DOUGLAS PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION Neighbor News



<u>Vol 85, No 5</u>

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2011

Don't Be Swindled by Dishonest Contractors and Vendors

By Ingrid Morroy, Commissioner of Revenue, Arlington, VA

Arlington's Commissioner of Revenue realizes that many people are unaware of the legal requirements for contractors and vendors who do work in Arlington County. For instance, does the contractor you consider hiring have a Business License with Arlington County or a State Contractors License with Virginia? Does the door-to-door vendor offering to trim trees or make home repairs have a Vendor's Permit from the County Police? You can call or email the Customer Advocate in the Commissioner of Revenue's Office to find out. The Customer Advocate has direct access to the appropriate State and County records and can tell you if the contractor or vendor you're considering is in compliance with the law - without your having to spend hours online or on the telephone.

Of course, knowing that businesses are in compliance with the law does not guarantee the quality of their work. But it is a first step in determining their level of responsibility. It's always a good idea to use referrals and get references before hiring anyone.

Should you wish to consult the Commissioner's Customer Advocate, please call 703.228.4810 or email *advocate@arlingtonva. us*.

President's Corner

by John Snyder

NEXT CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING

The next Douglas Park Civic Association meeting will be November 15, 2011 at Café Sazon, 4704 Columbia Pike. The main agenda item is the Columbia Pike Implementation Team design work for Columbia Pike.

NEXT DPCA MEETING

The next meeting of the Douglas Park Civic Association will be held Tuesday evening, 15 November 2011, at 7.30p at Café Sazon, 4704 Columbia Pike (near Goodwill at Columbia Pike and South Buchanan Street.) You can park in that lot or by the recycling center if you drive.

Douglas Park noticias noviembre 2011

REUNIÓN DE LA ASOCIACIÓN CÍVICA

a reunión de la asociación cívica sera el 15 de septiembre a las 19.30 a Café Sazon, 4704 Columbia Pike. ¡Atienda por favor!

HOLIDAY FUND DRIVE

Generosity is one of the things I admire most about our neighborhood. It is the essence of being a good neighbor, and we show our neighborhood's generosity year after year in our Holiday Fund Drive.

Each year, we raise money to help needy families in the neighborhood, identified by the staff at Randolph Elementary School, to provide food, clothes and toys for the children at Christmas. Loss of a job or sudden major expenses can devastate a family's finances. The civic association is able to fill the gap for some of the families in our community through the money we raise and the efforts of volunteer shoppers and gift wrappers. We need your help again.

We need some people to step forward to do a bit of shopping, mostly for kids' clothes, shoes, coats and toys, (based on lists prepared by the Randolph staff). We also need people to wrap the presents. If you would like to be a part of the elfish action, please contact John Snyder at 703.892.2887 or *jvsnyder54@comcast.net*. We need some new people to join in, as some of our volunteers from past years won't be able to participate. Students looking for public service opportunities are very welcome to help out.

All costs are reimbursed by the civic association from money we collect during the Fund Drive. We have raised literally thousands of dollars over the years, just by asking for it. We don't have a gala, or sell something. We just say "our neighbors need some help," and Douglas Park always comes through. 100% of all donations go to the needy families. Our neighbors need your help again this year. The economy is in rough shape and lots of people are out of work. We are Christmas for these families. Please give generously using the flyers and addressed envelopes inserted in the newsletter.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

Each neighborhood in Arlington can sponsor projects for our parks and streets. The new curb and gutter and sidewalks on South Pollard Street, South Oakland Street and 17th Street South are examples of these projects, as are the streetlights along 16th Street South, South Quincy Street and elsewhere in the neighborhood. Our latest project, improving and lighting

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DOUGLAS PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION • ARLINGTON, VA Meeting Calendar

