



# Over the Fence

News for Neighbors  
from ARLINGTON HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
Special Edition  
<http://www.ahca.info/>

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETINGS

Arlington Heights Civic Association has scheduled two special meetings on matters of great importance to the neighborhood. Please make every effort to attend.

**Date:** Thursday, February 22, 2007, 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Room 105, Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South  
**Agenda:** (1) Park at Corner of S. Irving St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South  
(2) Future Plans for Career Center site

**Date:** Friday, March 30, 2007, 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Patrick Henry Elementary School Library  
**Agenda:** Public Comment on updated Draft Neighborhood Conservation Plan

## AGENDAS FOR THE MEETINGS

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- **Park at Corner of S. Irving St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South.** The park committee formed at the January 23, 2007 AHCA Annual Meeting will present its recommendations for options for the new park area at the corner of S. Irving St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South. Please come to vote on the recommendations. Patrick Wegeng of the Arlington County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources department will be present to discuss the park. The park committee organized a walk-through of the area with Mr. Wegeng, scheduled for Saturday, February 10 at 11:30 a.m. to assist the committee in finalizing recommendations for the park area. Everyone has been invited to attend. This special meeting was scheduled to ensure that planting could begin in March.
- **Future Plans for Career Center site (across from Patrick Henry Elementary School and Location of the Columbia Pike Library).** The School Board's Multi-Site Study Committee of school properties, including the Career Center and Thomas Jefferson Middle School, scheduled a second public comment period for Monday, February 26, 2007. This special AHCA meeting has been scheduled to give the neighborhood an opportunity to weigh-in on future plans for the Career Center. Monique O'Grady, At-Large Representative and Arlington Heights resident will report on the options being considered. Additional information is available at:  
<http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/facilities/planning/mss.shtml>

**Date:** Friday, March 30, 2007, 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Patrick Henry Elementary School Library  
**Agenda:** Public Comment on updated Draft Neighborhood Conservation Plan

- **Public Comment Meeting on Draft Neighborhood Conservation Plan.** Numerous neighborhood volunteers have been working, on and off since 1999, to update the Arlington Heights' Neighborhood Conservation Plan, which dates to 1980. This important planning document is required to participate in funding from the NCAC. NCAC is a committee

made up of neighborhood representatives that recommends county funded beautification projects, including streetlight and sidewalk, curb and gutter improvements. A draft Executive Summary of the draft Plan is included in this Notice. Under NCAC guidelines, those not voting or expressing opposition to the draft plan will be presumed to be in favor of the draft plan. You do not need to be a member of the Arlington Heights Civic Association to vote on the Draft Plan.

- **The Public Comment Period for the updated Draft Plan will begin on or before March 15, 2007.** Please note that during February, AHCA's Executive Committee will be reviewing the draft Plan. A notice will be placed on the list serve and the AHCA website, at <http://www.ahca.info>, when the draft Plan is released for public comment. Comments can be made by clicking on the link. If you have trouble, contact the web master, Richard Bullington-McGuire at [rbullin@obscure.org](mailto:rbullin@obscure.org). You may also call Lynn Michaels ([lynn\\_michaels@verizon.net](mailto:lynn_michaels@verizon.net); 703-979-0791), our neighborhood contact for additional information about the time of release. If you would like to see a hard copy of the Draft Updated Plan, it will be available in the reference section of the Columbia Pike Branch Library, located at 816 S. Walter Reed Drive (open Mon. 10 -9, Tues. & Wed. 1-9, Thurs. 10-6, Fri. & Sat. 10-5, Sun 1-5) on or before March 15, 2007.

**DRAFT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** (Please note that this draft is subject to revision by the Executive Committee. It is meant to provide residents with notice of the major issues addressed in the updated draft Plan)

The updated Draft Plan opens with a discussion of the plan history, an overview of the survey results from the 1999 neighborhood survey, a discussion of neighborhood characteristics, including a short history of the neighborhood, demographic trends, housing stock, businesses, county and school facilities, and houses of worship. The remaining portions of the updated Draft Plan include recommendations. It is this portion of the updated Draft Plan that is included in this Draft Executive Summary, as follows.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

- Maintain, enhance, and promote the single-family residential character of Arlington Heights
- Improve street signage, streetscape, and lighting throughout the neighborhood
- Improve pedestrian safety and promote walking and bicycling
- Improve the quality of commercial buildings and establishments along Columbia Pike to blend with the residential community and provide an attractive commercial area
- Enhance the accessibility and use of local parks by residents
- Preserve and enhance the environment
- Upgrade existing county and school facilities in the neighborhood
- Ensure police protection and emergency services reduce crime and increase emergency response time
- Increase enforcement of county ordinances
- Enhance public transportation while reducing noise and pollution
- Reduce the number of high speed traffic accidents, particularly on portions of Columbia Pike and Arlington Boulevard that border the neighborhood.

#### GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

**Land Use & Zoning:** Preserve existing zoning and land use; No habitable housing should be replaced with commercial developing, upzoning, or apartments.

**Commercial Neighbors:** Support local businesses; Encourage beautification projects; Eliminate predatory towing practices; Improve lighting; add county owned parking ramp that is free or metered at northwest corner of S. Garfield St. and 9<sup>th</sup> Rd. South.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Streets, Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters:** Install sidewalks, curbs, and gutters throughout the neighborhood, on both sides of the street, where practical; Ensure that all sidewalks are accessible to persons with special needs; Properly maintain sidewalks, curbs, and gutters; Make recommended streetscape and signage improvements

**Streetlights:** Install Carlyle style streetlights throughout the neighborhood, along the entire length of the running trails at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, in dark areas of Thomas Jefferson Middle School in dark areas, and along Arlington Blvd.

**Drainage:** Address drainage problems along Arlington Blvd and the service road, at Arlington Heights Park, on Walter

Reed Drive at Career Center and Fenwick Center, and on S. Highland St. by Career Center

**Pedestrian Footbridges:** County should keep neighborhood informed of the conditions and potential need for replacement of the Jackson St. footbridge across Arlington Boulevard; the County should work with VDOT to add a second footbridge across Arlington Boulevard just east of S. Fillmore St.

**Community Entrances:** Due to location next to school and community center, the proposed S. Irving St. between Arlington Blvd and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South street improvement project should be given priority funding outside the NCAC program; county should work with neighborhood to determine whether the empty lot at S. Fillmore St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South can be built upon, and if it cannot, determine options for beautifying the area.

#### OPEN SPACE & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

**Improvements to Thomas Jefferson Community Center:** *Playgrounds:* The tot playground should be replaced with an improved tot lot, and be relocated to another space on the Thomas Jefferson grounds; play equipment for middle school aged children should be built adjacent to Thomas Jefferson Middle School; *Athletic Fields:* The athletic fields at TJ should be upgraded to permit more efficient use, thus taking pressure off areas of the TJ grounds that are not appropriate for team sport use.

**Neighborhood Green Space:** *Park at S. Irving St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South:* County staff should work closely with the neighborhood to determine an appropriate use for this new park area; this park areas should be for neighborhood use, and not included in any joint-use agreement with Arlington Public Schools; this park should not be programmed space; *Arlington Heights Park:* Poor drainage requires attention; improve landscaping; *Fourth of July Park:* Improve landscaping; upgrade fencing for safety; add water fountain (it is next to a bike path); *Green buffers along Arlington Boulevard:* County should plant grassy areas along Arlington Boulevard with trees and shrubs.

**Arlington County Fair:** Neighborhood should continue to work with the Arlington County Fair Board and the Arlington County Police Department on ways to enhance the fair and to minimize any negative impact upon the neighborhood.

**PARKS PROGRAMMING:** Add programming for small children.

**LITTER & PETS:** County should install additional trash canisters with lids that litter cannot blow through; neighborhood should work with Thomas Jefferson Middle School and athletic leagues to encourage responsible trash disposal habits; county should enforce codes against littering and pets running off leash.

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT:** Vigorously enforce the speed limit; fund and carry out neighborhood conservation projects; make recommended improvements to pavement markings and signage; work with VDOT to place no left turn signs for westbound Arlington Boulevard traffic onto S. Fenwick, S. Garfield, S. Highland, and S. Hudson; construct a series of nubs along 2<sup>nd</sup> St. South at Old Glebe Road, S. Garfield St., S. and S. Highland St., incorporating pedestrian crosswalks.

#### **Arlington Heights Civic Association -- 2007 Officers**

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### **February 2007 Real Estate Update**

**Recently in Northern Virginia** we have seen an increase in buying activity with the declining unsold inventories. From the 2nd quarter of 2006 through the 4th quarter of 2006 there was evidence of 10% to 20% asking-price reductions. Price cuts in the housing prices have stimulated buyers who had been sitting on the sidelines wondering when the market might bottom out to move back in and start shopping. The Washington DC area economy remains solid, with strong employment and significant in-migration. As inventory continues to decline, the selection of homes will once again become limited. **For prospective buyers, there may never be a better time to buy a home than right now.** Research indicates that home prices will not much lower. While certain local markets across the country may see limited price declines, the national and local DC area picture remains bright.

**From a historic perspective,** there was an average of 7% growth in area house prices in the last 30 years. From 1997 to 2005 there was a 138% growth in area house prices, which was an abnormal trend. Many industry experts are using the term "normalization", meaning that the housing market is returning to its long-term trend line. What we've experienced over the last several years has been extraordinary in terms of record low rates, record high appreciation, and liberal mortgage underwriting guidelines. The correction process began during the summer of 2005. Current conditions are looking favorable for a balanced real estate market as long as interest rates remain attractive and affordability is there for buyers. Affordable housing has been a problem for many who want to buy, and that will remain a critical issue.

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