



# The Current

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DONALDSON RUN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

[www.drca.org](http://www.drca.org)

January 2025

## PRESIDENT’S LETTER

**Bill Richardson**  
[Bill@drca.org](mailto:Bill@drca.org)

I hope you all will join us on **Wednesday, January 29**, to welcome back **Susan Cunningham**, our former DRCA board member, to hear her perspective on her first year as an Arlington County Board Member, and to ask her your questions about key issues facing Arlington County this year. As usual, our meeting will be held at **Taylor Elementary School, at 7:30 p.m.**, preceded by a social half hour beginning at 7:00.

At the County Board’s 2025 kickoff meeting on January 7, Susan highlighted her key goals for the year. These include continued focus on mental health and other human needs such as establishing a youth strategic plan, implementation of a climate resiliency resolution, tackling the long recognized need for study of the lot coverage provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, and making hard choices in a difficult budget environment on what County programs provide the best return on investment. Susan has also emphasized the need for performance metrics and transparency as a way to promote more trust in government.

We hope you will pass the word to your DRCA neighbors about our meeting with Susan, as we were unable to send hard copies of this newsletter through the mail to the 772 of our members who have not signed up to receive it electronically. Instead, we have sent out postcard notices for this meeting, with a link to the newsletter on our website.

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**Thanks again to  
Andy’s Lawn Service for  
your care and  
maintenance of the  
DRCA sign at  
Military Road and  
N. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
We truly appreciate  
your community spirit!**

The next Donaldson Run Civic Association meeting is at  
Taylor Elementary School  
Wednesday, January 29 at 7:30 p.m.

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

(continued from page 1)

For many years, we have been paying to mail the newsletter to all DRCA residents, even though most who receive the newsletter through the mail do not pay our annual \$20 voluntary dues that go primarily to funding these newsletters. While we received a one-time grant from the County to mail our last newsletter, we need to replenish our funds in order to continue with such mailings in the future.

To do so, I ask that you do two things. First, consider whether to elect to receive these newsletters electronically in the future, rather than by mail. Second, please stay current with your annual dues. See below for instructions.

I hope to see you at Taylor School on January 29.

## Membership Dues

*Kathy Rehill*

Your dues pay for this newsletter, our ice cream socials, and our updated website. Paying dues allows you to be a member of DRCA and vote on civic association business. Dues are \$20/household.

For an update on your dues status, email [treasurer@drca.org](mailto:treasurer@drca.org). You can renew your dues by sending a check payable to DRCA along with the form on page 8 to Kathy Rehill, DRCA Treasurer, 2701 North Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22207. You can also pay via PayPal to @DonaldsonRunCivAssoc or by pointing your phone's camera to this QR code. Thanks for supporting this all-volunteer organization!



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	Amanda Weaver	202-365-3292
Secretary	Dana Miller	202-841-3696
Treasurer	Kathy Rehill	403-1064
Director	Alisa Cowen	407-5324
Director	John Fisher	623-1111
Director	Charlie Henkin	294-4002
Director	Laura Yoeckel-Kelly	362-5380
Editor	Mary Cooper	407-8045

## THE COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT BOARD NEEDS YOU

The Arlington County Community Oversight Board (COB), with the Independent Police Auditor, independently reviews and addresses public grievances against the police department and has the power to investigate complaints and recommend actions. The COB works to build trust and accountability between the community and the police department. There are current vacancies on the Board. To learn more and apply, please visit the website:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Commissions-and-Advisory-Groups/Community-Oversight-Board>.

# COUNTY’S “MISSING MIDDLE” PROGRAM HALTED PENDING COURT APPEAL

**Bill Richardson**

The County’s controversial “Expanded Housing Options” (EHO) program adopted in 2023, aka “missing middle,” would have permitted construction of multifamily housing (from duplexes up to six-plexes) in all single-family housing districts in the County. Of the 45 EHO applications granted by the County prior to the circuit court’s invalidation of the program in September 2024, one was located in DRCA.

In November 2024, the County appealed that circuit court decision to the Virginia Court of Appeals. The County is expected to argue on appeal both that the circuit court should have dismissed the challenge for lack of particularized injury to the named plaintiff homeowners, and that the court’s decision on the merits was wrong. The decision found (1) procedural flaws in the County’s action relating principally to lack of the adequate notice required by state law, (2) a failure to analyze the infrastructure costs anticipated from the EHO program, and (3) reliance on additional tree planting requirements beyond those permitted to local governments under state law.