The Association meets on the third Tuesdays of February, April, June, September and November at 7.30 pm. Meeting dates and locations are subject to change; up-to-date information is available at *http://www.douglasparkca.org/* or in the *Douglas Park Neighbor News*.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday evening, 15 November 2011 at 7.30 pm at Café Sazon, 4704 Columbia Pike (near Goodwill at Columbia Pike and South Buchanan Street.) You can park in that lot or by the recycling center if you drive. Please see the full agenda on the cover page of this issue of the *Douglas Park Neighbor News*. All are welcome.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Rita Wiggins, 703.521.4725, roserita_wiggins@apsva.us PARKS COMMITTEE

Marty Nielsen, 703.979.8777, mrtynlsn@gmail.com

Traffic Committee

Open. To volunteer, contact John Snyder at *jvsnyder54@comcast.net* **PARKING LIAISON**

Lane Nemirow, 703.271.1111, lane@pop.net

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	Articles an
Issue 86.01:	Fri 3 Febr
Issue 86.02:	Fri 30 Mar

nd Adverts Due 2012 : 2012 Distribution Sat/Sun 18/19 Febr 2012 Sat/Sun 14/15 Apr 2012

DOUGLAS PARK ON THE WEB

WEBSITE http://www.douglasparkca.org/ LISTSERV Send email to douglaspark-subscribe@yahoogroups.com the trail in Doctors Run Park from George Mason to Randolph School has been approved and awaiting construction. So now the question is—what's next?

Part of the Neighborhood Conservation process is reaching consensus on our neighborhood priorities. We identified dozens of potential projects in a survey of the neighborhood years ago. You can see the Neighborhood Project List on the DPCA website, *http://www.douglasparkca.org/.* Now we need to decide which of these projects to pursue.

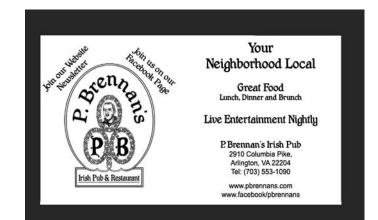
Here are some potential projects:

- Complete the curb and gutter and sidewalks on 18th Street South between South Monroe and South Quincy Streets. The sidewalk starts and stops along the way, but does not connect all the way through.
- Install street lights on 12th Street South between South Monroe and South Quincy Streets.
- Complete the sidewalk on the west side of Monroe near 13th Street South, connecting Monroe Park and points to the south with Columbia Pike and points to the north on the west (park) side of the street. Drainage at the corner of 13th Street South and South Monroe Street could be fixed at the same time.
- Re-align the corner of South Highland Street and 12th Street South to improve visibility for those on 12th Street South trying to cross South Highland.
- Install street lights along Glebe Road between Walter Reed Drive and Columbia Pike—at least as far as 12th Street South—on both sides).
- Complete curb, gutter and sidewalk on 13th Street South between Glebe Road and Walter Reed Drive.

These are examples. If you see a need for a project that is not on this list, nominate the project by contacting John Snyder at 703.892.2887 or *jvsnyder54@comcast.net*. Alternatively, use this contact information if your reaction to one of the projects above is 'Yikes! Don't do that!' Once we have a list of projects, we can vote on the one we want to pursue first.

COLUMBIA PIKE LAND USE AND HOUSING STUDY

The Columbia Pike Land Use and Housing Study has moved to the next stage. A draft policy document has been prepared,



reflecting the discussions to date, and the charrette held in June. The goal is to make a plan to guide re-development of the residential areas along the Pike (the apartment complexes) to be prepared if the land owners decide to re-develop. It gives the community, through the county, the chance to shape land use ordinances to promote what we want to see and discourage what we don't.

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One of the goals is to preserve affordable housing. A very large portion of the market-rate affordable housing in Arlington is along Columbia Pike. For example, the Barcroft apartments are affordable for a family making 60% of the area median income. Committed affordable housing, such as Virginia Gardens, on South Taylor Street, also charge affordable rents, but they are committed by the terms of lower cost public financing (and tax breaks on private financing) to remain affordable for decades. There is no indication that the apartment owners (like Barcroft, Westmont Gardens and Oakland Apartments) have any plans to redevelop their land, but if they did, it would be a huge impact on the neighborhood, particularly the people living there now.

