

ALCOVA HEIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Alcova Heights Neighborhood, Arlington, Virginia

February 2014



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NEXT MEETING

Alcova Heights Citizens Association Winter Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 20

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Baptist Church,
8th and Monroe

Agenda:

1. Presbyterian Church redevelopment update
2. Traffic Committee report
3. Conservation Plan update
4. New Elementary School in South Arlington
5. Park Clean Up
6. Block Party Update

Special Deliveries

A thank you to neighbors whose contributions add up

by Sara Uzel, AHCA President

Dear Neighbors:

I'd like to start off by saying, "Thank you" to the many folks in our neighborhood whose contributions large and small all add up to make Alcova Heights a great community.

One such contributor is Rhea Dola, who has been in charge of our newsletter distribution for as long as I've lived in the neighborhood. She does her job so well, most don't realize how difficult it is. But I learned first hand last month when we delivered a special emergency survey about the Arlington Presbyterian Church redevelopment.



I thought it wouldn't be fair to ask Rhea to handle delivery on such short notice, so I decided to go it alone with a few helpers. On delivery day, Mother Nature of course decided to send us a downpour. We also struggled to sort out which houses get paper copies of the newsletter and which get electronic.

Thanks to the help of Marie Van Ness, Gretchen Allin, Mike Kigin, and Mark Uzel, we managed to get them out in two days. We got a great response to the survey, which has helped us shape our position regarding the church property. And I got a crash course in how truly valuable Rhea and all her neighbor/deliverers are. Thanks to all of you for what you do!

School Talk

On another issue, now that my children have graduated from high school, I realize that I am beginning to lose touch with what's going in Arlington Public Schools news. This is strange for me, because I was extremely engaged in school happenings up until spring of last year.

Being involved in school decision-making is important work and very rewarding, and I strongly encourage those of you with children in APS to play close attention to the issues, including the most recent debate about capacity planning. Capacity has been a sticking point for APS for at least the 20 years I've lived in the county. I even sat (painfully!) on two boundary capacity committees over the years.



cont'd. on page 2

Sara's column cont'd. from page 1

Arlington is facing very tough decisions regarding school overcrowding, new infrastructure, and how we spend our limited resources in the coming years. It's important that we understand what changes are being considered and how these changes could positively or negatively affect our families.

Package Thefts

Lastly, I wanted to mention something that's come across the listserv. We seem to be having an issue with strangers picking up delivered packages in the neighborhood. Please, if you see someone that does not appear to be the homeowner picking up a package, call the police immediately. I recently was in another neighborhood and saw a man pushing a stroller and "bumping" car door handles. I called the police, and when I returned, it appeared the person had been arrested.

Let's all keep an eye out for one another and don't hesitate to report suspicious behavior.

Happy 2014, everyone. And to those of you who, like me, don't like the cold, let's hope winter eases its grip soon. See everyone at the Alcova Heights Citizens Association meeting on Thursday, February 20.

Sara

ALCOVA HEIGHTS LISTSERV: Get Connected

The Alcova Heights neighborhood listserv has reached 486 participants. If you'd like to stay current with what's happening in the neighborhood, subscribe today. Go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcova_Heights and sign up using a Yahoo account, or simply send a message to Alcova_Heights-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the e-mail account you would like to sign up with.

You can choose to receive each listserv e-mail as it's sent or a daily digest with all of the previous day's communications. Get connected! Sign up today!

Alcova Conservation Plan Clears First Two of Three Approval Hurdles

by Marie Van Ness

On January 9, Association Vice President Kelly Holly presented the Alcova Heights Conservation Plan to the Arlington County Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC). This was the first step toward moving the plan to final approval from the county board.

After a brief presentation and discussion, the NCAC voted to accept the plan and send it to the next level in the process.

Kelly and I then presented to the Arlington County Planning Commission on Thursday, February 10. The commission voted unanimously to send the plan to the Arlington County Board. Commission members commended Alcova Heights for a thoughtful, articulate plan and recognized our desire to be kept informed and involved in redevelopment, our concerns about traffic and congestion, and request for assistance with environmental preservation.