The parties have not yet filed their briefs on appeal, and the court of appeals has not yet scheduled oral argument. Thus, its decision on the County’s appeal is not expected before late this year. The losing party is likely to file a further appeal with the Virginia Supreme Court.

Pending the appeal, the County sought and obtained from the circuit court a partial stay of its decision. This stay permits proceeding with the 45 EHO applications that had already been granted prior to the September 2024 decision, while the appeal is pending. However, the circuit court required each such EHO grantee to insert in its land records a notice of the pendency of the appeal and the prospect of potentially voiding the grant, depending on the outcome of the appeal. We understand that this notice condition has led to inaction (or proceeding instead with single-family home construction) on most if not all of these 45 projects.

# STATUS OF TRAFFIC ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT KEY AREA INTERSECTIONS

**Bill Richardson**

DRCA residents have often complained about speeding and traffic issues in our neighborhood over the years. Here is a brief rundown of the key developments over the past year on some of these.

**Lorcom Lane/Vacation Lane intersection.** Last year, following DRCA’s 2022 request for a traffic study, the County set aside \$2.3 million for improvements at this site to reduce safety risks. Staff will seek comment on the preferred solution after a preliminary design proposal, which may or may not include a traffic signal.

**Military Road/Nelly Custis Drive roundabout.** The County has finalized the design for the permanent version of this controversial project, which is being put out for bid.

**Lorcom Lane (from Military Road to Nelly Custis Drive).** Staff is now working on the final concept design for this project, which proposes additional and wider sidewalks, reduced pedestrian crossing distances, and safety improvements at Nelly Custis.

**Lorcom Lane/Langston Boulevard intersection.** Following a number of crashes and other issues at this traffic light over the past several years, DRCA asked the Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA) to include a study of this site in coordination with County staff’s review of transportation issues throughout the Langston Boulevard corridor. One possibility would be adding right turn signals. We will be meeting on February 12 with LBA and County staff to discuss this site.

**Marcey Road.** Residents here (including those in the Marcey Creek townhouses) met with staff last spring, together with the president of the neighborhood pool, to address concerns about speeding, traffic, and parking in light of increased use of this route to parks and the pool. The County eliminated one parking spot on the pool side, but deferred residents’ additional request for a 5 mph reduction in the speed limit and addition of speed humps. Staff want to evaluate the effectiveness of similar steps at neighborhood schools, based on experience adopting them for the 2023-2024 school year.



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST WINNERS!

*2024 was a great year for festive displays in Donaldson Run. Thanks to all for brightening our neighborhood!*

**Best Lights**  
4141 26th Rd N

**Best Doorway**  
2260 N Upton Street

**Best Tree**  
2401 N Vernon Street

**Best Traditional**  
2401 N Taylor Street

**Best Block/Cul de Sac/Intersection or Street**  
Cul de Sac at 2500 N Utah Street

**Best Inflatables**  
4522 26th Street N

**Best "Griswold" (most humorous)**  
4528 26th Street N

**Judge's Choice**  
2611 N Upland Street



**The Krumins Family were winners of  
"Best Griswold"**



**The Hassouni Family, winners of "Judges' Choice"**

# SCOPE AND TIMING OF COUNTY BOARD'S PROMISED LOT COVERAGE STUDY STILL UNCLEAR

*Bill Richardson*

For many years, DRCA and other civic associations have been urging the County Board to make good on the staff's recognition in the 2014 Stormwater Management Plan of the need for "a more comprehensive look" at the lot coverage provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. These provisions have now been in effect for almost 20 years. They have permitted teardowns leading to much larger footprints for single family homes, with devastating impacts on mature trees, stormwater management, the inventory of smaller and less expensive homes, and neighboring properties.

In December 2023, following the urging of these civic associations, the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission, and the Arlington Tree Action Group (ATAG), the County Board adopted the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP). Among many other things, this plan directed staff to begin work on a study of possible reforms of these lot coverage provisions. Last spring, the Board added a staff position to the FY 2025 budget to fund this study.

Despite repeated requests from these groups to initiate this required study, however, the County has still not yet done so. In July 2024, these civic associations – together with ATAG and the co-chair of the Civic Federation's Planning and Zoning Committee – provided the County with a set of suggestions for a comprehensive review of these provisions. These also included recommendations for study of the 35-foot height limit and the setback limits under the Zoning Ordinance.