Within the Land Use and Housing Study there is no plan for any changes to the single-family home areas along the Pike, but the quality of the plan obviously affects the quality of life in those neighborhoods.

These sort of plans often involve competing goals and the draft document reflects this complexity. It is available on the homepage of the Douglas Park website at http://www. *douglasparkca.org/*. Here are some highlights and issues:

- The draft policy identifies areas along the Pike where additional density (somewhat taller buildings) would be allowed to try to promote affordable housing preservation. Basically, if the landowner has an opportunity to make more on some of the land, it is economically feasible to preserve or build affordable housing on other portions. At the same time, the neighborhoods don't want to be overwhelmed by large buildings. As with the Form Based Code adopted years ago for the commercial areas of the Pike, the policy document would place the higher density generally right on the Pike, while leaving the areas facing existing townhouses or single-family houses at a lower height and scale. The policy document also tries to avoid plans that would substantially change areas designated as historically important, like the Barcroft Apartments, and Oakland Apartments. Thus the plan envisions buildings of up to six stories along the Pike where Westmont Gardens is now, and replacing some of the buildings right at the corner of George Mason Drive and the Pike. The policy is general at this point, but can become very specific as a form based code can dictate the number of floors allowed on particular street fronts, determined block by block. More could be allowed on the Pike frontage, less on side streets.
- There are some potential policy changes that could affect our neighborhood. One is transfer of development rights from historic properties to elsewhere in the county. The idea would be that the owner of an historic property like the Barcroft Apartments might trade the right to build higher

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- to another property, in exchange for money, which would then be used to preserve the 'sending' property much as it is. This would preserve both the historic structures and the affordable housing. The downside to this concept is that such a trade limits the potential for the property to change in the future. Sometimes change is better for a particular property on a particular site, or allows for related amenities, like retail stores. Another downside is that the additional density goes somewhere else. Hopefully that other place is appropriate for taller buildings, like perhaps Rosslyn or Crystal City, but it could be another spot on the Pike. The plan for the 'receiving' site needs to be appropriate also.
- Some of the policy proposals to promote affordable housing could apply everywhere in the county since they are not tied to a particular location. Examples are bonus density for affordable housing projects (adding a floor or two if

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'The Balloon Lady'

DOUGLAS PARK Neighbor News

the project commits a certain percentage to affordable units) streamlined county approval processes for affordable housing projects, lower tap fees (the cost to tap into water and sewer lines), or tax exemptions for affordable housing. These policies would promote affordable housing projects by lowering costs. The Douglas Park representatives to this process have pointed out that these sort of general policies should be adopted (or not) county-wide and not just limited to Columbia Pike.

• One issue that is potentially troublesome for our neighborhood is the proposal to limit the parking requirements for affordable housing projects to 0.7 or 0.8 parking spaces per unit. Under the Form Based Code, the ratio is generally 1.125 spaces per unit. This means a building of 200 apartments would have 225 parking spaces, or one parking space per unit and plus one visitor space for every eight units. A 200 apartment building with a 0.7 ratio would have 140 parking spaces total. The idea behind this is that because Columbia Pike has good transit, and with transit improvements planned, less parking is needed. This makes the building less expensive, and easier to be affordable. The consultants and staff have stated that this ratio has worked in other places. There is skepticism about whether these places are really similar to the Pike neighborhoods, and whether such a ratio would really work on the Pike. Parking is already very tight, and parking shortages affect the whole neighborhood as we have seen through unpleasant experience. In addition, although transit improvements are planned on the Pike, plans don't always result in actual improvements. The Douglas Park representatives are paying particular attention to this issue.

