



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

www.drca.org

Spring 2022

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Bill Richardson
Bill@drca.org

We hope you will be able to attend the last membership meeting of the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) before the beginning of the new school year. It will be held at Taylor School at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8. A social half hour will begin at 7:00 p.m. Our primary focus will be to describe the County's current "missing middle" housing initiative and get your views on it, so that we can present the County Board with those views in time for their consideration at the Board's July monthly meeting. More on that in the accompanying article by Charlie Henkin on page 5.

We also will hear a brief presentation by the current manager of Potomac Overlook Regional Park, Rachel Doody, about priorities and upcoming programs at the park. Living in the house closest to the park, I know that it has become a great refuge to many of us during the past two years of living with COVID.

I also want to urge you to complete the Survey Monkey survey that's highlighted in this newsletter on page X. It's designed to update our Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan, now over 20 years old, which we use to inform the County of our members' overall priorities and concerns. These may include funding for sidewalks and other NC projects in our area, management and

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FARMERS MARKET BACK FOR SECOND SEASON

On April 16, the Cherrydale Farmers Market opened for business again at Hamm Middle School. The market again will be operating each Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to noon through early November. Check out the full list of vendors at cherrydalefarmersmarket.org.

For those who choose to drive rather than walk or bike to the market, parking is available on Lorcom Lane, Military Road, or in the school parking lot. We hope to see you at the market this season!

The next Donaldson Run Civic Association meeting is in person at Taylor Elementary School Wednesday, June 8 at 7:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

(continued from page 1)

operation of our parks and facilities, speeding and traffic concerns, school issues, deer control, Langston Boulevard development, zoning issues, and whatever else interests you. Many thanks to Amanda Weaver for updating this survey. We will also be sending it out by e-mail, so please be sure we have your e-mail address. See the article below by Kathy Rehill on how to get us your contact information. Please complete the survey as soon as you can so that we will be able to compile the results in preparing our updated NC Plan.

Finally, in connection with our upcoming DRCA board elections, I want to thank two board members for their long and devoted service as they retire from the board. Anne Wilson, my predecessor as president for many years, has continued to serve tirelessly on a whole range of issues, including the 26th Street-Old Dominion Task Force, Marymount University liaison, stream restoration issues, traffic concerns, webmaster, and all around go-to person for contact with relevant County staff. Deirdre Dessingue, our Second Vice President, has been active in DRCA in one capacity or another for decades. She has been our principal liaison with the Langston Boulevard (formerly Lee Highway) Alliance, represented us on Marymount University matters, and been a constant reminder to us of county-wide issues of concern to our members. Please give Anne and Deirdre your thanks as they head off to a well-deserved retirement after looking after the neighborhood's interests for so many years.

DRCA NEEDS YOUR ANNUAL DUES!

Kathy Rehill

DRCA is a volunteer run organization that uses dues to produce and send our newsletters to all the residents of the Donaldson Run neighborhood. Dues also help to pay for the costs associated with owning a website, email distribution system, and maintaining or replacing the kiosks where we post newsletters and the signs that announce the Donaldson Run neighborhood.

While dues are not mandatory, they enable our civic association to distribute neighborhood information. Being paid up on your annual dues means you are a member in good standing and can vote on civic association business. If your membership has expired (see the address label on

The Current is distributed free of charge to all households in the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) area. DRCA, like all civic associations in Arlington, is a neighborhood organization, administered by elected volunteers. The DRCA promotes information sharing and discussion on neighborhood, local, and regional issues. DRCA is not affiliated with any political or religious group or with the Donaldson Run Recreation Association that operates the swimming pool on Marcey Road. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at Taylor Elementary School (2600 North Stuart Street). Follow this newsletter for meeting dates. Only dues-paying DRCA residents are eligible to vote. DRCA boundaries are: Military Road on the east (including Marcey Road, North 26th Street, North 25th Place, and North Ridgeview Road); 26th/31st Street on the north; Lorcom Lane on the south (including North Randolph Street and 27th Streets south of Lorcom Lane); and Vernon Street on the west.