The next and final step is to present the plan to the Arlington County Board on February 22 or 25. A completed plan means that Alcova Heights will be more competitive for projects to meet community needs. So put your thinking caps on for ideas to improve our neighborhood!

Kelly, Bill, and I will continue to work together to finish this project. We appreciate the support of Katie Brown-Henry from the county staff and our neighborhood association president Sara Uzel.

2014 Neighborhood Calendar

Citizens Association Meetings*

February 20

April 24

June 19

September 18

November 20

* Citizens Association Meetings: Baptist Church, 8th and Monroe, 7 p.m.

Presbyterian Church Redevelopment Moves Forward

by Sara Uzel, AHCA President

Here's an update on the ongoing Arlington Presbyterian Church (APC) redevelopment efforts:

We were disappointed to learn that Arlington's Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB) voted recently to not recommend a historical designation for the APC. APC is proposing a major redevelopment of its property on Columbia Pike, along with the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH).

HALRB in November determined that the property met enough of the required criteria to be considered for historic designation. At the November meeting, the HALRB asked our community to provide input about the potential designation.

We provided this input at the January meeting, during which time, the HALRB listened to public testimony and took two votes. The first was whether the building met certain criteria to designate the property. The second vote was whether, based on this criteria, they should forward the designation to be advertised as a zoning change and then be voted on by the full county board. This resolution did not pass, effectively closing the matter for the HALRB.

I reached out to APAH after the January meeting to ask about their plans regarding schedule, site design, and, most importantly, outreach to our community.

APAH President Nina Janopaul responded with the following statement:

Since the HALRB decision three weeks ago, APAH and APC have been working internally on a variety of complex issues associated with joint redevelopment of the APC property. This internal process between APAH and APC will take some time, as there are multiple considerations to be taken into account in order to design an economically viable project that meets the vision and priorities of both parties. Once a viable concept is developed, APAH and APC will work with the county to follow the established process for the Columbia Pike Form Based Code (FBC), which was outlined by county staff in its January 14th meeting with APAH, APC, and Sara Uzel, president of AHCA. This process has worked successfully for both the community and developers in the past, as evidenced by the many vibrant FBC projects that continue to revitalize Columbia Pike. APAH and APC look forward to developing a mixed-use FBC project that provides a variety of much-needed uses (affordable housing, church, daycare, and retail) while contributing to the realization of the community's vision as reflected in the Form Based Code.

The AHCA will continue to work with APAH and county staff to ensure that the interests of our community are heard.

EYE ON ALCOVA HEIGHTS



Parents watch their kids barreling down, and then trudging up, the hill close to 6th St. S. and S. Quincy St. at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, a popular sledding venue at Sochi-Alcova.

Traffic and Infrastructure Committee Update

by Mike Kigin

The county has finally removed the utility pole at the corner of 8th Street and Quincy, but we are still awaiting the muddy hole to be paved over and the sidewalk to be completed.

Washington Gas appears to have finished its digging at the corner of 8th Street and Monroe, so hopefully the remaining storm sewer and sidewalk work will soon be completed by the county.

The leaning pole at 8th Street and Lincoln has been deemed by the utilities, and thus the county, to be safe.

I have raised with the county my observation that the light at George Mason Drive and Arlington Blvd. is staying green way too long for traffic exiting off Arlington Blvd heading east, thus delaying traffic on George Mason in both directions. I have yet to receive a response from the county on this issue, so if anyone else notices the same thing, a call or email to the county from others may help get them to address the issue.

Following a few stolen-package incidents, I wrote on behalf of our neighborhood association to the Post Office, UPS, and Federal Express and encouraged them to have their package deliverers knock or ring the doorbell when dropping off items in the neighborhood. Each of us should individually write to them as well, because the more it comes to their attention, the more likely it is to happen.

Feel free to contact me at mikekigin@gmail.com or at 703-920-4899 if you have any questions or additional traffic or infrastructure issues that I might be able to assist with.