In a November 2024 work session with the County Board, staff proposed to limit the study to whether to include sidewalks and patios in the lot coverage calculation. Eighteen civic associations have so far responded that this approach ignores the most important trend, which has not been the relatively constant role of these impervious surfaces, but the enormous expansion of the footprints of new houses themselves in these teardowns. The staff's proposal is also flatly inconsistent with the more expansive scope of the study required by the County Board in the December 2023 FNRP.

DRCA, these many other civic associations, ATAG, and others continue to emphasize the need for a prompt and comprehensive review of these Zoning Ordinance provisions, in light of the accelerating pace of these irreparable teardowns. We are urging the County Board to direct staff to engage in that review, the scope and timing of which will become clear in the coming weeks.

## MULCH VOLCANOES

*Jeff Elder*

Americans love their mulch. But you know who loves it more? Landscape companies. Why? Because they can develop maintenance plans to visit your yard periodically and they can still "make it look" like new by spreading an infinitesimal dusting of mulch under your trees. Every visit, year after year, more mulch. Before you know it, voila.... mulch volcano!

### So What's the Problem?

Roots grow upwards into the rich organic material you've just added and not downward. When the dog days of summer hit, this mulch mound dries out, leaving these roots without water. These mounds become hydrophobic, sheeting water off preventing water from getting to the tree roots. When mounded above the root flare (where the roots spread out at the trunk of the tree), this mulch can cause bark to rot, sometimes bringing fungus and pathogens into the tree, and otherwise making nutrient transport more difficult. These upward running roots can grow thicker ultimately girdling the tree.

### How Should Mulching Be Done?

The rule of 3's is a place to start when planting a new tree: Create a ring of mulch around your tree, 3 inches deep in a 3-foot radius from the trunk, making sure to leave a 3-inch space right around the tree trunk. Even better is to create a mulch bed that extends to the drip line of your tree. Trees and turfgrass are not friendly companions, but competitors. Eventually, you can convert these mulch beds to mixed perennial beds with groundcovers and small plants or shrubs. Then when fall comes, let the leaves lie: The best organic matter for trees is leaf matter, but we blow it all away! And fireflies and other helpful insects overwinter in dropped leaves.

Don't forget to join Amy White and me for monthly invasive removal events: third Saturdays from 9-11am. Sign up here and to find out where to meet: <https://shorturl.at/NpGFa>.

## **PROFESSIONAL HELP AROUND the HOUSE**

### **Appliance Repair**

Paul Mills, Master Appliance Service, (703) 938-6910, recommended by Maxine Nagel, (703) 524-5093

### **Computer Support Services**

Pete Herbst, (703) 283-6595, recommended by Judy Cherrington, (703) 243-6034.

Cameron Jones (571) 217-3596, recommended by Rick DeVore (703) 528-3484 and several other neighbors

### **Gutter Installation or Cleaning and Repair**

Auguste Remy, (703) 425-9595, recommended by Dan Sagalyn, (703) 795-5490

Metro Gutter & Home Services, Inc. (703) 354-4333  
Recommended by Judy Cherrington, (703) 243-6034

Northern Virginia Gutter Cleaning (571) 352-7292,  
[www.NOVAGutters.com](http://www.NOVAGutters.com), recommended by  
Maxine Nagel, (703)-524-5093

### **Handyman Services**

Neil McDonald, 703-200-0746, recommended by  
Janis Clark and Diane Gronewold, 703-516-0766

Sam Axton, (703)-569-5707 or  
[Sam\\_Axton@msn.com](mailto:Sam_Axton@msn.com),  
recommended by Jeanne Svihart (703) 851-2695

Chris Lamar with Arlington Home Service, (703)  
362-0930 or [ahservice@verizon.net](mailto:ahservice@verizon.net), recommended  
by Martha Shmokler, [mess14@juno.com](mailto:mess14@juno.com)

Tulio Pineda, (703) 940-4126, recommended by  
Chuchi Arevalo, (703) 371-3155

### **Housecleaning**

Nuria Cruz at 571-721-0810, recommended by  
Susan Martin ([susanhmartin@icloud.com](mailto:susanhmartin@icloud.com))

Cynthia Baldo, (703) 843-8272, recommended by  
Sharon Frey, (703) 405-5674

Sonia Cerna, (571) 428-8616, recommended by  
Zlática and Werner Hahn, (703) 528 1982.