DRCA Board

President	Bill Richardson	525-5270
1st VP	John Seggerman	403-2844
2nd VP	Deirdre Dessingue	525-1351
Secretary	Charlie Henkin	294-4002
Treasurer	Kathy Rehill	403-1064
Director	Susan Cunningham	527-7705
Director	John Fisher	
Director	Amanda Weaver	202-365-3292
Director	Anne Wilson	525-0322
Editor	Mary Heston Cooper	407-8045

page 8), and you want to renew, please send a check payable to DRCA, along with the form on page 7, to Kathy Rehill, DRCA Treasurer, 2701 N. Wakefield Street, Arlington VA 22207.

We don't have a Zelle or Paypal option yet, but if you would like to help Kathy set up such a system, please reach out to her at kathy@drca.org or let her know if you prefer being able to pay electronically by Paypal, Venmo, or Zelle. If you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, please indicate your email on the membership form when you mail in your dues.

DRCA ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT JUNE 8 MEETING

Anne Wilson

Every two years the terms of all nine DRCA officers expire. This year, the election for new officers will be held at the civic association meeting on June 8. Two current members, Second Vice President Deirdre Dessingue and Director Anne Wilson, will be retiring from the Board.

Consistent with Article V of the DRCA Constitution, a nominating committee consisting of Anne, Deirdre, and John Seggerman was established to seek interested neighbors to fill the vacant positions. The committee is proposing the following slate that will be presented to the membership at the meeting in June:

President: Bill Richardson
First Vice President: John Seggerman
Second Vice President: Amanda Weaver
Secretary: Jennifer Mehmood
Treasurer: Kathy Rehill
Director: Alisa Cowen
Director: Susan Cunningham
Director: John Fisher
Director: Charlie Henkin

Under the DRCA Constitution, members who pay their dues at least 60 days prior to the election will be eligible to vote. To join or renew your membership go to: www.drca.org/about_us. If you have a question about your membership status, contact Kathy Rehill (kathy@drca.org).

LARRY FINCH PLAQUE TO BE UNVEILED ON JUNE 18

Anne Wilson

On **Saturday June 18 at 11 a.m.** all are invited to attend the unveiling of a plaque honoring former Donaldson Run neighbor, the late Larry Finch. If you moved into the neighborhood in recent years, you may not be aware of Larry's longtime work to enhance parks and promote the planting of trees throughout Arlington. DRCA joined with the Friends of Arlington Parks (FOAP) to request that a plaque be approved to commemorate Larry's work. It will be installed near the Military Road entrance to Zachary Taylor Park adjacent to the "Larry tree" that was planted in Larry's honor when he moved out of the area. At the unveiling, several speakers, including a member of Larry's family, will make brief comments. Light refreshments will be served.

For those who are interested, following the program there will be a guided walk to the Tributary B stream restoration project, which will have just been completed. Even if you did not know Larry, this will be a good opportunity to meet some neighbors and learn about an individual who used his passion for nature to motivate individuals and local government to preserve and improve Arlington's parks and natural spaces. To sign up for this free event, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dedication-of-plaque-and-tree-in-memory-of-larry-finch-tickets-323395313087>

COUNTY BOARD DIRECTS STAFF TO BEGIN STUDY OF LOT COVERAGE ISSUE

Bill Richardson

One of the issues that County Board Member Takis Karantonis spoke to us about at our February meeting was DRCA's longtime concern about the "McMansion" issue. Redevelopment in our neighborhood has proceeded at a rapid pace, at a size and scope that poses a substantial threat to the neighborhood's look and feel, often at the sacrifice of mature tree canopy, and with serious stormwater management impacts. Earlier this year, the County Board directed Planning Division staff to include in their annual work plan a study of possible Zoning Ordinance reforms that could address this issue.