Meetings on this process will continue. We are trying to organize a meeting with county staff and the consultants for several Pike civic associations, date and time to be announced. You can read more about this process on the county website at *http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/current/Columbia_Pike_LandUse_Housing_Study.aspx.* A copy of the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Plan Policy Framework is posted on the homepage of the Douglas Park website at *http://www.douglasparkca.org/.*

RE-BUILDING COLUMBIA PIKE

Work continues on designing Columbia Pike to be more pedestrian and transit-friendly, while moving traffic better, through the Columbia Pike Implementation Team, on which Douglas Park is represented. This is a continuation of work that has been undertaken for years to improve the streetscape as part of the Columbia Pike Initiative. It is being done in parallel with plans for transit improvement and the streetcar, but this effort is focused on sidewalks, crosswalks, medians and left turn lanes. The Pike is 200 years old, and will need to be re-built in the coming years. The goal is at the same time to make it more of a main street, rather than a highway.

A public meeting will be held in January 2012 to go over the work so far. In general, the plan is to create a uniform road, fifty-six feet across, leaving room for two lanes of traffic in each direction, left turn lanes where needed, and medians in between intersections.

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It is being planned block by block. Sidewalks are to be expanded to 10 feet wide where possible, or at least six feet. In some areas, like next to the old Ski Chalet, it will still be very tight, because the buildings are close to the road. Superstops for transit are being incorporated into the design. Details of the work so far are available at *http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/CPHDForumsColumbiaColumbiaPikeOngoingInitiatives. aspx.*

The roadbed on the Pike between South Taylor Street and Four Mile Run Drive is a mess because of paused construction. In the middle of work to re-locate and upgrade utilities, like water and sewer, as part of putting electrical and communication lines underground, it was discovered that the utilities were not in the locations shown on the plan. The project needed re-design, which reportedly has been completed. Between now and the restart of construction, the road surface is to get a better temporary fix, according ot County officials.

Volunteer Opportunities at Randolph

By Rita Wiggins

ADOPT-A-READER

If you love reading with children, are available during the day, and would like to help a young child improve his/her reading proficiency, we have a great opportunity for you. Adopt-A- Reader programs are held before and after school at 7.45 to 8.15a, and 3.20 to 4.00pm, respectively. Adults are matched one-on -one with children who need extra help to improve their reading skills. Books and guidance are provided.

LUNCH BUDDY/READING BUDDY

Adults are matched with students who need friendship, a role model, incentive to do their work and stay on the right track academically/behaviorally. Lunch buddies meet with students once each week for 45 minutes during the student's assigned lunch period. The first lunch period begins at 11.00a. The last lunch period begins at 12.10p. During that time they eat together and interact by doing any of the following: completing homework, reading, going to the computer lab, playing a board game, playing outside, taking a walk on school grounds, talking, etc. Students buy their lunch in the cafeteria or bring a lunch from home. Lunch buddies can eat in Ms Wiggins' room, the student's classroom, the cafeteria or outside.

Want to help? Contact Rita Wiggins at 703.228-.2321 or rita. *wiggins@apsva.us*.



Wakefield HS News

By Katharine Voldal

The Wakefield PTA will host a special community meeting on the new high school construction on Monday 14 November from 7.00—8.00p in the the WHS cafeteria. Representatives from Arlington Public Schools and the construction management team will provide an overview of the building project to date, followed by a Q&A session. Wakefield parents and residents of the surrounding community are invited to attend! The regular monthly PTA meeting will immediately follow in Room 110.

Upcoming events at WHS:

• WHS presents *The Marriage of Miss Hollywood and King Neptune* by Robert Schenkkan, a comedy set against the backdrop of early Hollywood and Los Angeles political corruption. Performances are 2, 3, 9 and 10 December from 7.00p in the Wakefield auditorium. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5 for students.

Other events:

- **Monday 5 December.** Information Night for Wakefield Parents; College Financial Aid Workshop. From 7.00p in room 110.
- **Tuesday 13 December.** Winter Band Concert. From 7.30p in the auditorium.
- Monday 20 December. Winter Orchestra and Choir Concert. From 7.00p in the auditorium.

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