

The February 25, 2025 meeting of the Arlington Heights Civic Association was called to order by president Brian Sigriz at 7:04 PM at the Arlington Career Center.

Attendees: Jeff Bartlett, Ted Black, Jose Castrillo, Kelly Davison, Mahender Dudani, Keith Dunklee, Evan Farley, Megan Garner, Tatjana Hessami Pouliott, Eileen Janas, Susannah Keefe, Eric Leach, Dan Loughy, Andrew Martin, Marilyn Marton, Gail Massot, Olivier Massot, David and Conchita Mitchell, Alex Monde, Catherine Newling, Amy Petz, Tia Scales, Janet Shannon, Brian Sigriz, Miles Townes,

Guests: Matt Cochrane, Arlington County Fair Board; Emilee Riches, Arlington Parks and Recreation, Jerusalem "Jerri" Solomon, Arlington Parks and Recreation

Minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting were approved.

Kelly Davison, Treasurer, reported 40 households have paid dues for 2025, with \$3186 in our account. Please address suggestions for activities (Easter egg hunt, Halloween parade, park clean-up etc.) to Brian Sigriz.

Brian Sigriz reported on the following issues:

The new website is up and running: www.arlingtonheightsva.org. Thanks to Miles for working through the issues list.

Brian is receiving monthly updates on the construction at the Grace Hopper Center and distributing them via the listserve. He attended the quarterly update meeting and discussed parking issues, late night work, and alarms. Debris from the former Thomas Jefferson Middle School were found on the site and must be removed to establish a stable foundation.

The Arlington Neighborhoods Program approved the design proposal for 1st Road South traffic calming at their December meeting. It will go to the County Board in March for funding authorization.

Irving street construction between 6th St and 7th St should start the week of March 3.

Irving street construction between 2nd St and 6th St should start in the summer.

9th and Glebe intersection improvements is in the design phase.

Columbia Pike construction continues in Segment D.

Businesses with leases at the Westmont include CVS, 5 Guys, Jersey Mikes, and an Urgent Care Center.

The Elkins Building redevelopment is moving forward.

There is a new developer, Toll Brothers, interested in the Fillmore Shopping Center. They are proposing 250 units and ground level retail, with an expansion of Penrose Park.

Brian received a request for information on establishing permit parking on Ivy St. between 7th and 9th. Permit parking is a neighborhood led process. A petition is required which must have support from 80% of the people living there.

Eileen Janas reported that Sidewalks on S. Highland Street between Route 50 and 2nd Street South has been submitted to the Arlington Neighborhoods Program as the Arlington Heights

first priority project, following the discussion at the November meeting. Children walk down the center of the street on their way to school. Cars coming rapidly off Route 50 make it a dangerous place for all pedestrians.

County Fair Planning:

Matt Richard, Chair of the Arlington Fair Board and Matt Cochrane, Vice Chair attended the meeting, along with Jerusalem "Jerri" Solomon and Emilee Riches from the Department of Parks and Recreation, with Lt. Owens, Arlington County Police Department, participating via livestream. Over the last five years attendance has grown from 70,000 to 160,000 visitors making the logistics issues too large for a volunteer organization to manage. The county has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Fair Board and will take more ownership of logistics issues: trash, parking, shuttle services and safety. Emilee Riches will be in charge of the effort. The Fair Board will focus on adding more free entertainment. They hope to expand the indoor vendors and children's entertainment. They are working with Matt de Ferranti to move the beer garden on site. State law prevents having alcohol on school grounds but the fair area is under parks control.

Community members described both their enthusiasm and support of the fair as well as the many challenges for the neighborhood that have increased over time: blocked driveways, air quality, noise, trash, Emergency vehicles being unable to use 2nd Street, Uber and Lyft drivers blocking traffic flow, changes to Metro bus routes, the lack of advertising for and the decline of competitive exhibits. As Miles succinctly put it: "Growth is great until it turns into cancer." At what point will the Fair Board realize it has outgrown its space.

Matt reported efforts to find other space: Long Branch Park is too near the airport; Carlyn Springs Middle School doesn't have room for the rides.

The fair takes in about \$380,000 from vendor fees and has expenses of \$360,000. (The vendors keep their own revenue.) The Fair Board provides some grants and scholarships with the excess revenue.

Emilee Riches is the Special Events Coordinator for DPR. They have a staffing plan and will be managing the shuttle service and parking enforcement.

Lt. Owens, 23 years with the County police, reported that the police give out parking tickets and tow cars that are blocking driveways. They issued 50 tickets per day and towed lots of cars in 2024. They try hard not to ticket or tow residents cars. The fair is overtime duty for police officers and is staffed by off duty officers. They had trouble staffing some security posts last year due to their staff shortages. Bridget Jenkins in DES/Traffic Engineering and Lt. Owens plan the No Parking zone. They increased the area in 2024. They did some rerouting of metrobus lines.

Lt. Owens reported that littering is a misdemeanor and can't be ticketed unless it is done in front of a police officer. In previous years Matt had volunteers from OAR for lots of jobs but did not have them for litter collection in 2024.

Residents asked if our trash day could be changed to earlier in the week instead of Thursday during Fair weekend.

Mahender reported on e-scooter dumping. The companies are difficult to deal with.

There are three open spots on the Fair Board and Matt would welcome our participation. Please advise Brian if you are willing to join the board or meet with county staff to talk more about fair issues and solutions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Janas
Secretary