This study will include an analysis of the "lot coverage" issue – that is, the limits established in 2005 on the extent of a lot that the ordinance permits to be covered by residential development projects. These current limits permit up to 43 percent coverage in R-8 districts (and 40 percent in R-10 districts), do not account for the impact of all impervious surfaces, and may not appropriately address undersized lots (e.g., a smaller 6,000 square foot lot in an R-8 district, which means a district generally requiring minimum lot size of 8,000 square feet). Height as well as lot coverage has also become an issue in some parts of the DRCA neighborhood. We have asked the County to review the way the Zoning Ordinance calculates compliance with the current 35-foot height limit. By using the average height at all four corners of the house, and including only half the height of a gable roof, the ordinance currently permits the building of very tall homes.

Apart from whether these current Zoning

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LOT COVERAGE STUDY

(continued from page 3)

Ordinance provisions need reform, DRCA members have also sometimes expressed serious doubts about whether construction *actually complies* with them. We have asked the County to ensure that adequate resources are available to determine whether building plans comply with the ordinance, and whether as-built structures are consistent with those plans approved by the staff. We believe the County Board supports this resource commitment, and we understand that they will be exploring with staff the more challenging question of how to recruit additional personnel with the experience necessary to take on these jobs.

The County's ongoing study of expanding "missing middle" housing intersects with this question about the need for Zoning Ordinance reform. ("Missing middle" refers to housing stock of greater density, falling between single-family homes and very large apartment or condominium buildings.) Preliminary indications are that the County Board prefers to tackle Zoning Ordinance reform only after it has addressed the need for more affordable missing middle housing stock. However, concerns about the size and scope of residential structures are largely the same, whether they are single-family or multi-family homes. We hope to raise these concerns with the County in the coming months.

TRIBUTARY B PROJECT TO BE FINISHED IN JUNE

Aileen Winquist

The Tributary B stream project will be complete in June. The work to re-shape the stream channel and the addition of stone step pools will reduce energy within the channel, protect the stream banks from erosion and increase resiliency during flooding events. The work will also protect the critical water main that runs parallel to the stream and serves the Donaldson Run neighborhood.

The final work for the project includes planting and trail restoration. The contractor will be planting 332 native trees, 180 shrubs, 200 live stakes (cuttings that will grow into trees), and more than 4000 herbaceous plants. Trees will include flowering dogwood, black cherry, beech, American holly, red oak, black gum, white oak, sycamore, spicebush, elderberry and many other species. Plants will include woodland sedge, broomsedge, Christmas fern, sensitive fern, several species of goldenrod, soft rush, swamp milkweed,



A before picture, above, shows the extensive stream erosion threatening the water main, trail, and trees along the stream channel.



The after picture, above, shows the new channel with step pools to manage and direct the energy of the flow.

and white wood aster. The planting contract includes a five-year warranty on the plants and invasive plant control.

The contractor will also be re-constructing the trail, adding under trail drainage in key locations, and restoring the staging areas. The access and staging area along N. Upton will have one street tree planted closer to the dead end of the street (where a tree was removed). Any damaged sidewalks will be replaced, and the temporary asphalt sidewalk will be replaced with grass. The asphalt on N. Vermont is scheduled to be repaved under the County's paving contract following the project completion.

More information about this project is available on the project web site:

www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Environment-Projects/Donaldson-Run-Stream-Restoration-Tributary-B

Please contact Aileen Winquist at awinquist@arlingtonva.us with any questions.

COUNTY'S MISSING MIDDLE REPORT

Charlie Henkin

On April 28 Arlington released its Phase 2 "Draft Framework" on "Missing Middle Housing" (MM). Missing Middle refers to housing in which more than one residential unit (other than an Accessory Dwelling Unit) exists on a lot, but less than higher rise developments. So it includes duplexes at the low end of the spectrum and garden style apartments and octoplexes at the densest end of the spectrum. The County Board currently plans to consider this Draft Framework at its July meeting.

