter/e-bike dangerously parked or blocking a path, you can move it (be careful; they are heavy). Alternatively, contact the relevant e-bike operator. Contacts are:

- Bird: 1-866-205-2442 or [hello@bird.co](mailto:hello@bird.co)
- Spin: 1-888-249-9698 or [support@spin.pm](mailto:support@spin.pm)
- Lime: 1-888-546-3345 or [support@li.me](mailto:support@li.me)

You can also contact the county using the [report-a-problem tool](#).



### Executive Board

*BCA Officers & Reps*

President	Henry McFarland <a href="mailto:president@bluemontcivic.org">president@bluemontcivic.org</a>
First Vice President	Laura Kirkconnell
Second Vice President	Carla Conover
Treasurer	David Smith
Secretary	Fahd Patel

#### *Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF)*

Delegates	David Hughes, Allen Norton, Shakti Shukla, David Smith
Alternates	Laura Kirkconnell, Chris Kuhman, Kate Mattos, Kathleen Reilly

#### *Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ArNAC)*

Representative	Christopher George
Alternate	Nick Pastore

## BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the April 2024 Newsletter

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More information on civic association meetings, including the full text of resolutions, are in the minutes posted at [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org).

### May 2024

The meeting included a presentation from Takis Karantonis, Vice-Chair of the County Board. He discussed the following topics: rising property taxes; office vacancy rates; funding for Arlington Public Schools, which account for about half of County spending; the vacancy in the County auditor position; competitiveness in the process for hiring contractors; the need for efficiencies and effectiveness in County spending; Arlington Regional Transit; the lot coverage study; the effects of larger homes expanding the impermeable surface on lots; the study of N. Carlin Springs Road and the remainder of Carlin Springs Road; lack of pedestrian safety to cross Carlin Springs Road for school children; prioritizing County studies; the library system and its current survey on the future of the library; the future structure of Arlington governance; population and density and their effects; the Washington Capitals Ballston practice facility; flooding and stormwater; parks; proposed widening of the W&OD Trail; zoning; Expanding Housing Options; traffic; police, sheriff and Fire Department staffing and pay; infrastructure; dangers from cables left dangling by utilities and communications companies; eminent domain; and other issues.

Members unanimously approved a slate of nominees for BCA offices.

The members unanimously approved a letter from the BCA to the County Board supporting allocating \$14 million in bond funds for the Arlington Neighborhoods Program projects in the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan.

Members unanimously approved the President's proposal to sign a letter—jointly with other civic association presidents—to the County Board requesting a study of the process of granting special exemptions to the Generalized Land Use Plan.

### June 2024

Members voted unanimously to elect the following volunteers: President, Henry McFarland; First VP, Laura Kirkconnell; Second VP Carla Conover; Treasurer, David Smith; Secretary, Fahd Patel; Civic Federation (CivFed) Delegates, David Hughes, Allen Norton, Shakti Shukla, and David Smith; CivFed Alternates, Jeremiah Howard, Barbara Wein, Kate Mattos, Chitra Kumar; Arl Neighborhood

Advisory Committee, Christopher George (representative), Nick Pastore (alternate).

Virginia States Assembly Delegate Patrick Hope gave a presentation and answered questions. Topics included: the legislation he is trying to get passed that would give Arlington County officials some control over how much tree canopy is removed by developers and his efforts to give Arlington County authority to reform its system of governance. Examples of possible reforms were the County Board Chair being chosen by Board members and all County Board positions representing districts within Arlington rather than at-large. Other topics included a bill about special grand juries in Arlington and the related waste of resources; women's health; the need for the state to give Arlington officials more power during the site plan process to require developers to mitigate the effects their projects have on worsening stormwater flows from their properties; and traffic noise.

The President reported on the meeting he joined with the officers of other civic associations, the Arlington County Civic Federation, and the Arlington County Stormwater Management Team about an overview of the County's stormwater risk and management plan.

# BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the April 2024 Newsletter

## July 2024

The Executive Committee agreed on a schedule of upcoming Executive Committee Meetings, which generally occur on the last Wednesday of the month, except for November and December. The dates are September 25, 2024; October 30, 2024; November 20, 2024; December 18, 2024; January 29, 2025; February 26, 2025; April 30, 2025, May 28, 2025; and June 25, 2025.

The Executive Committee unanimously agreed to allocate \$15 per holiday to purchase cupcakes for bell ringing.

## August 2024

Although a quorum was not present, the association President noted that Josh Serck will attend the September meeting to discuss the Lacy Park renovation. He also noted that at the October meeting, a representative for the Macys' construction project will attend.

## September 2024

At the Executive Meeting, the Executive Board unanimously voted to have Family Fun Day this year, likely in May. At the same meeting, the President indicated that he planned on sending a letter to the County Board chair about flooding in Waycroft-Woodlawn and Bluemont's similar concerns about storm-water runoff and flooding from Lubber Run.

At the General Meeting, Joshua Serck, Landscape Architect with Arlington County Department of Parks presented on the Lacy Woods Park capital maintenance renovation project. Joining him was Recreation and Landscape Architect Supervisor Bernadette Grullon. Mr.

Serck explained that the project involves renovating bathrooms, picnic shelter, basketball court, and the open-space athletic field. The project further includes adding additional site furnishings, additional ADA compliance features, and stormwater drainage solutions. The project is currently in permitting process. They will bid out the project soon and hope to start construction by summer 2025. They expect that the project will take at least 12 months to complete and indicated that the playground should be open during most of the renovation. The project will also involve widening the basketball court and improving lighting and replacing the shelter and bathrooms.

Chris George reported on N. Carlin Springs safety project. He indicated that the county pushed back the corridor study until later 2026. The members voted unanimously for Mr. George to send a letter to the county requesting them to make initial safety improvements during the pendency of the study.

President Henry McFarland noted that he sent a questionnaire survey to residents of Bluemont, seeking information about residents' priorities for the civic association. He noted that 70 people filled out the survey and encouraged everyone to do the same.

The members also discussed a proposed motion to designate a property at the intersection of Harrison St. and 9th road, next to the I-66 sound barrier, as a park. The motion passed unanimously and will be voted on at the next meeting.

**MOTION:** The Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) recommends designation of the Arlington County Board owned land parcels 13006068 and 13012043 located between the intersection of North Harrison Street and 9th Road North and the North Jacksonville Street dead end at the Route 66 sound barrier as a County park under the provisions of the Arlington County Public Spaces Master Plan during the plan's 2024 review. The BCA supports the designation of this "de facto" park as an Arlington County park. The Parks and Recreation Department already provides basic maintenance of the land, vegetation, and paved trail and enlists the assistance of volunteer tree stewards in providing tree care, removal of invasive plants and trash removal. The paved trail is referred to in County bike maps. Designation as a County park should entitle the area to enhanced care consistent with the provisions of the master plan, "A well-managed public space system supports environmental infrastructure, economic development, social health, and recreation and recreation activities."



## Connect with Bluemont



**Facebook:** Like our [Bluemont Civic Association page on Facebook](#) for regular updates on news of interest to Bluemont, and civic association activities.

**BCA website** for BCA meetings and official information. [www.bluemontcivic.org](http://www.bluemontcivic.org)

**BCA e-Mails:** Neighbors who provide their e-mail address to [exec@bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org) receive e-mail reports roughly monthly on issues affecting Bluemont residents, and civic association activities.

**Contact the Executive Board:** BCA welcomes comments, suggestions and questions from members. Contact us at [exec@Bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).

**Nextdoor.com** is a free, private social network where you can connect with people who live nearby. BCA posts announcements on Nextdoor.com.

# Join or Renew Today!

Keep your membership current! Please use this form to join or renew.

## BCA Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew your membership at any General Membership meeting, or

Mail this form with your check made out to "Bluemont Civic Association" to  
BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington, VA 22205.

All information is for BCA use only.