Advertisers Wanted

Know any local business owners or managers who are trying to get the word out about their products or services? Let them know that the Alcova Heights newsletter, with circulation to 700 households, is a great place to start.

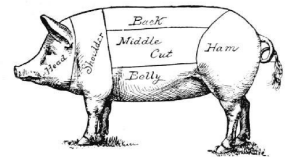
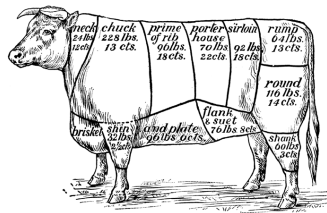
Contact TJ Ball (vtball007@hotmail.com) for details about ad rates, placement, package deals, and more.

LET IT SNOW!



Using methods employed by the ancient Egyptians, Sofia and Antonio roll a head onto their snowman. Heavy, wet snow blanketed much of the East Coast and left 9 inches on the ground by morning in Arlington on February 13, shutting schools and federal and local government offices.

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Announcements and Milestones

Hal Lightle

Dearly loved South Lincoln St. neighbor Hal Lightle passed away at home on the morning of Thursday, January 9.

Lincoln Street neighbor Marie Van Ness had this to say about Hal: "Hal was so much a part of South Lincoln Street, we're not sure what to do without his presence. He loved his family and his friends and was proud of his home. No one kept their yard as Hal kept his, and he had his ways to keep things in the neighborhood in check. One of the many things he did for neighbors each week was put trash and recycling cans away for those who worked or had little kids.... Hal was the best."

A moving service was held for Hal on Saturday, January 18. Friends and family came from far and wide to reminiscence about his life.

Birthdays

Derek Morch and Cathy Chung welcomed their second child, **Evangeline Chung Morch**, a.k.a. Eva, February 4.

Jefferson Middle School Announcement

The second annual Healthy Family Fun Fair will be held on March 23 at the Jefferson Community Center. All are invited to this free community event sponsored by the Jefferson Middle School PTA.

Also, the Jefferson PTA will hold a fundraiser at Dogfish Head Brew Pub in 7 Corners (near the Home Depot) on March 25. The PTA will receive 15 percent of all purchases at the restaurant all day long. "Girl X," a band made up of current and future Jefferson parents, will perform at the restaurant around 7:00 that evening.

Barcroft Elementary Update

Barcroft Elementary School's mid-year **parent-teacher conferences** will be held just before the Presidents Day holiday, so students will have **no school from February 13 to 17**.

Barcroft will hold its **Coffeehouse and Book Exchange** from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4. All are welcome to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday, talk to the principal and members of the PTA about issues on your mind, and to exchange books. Gently used children's and young adult books are being collected in the school lobby prior to the event and on the night of the event.



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Celebrating Our 43rd Anniversary

Alcova Heights Citizens Association

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Mark Cole, Treasurer, 815 S. Oakland St.,
Arlington, Va. 22204

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Arlington's real estate assessments in 2014 grew 5.8% with a strong residential market and construction of commercial properties. The residential sector average prices increased 5.3% from \$524,700 last year to \$552,700.

Alcova Heights saw an increase in the average sold price of \$854,965 in 2013 with 13 listings sold compared to an average price of \$639,040 in 2012 with 20 listings.

Arlington continues to show resilience and stability being one of the most popular areas to live while affordability for many buyers seeking housing here is an ongoing challenge.

Looking at December 2013 versus December 2012, the housing market in the Washington DC Metro Region improved as the total number of sales in the region increased 9.3% from 2012

levels and the median sale price increased by 9.6%. All jurisdictions in the region had a higher median sales price in 2013 than in 2012.

So far in 2014 the demand from buyers has been strong and the supply has been low with multiple offers being common in most of the housing sectors. Traditionally the best time for a seller to obtain top dollar has been in the first quarter and early second quarter of the year and this year is predicted to follow those trends. In January of 2014, I have experienced the multiple offer effect in four different transactions, advising clients to gain the most positive outcome in their situation.

Considering a move in the near future? I can provide guidance and value added services – offering creative strategies to help you maximize your outcome including three popular pricing angles.



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