The MM proposal would expand the availability of these options by allowing them on lots currently zoned only for single-family homes. You can review the Draft Framework at <https://bit.ly/MMHS-Phase2>. On May 10, DRCA urged the County to review whether to tighten the lot coverage, height, and setback limits applicable to single-family and proposed MM homes before enacting any MM proposal. DRCA also asked for information supporting certain assumptions in the Draft Framework.

In recent years, a number of jurisdictions around the country have relaxed single-family zoning requirements, in hopes of increasing and diversifying housing stock and providing less expensive housing options. These actions are separate from efforts, here and elsewhere, to promote even less expensive "affordable" housing, priced at or modestly above the poverty income level.

The April 28 MM Draft Framework had two principal features:

- The proposed Missing Middle Housing types would include those with up to eight dwellings fitting within the same footprint, placement, and height standards as single-detached housing. The Draft Framework estimates that MM units would be affordable to households with incomes as low as \$108,000 (for 8-Plex) to \$244,000 (for duplex).
- At the same time the Report noted that "Large single-detached houses would still be more financially attractive for most redevelopment." According to the draft, the market for large homes is strong, and MM housing has more risk and complexity. Thus, the draft predicts, "housing and population growth due to

MM housing would be modest and dispersed."

Therefore, the net effect is estimated to entail only about 20 lots and 150 residents per year over a 10-year period. If these projections are accurate, such a modest effect does not appear consequential, pro or con, for the initiative. The projections do not include estimates beyond this 10-year period.

Prior comments suggest some widespread questions about the impacts of this proposal, including:

- How reliable are these estimates of the extent of likely MM deployment, and the likely income at which MM ownership or rental would be affordable?
- What effect would the proposal have on widespread concerns about the effects of housing redevelopment on stormwater management, diminishing tree canopy, and public parks? The law caps required tree canopy to as little as 10 percent of the lot for MM, half that for single-family homes.
- Would MM redevelopments present challenges for school and infrastructure investment, and needed tax revenue, over time? Or would such effects be minimal if MM units are spread across all County neighborhoods?

GULF BRANCH NATURE CENTER FUNDING STAYS LIMITED TO THREE DAYS PER WEEK

According to the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center, and despite advocacy by Friends and others, the County budget as approved in April does not include funding to permit resumption of pre-pandemic operations six days a week. We understand that the cost of restoring these hours would have amounted only to \$25,000.

Friends of Gulf Branch plans to see if the proposed Capital Improvement Program includes funding for updating Gulf Branch and Long Branch Nature Centers, which have received no such funding as have other facilities such as community and recreation centers. You may keep abreast of their efforts at <http://site.friendsofgbnc.org/> or contact the County Board to express your views at Countyboard@arlingtonva.us.

DONALDSON RUN NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION SURVEY

Amanda Weaver

As previously announced, the Donaldson Run Civic Association is updating the Neighborhood Conservation Survey. This survey was last updated in 1999 and many changes have come to our neighborhood since. The DRCA Board plans to use this survey to identify and prioritize those items of importance to our membership. Additionally, the survey can be used to advocate for funding and benefits with Arlington County. Results of the 1999 survey proved useful and persuasive, resulting in neighborhood conservation funding for pedestrian safety, streetlights, and other enhancements.

This is your opportunity to share your opinion on land use and development, safety and transportation issues, commercial development, and our parks and recreation. Your assistance in updating the results of this survey to reflect current priorities and concerns is greatly appreciated.

The survey is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete and the deadline for submission is September 1. Only one survey should be submitted per household. The survey can be accessed using the link or QR code below. If you would prefer to complete and return a paper copy of the survey, please contact Amanda@drca.org.



Professional Help Around the House
will return in our next issue.
Please refer to the February newsletter
for the last version of that section:
<https://www.drca.org/newsletters-current>

MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY REVISES PROPOSAL FOR SOCCER/LACROSSE FIELD AT MULCH PILE SITE

Bill Richardson

As you may recall, three years ago the County's 26th Street-Old Dominion Task Force, which included members from DRCA and other surrounding neighborhoods, provided recommendations on future use of the current mulch pile/salt dome site. These included a proposal for an enhanced park area next to the Donaldson Run trailhead. The County has not yet acted on these recommendations, the cost of which was estimated to be \$30-40 million for the full variety of changes.