Sandra Hueco, home: (571) 277-7579 cell: (703)  
338-6160, recommended by Glenn Ward, (703) 527-  
7315

Jupiter's Cleaning & Services, Barhas at (703) 981-  
8700 or e-mail [Jupiters.2011@gmail.com](mailto:Jupiters.2011@gmail.com),  
recommended by Karen Hanneman, (703) 527-4604

Professional Housecleaning Services, managed by  
Alba Isabel, (703) 928-9089 recommended by Rob  
Jones, (703) 276-0545

Squeaky Cleaners, LLC,  
[squeakycleanersnova@gmail.com](mailto:squeakycleanersnova@gmail.com), recommended  
by Shany O'Donnell, [Shanybenitah@gmail.com](mailto:Shanybenitah@gmail.com)

### **Interior Decorating/Home Design:**

Stefani McNair at McNair Designs, (703) 868-3489.  
Recommended by Alexa & James Fleming, (703)  
577-3812.

### **Landscaping and Yardwork**

Lawn and Tree Services, Tu Nguyen, (703) 622-  
7988, recommended by Barbara and Dan Taft (703)  
276-1987

### **Painting and/or Wallpapering**

Ed Wilkerson of C. W. Wilkerson & Sons, (703)  
524-1019, recommended by Liz Hayes, (202) 320-  
0500

### **Roof and Exterior Cleaning**

Smart Wash, (703) 595-4000, recommended by Dug  
and Judy Gillies, (703) 528-3437

### **Window Cleaning**

Old Dominion Cleaning Co. (703) 569-2000,  
recommended by Liz Hayes (703) 528-4119

## **CHERRYDALE LIBRARY EVENTS**

Join the library for fun events for all ages! See the  
Citizens for Cherrydale Library website for links to  
information, to register, and to browse the many other  
ongoing programs at [www.cherrydalelibrary.org](http://www.cherrydalelibrary.org)

**Via Zoom**--Cherrydale Library Book Club. For adults,  
volunteer-led, fiction & nonfiction. Email Suzanne for  
info on registration, questions, and book  
availability: [suza1@comcast.net](mailto:suza1@comcast.net)

**In-Person**--Pajama Storytime for kids 0-5 years old.  
Board Game Evening with Northern Virginia Board  
Game Group for adults.  
The Book Crushers Club for 3rd, 4th or 5th graders.  
NEW PROGRAM: Great Decisions Seminar  
Discussions on world and foreign policy issues.

And that's not all! Visit  
[www.cherrydalelibrary.org](http://www.cherrydalelibrary.org) for more information!



**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: \$20 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 or if you prefer to pay electronically, via PayPal @DonaldsonRunCivAssoc.

**HIRE A NEIGHBOR**

Calling all neighborhood teens! Do you shovel snow? Walk pets? Your Donaldson Run neighbors need you. Send an email to Mary@drca.org and we'll list the service you'd like to provide.

**Babysitting**

- Zoya Ridgway, 12 y.o. text 703-864-8271
- Molly Doster, 16 y.o., 703-505-0898
- Maia Corson, 15 y.o., 571-329-5871, maia.corson@gmail.com
- Mackenzie Rau, 14 y.o., 703-655-5718, Mackenzie.rau21@gmail.com
- Iris Aitken, 15 y.o., 571-242-7994 or iris\_aitken@icloud.com
- Ella Paris, 16 y.o., 571-317-4962

**Cat Sitting**

- Zoya Ridgway, 12 y.o. text 703-864-8271
  - Ayla Mehmood, High Schooler, text 571-599-8282
- Experienced in caring for cats with special needs.

**Dog Walking/Sitting**

- Zoya Ridgway, 12 y.o. text 703-864-8271
- Molly Doster, 16 y.o., 703-505-0898
- Maggie Buchko, 7th grade, 484-803-3189 or maggiesdogwalkingbusiness@gmail.com
- Maia Corson, 15 y.o., 571-329-5871, maia.corson@gmail.com

**Guinea Pig/Hamster Sitting**

- Zoya Ridgway, 12 y.o. text 703-864-8271

**Lawn and Garden Care**

- Iris Aitken 15 y.o., 571-242-7994 or iris\_aitken@icloud.com