During the Task Force's study, Marymount University proposed an alternative plan for the site that would have included an NCAA-size soccer and lacrosse field on County property, financed by Marymount for use by its teams but also available for use by County residents. The Task Force overwhelmingly rejected this alternative proposal.

Late last year, Marymount submitted a revised proposal for this field to the County, in an effort to address some of the concerns raised during the Task Force review. This proposal would make use of Marymount's later \$3 million acquisition of additional property behind the site, coupled with access to the Missionhurst property, designed to provide improved and more walkable green space. It also includes a small park dedicated to public use on the Marymount property across 26th Street. An initial meeting, to which Marymount invited DRCA and the Old Dominion Civic Association, identified several concerns with the revised proposal. These included the size of the soccer/lacrosse field and facilities, the reduced space available for mulch pickup, the loss of leaf storage facilities, the availability of public access to Missionhurst already, and the diminished size and relocation of the public park sought by area residents to which the County has committed.

County staff have undertaken to include DRCA and other affected civic associations in their future discussions with Marymount about its revised plan. DRCA will continue to update its membership as events warrant.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Please check your mailing label on page 8 to see how many residents in your home are members and the latest year for which dues have been paid. Dues cover a calendar year. Contributions are not tax deductible. Note that only members whose dues have been paid 60 days in advance are allowed to vote on civic association business.

Dues: \$15 per household per calendar year. Payment for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 years (circle one)

Total dues: \$_____ Newsletter contribution: \$_____ Total enclosed: \$_____

New resident: Yes _____ No _____ Email only copy of newsletter Yes _____ No _____

Name(s):

Phone: _____ email address: _____

Address:

Are you already on the DRCA email list? _____

If you are not on the DRCA listserv, we recommend that you sign up for it so that you will be notified of issues in a timely way. Would you like to be added to this listserv? _____

Special Interests/Volunteer Areas/Comment

Please make check payable to Donaldson Run Civic Association.

Mail to: Kathy Rehill, Treasurer, 2701 N. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22207

HIRE A NEIGHBOR

Many thanks to our neighborhood teens who are available for the jobs listed below. If you, or someone you know, are interested in providing a neighborhood service, email mary@drca.org.

Babysitting

Ella Paris, 14 y.o., 571-317-4962
Sophia Coccozza, 17 y.o., 571-639-8785
Paula Margison, 18 y.o., 703-357-8528
Mackenzie Rau, 13 y.o., susannewton@yahoo.com
or 703-898-7307

Dog Walking & Pet Care

Quinn Cooper, 18 y.o., 703-401-0133
TJ Hutchison, 18 y.o., 571-286-8795

STAYING IN TOUCH

Did you miss the announcements about the Holiday Decorating Contest? Do you want to keep abreast of issues affecting our neighborhood in between the quarterly newsletters? Are you hoping to participate electronically in the upcoming Donaldson Run Civic Association survey to help update our Neighborhood Conservation Plan?

For more ways to stay in touch, members are encouraged to subscribe to the DRCA email distribution. It is the best way to stay up-to-date on what is going on in the neighborhood. If you would like to be added to the list, please send an email with your name and street address to: drca-group+subscribe@groups.io

Donaldson Run Civic Association
c/o Kathy Rehill, Treasurer
2701 N. Wakefield Street
Arlington, VA 22207

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This is your neighborhood newsletter.
See page 2 for Civic Association
information.

Next Donaldson Run Civic Association Meeting
Wednesday, June 8 at 7:30 p.m.
A social half hour will begin at 7 p.m.

Agenda:
DRCA Board Elections
Potomac Overlook Park Manager, Rachel Doody
Missing Middle Discussion

In person at Taylor Elementary School