



# THE Civic Voice

ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

Newsletter of the Arlington County Civic Federation

Volume 101, Issue 7 March 2017

**Education Focus at March General Meeting:** The Arlington County School Board and the Principal of Arlington Tech will join us as our main presentations for March 7 Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF) meeting.

**2017 Banquet:** This year's banquet will feature a timely panel discussion of Metro's problems and ways to resolve to them with Dr. Gridlock of the Washington Post and Emeke Moneme of the Federal City Council. See page 4 for more information.

**Nominating Committee:** Please consider volunteering for our nomination committee to recruit officers for 2017-2018. Our treasurer and president will both be stepping down as of July 1, 2017. The nominating committee members will be voted upon during the April meeting. ACCF elections occur at the June 2017 meeting.

**Video Recording of Federation Meetings:** We greatly appreciate our working relationship with the Arlington County Career Center to provide filming. Hopefully, we have raised civic awareness of our next generation. Our video links can be found by month on our home page and embedded in most newsletters.

Thank you to our Arlington County Career Center students Christian Porter and Phillip Wince for filming and Flor Cáceres Godoy for editing for the [February floodplain and storm water meeting](#). Video also includes Real Estate Tax Relief overview. Thank you to Tom O'Day, the student advisor for his filming and overall management.

The January meeting with the County Board is only available via the [Arlington County site](#). The vote and comments on the Marijuana resolution vote were not recorded.

**Budget Season for APS:** Public comments on the FY 2018 Superintendent's Proposed Budget for the Arlington Public Schools may be made during the School Board's meetings on March 23 and April 20. Please check the APS website for the exact times and locations for all of these meetings.

The School Board will present and answer questions during our March 7 Arlington County Civic Federation meeting. Please contact our Schools Committee chair, [Michael Beer](#), if you would like to volunteer.

## GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Hazel Auditorium  
Virginia Hospital Center  
1701 N George Mason Drive  
Arlington VA 22205

## Agenda

- 7:00 Meeting called to order
- 7:10 Changing Face of Secondary Education
- 7:40 School Board
- 8:40 County Board Consent Agenda Resolution Discussion and Vote
- 8:50 Unfinished Business and Announcements
- 8:55 New Business
- 9:00 Adjourn

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## Tackling Big Needs Within Arlington's Limited Space

Arlington has limited land available to meet urgent needs such as schools, parks, recreational facilities, and essential operational and support services such as school and ART bus parking, equipment and storage, and contractor staging.

Members of the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC) will hold a series of small interactive roundtable discussions on the opportunities that Arlington County has to acquire new land and the land use recommendations that JFAC will be making over the next six months.

The public is invited to participate in these roundtables. Participants will have the opportunity to give JFAC their recommendations on land acquisition and use to the County and School Boards, including specific uses of the Buck property on N. Quincy Street, a potential land exchange involving property on Shirlington Road, and the Virginia Hospital Center's Carlin Springs/Lee Highway/16th St. North sites.

**Registration is free and required.** Due to limited space, participants are asked to register for only **one roundtable**, to allow everyone interested the opportunity to participate.

[March 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Fairlington Community Center, Room 134](#)

[March 8, 10:30 a.m to 12:30 p.m., Westover Library](#)

[March 9, 7 to 9 p.m., Kenmore Middle School, Room 181](#)

[March 11, 1 to 3 p.m., Arlington Mill Community Center, Room 527 A&B](#)

[March 13, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Central Library, 2nd floor conf. room](#)

[March 14, 7 to 9 p.m., Key Elementary School, Room 317](#)

[March 16, 1 to 3 p.m., Long Branch Nature Center](#)

[March 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Shirlington Library, Conference Room](#)

[March 23, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Washington-Lee High School, Room 1011](#)

[March 25, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Langston-Brown Community Center, Room 109](#)

## ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

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Arlington, VA 22204  
[www.civfed.org](http://www.civfed.org)

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## Executive Committee

*Jesse Boeding*

The Executive Committee met on Sunday, February 12, 2017 to plan the agenda for March 7, 2017 general meeting and discuss future meetings.

The Executive Committee will meet on Sunday, March 12, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. at 4805 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA 22203 (Fire Station 2).

The deadline for newsletter articles is Thursday, March 23, 2016 due to the meeting date of Tuesday, April 4. Newsletters are published approximately 1 week before the meeting.

## Budget Season for County

Arlington County FY2018 Budget Season is in full swing. Please refer to the [Arlington County website](#) for additional materials, meeting dates, and submission links.

Public hearings for budget and tax rates will be held Tuesday 7pm, March 28 and Thursday 7pm, March 30. The online links are open at all hours.

The County Board scheduled to vote on budget adoption Saturday, April 22.

Contact our Vice President and member of the Revenues & Expenditures Committee, [Duke Banks](#), if you would like to participate in ACCF budget efforts.

## Additional Links for Arlington Info

[Insider weekly email newsletter](#)

[Service Requests or Report Problem Online](#)

[Arlington Alert emergency notifications](#)

## Resolution: Asking the Arlington County Board To Reconsider Its Policy Of Classifying Consent Agenda Items as “Nonpublic”

*Suzanne Sundburg*

*Whereas* all Arlington County Board meeting consent agenda items are passed en masse by a single Board vote and without any further review or public discussion at the beginning of regular Board meetings;

*Whereas* historically any member of the public could pull any County Board consent agenda item for public comment and Board discussion for any reason, so long as he/she pulled the item in person prior to a vote on the consent agenda being taken;

*Whereas* on Jan. 3, 2017, the Board voted to reclassify a significant percentage of consent agenda items as “nonpublic,” eliminating the public’s ability to pull any of these consent agenda items (for subsequent public comment and Board discussion) without the approval of at least one County Board member;

*Whereas* on the Board’s Jan. 28, 2017, meeting agenda, 34 items out of 37 total items were consent agenda items, representing approximately 92% of the Board’s entire meeting agenda; *Whereas* of the 34 consent agenda items, 13 items (including capital project contract awards, other contracts, appropriations, permanent and temporary easements/vacations of public property, and acquisition of private property) were classified as “nonpublic,” representing approximately 38% of the consent agenda;

*Whereas* new consent agenda items can be added (or changes to existing items made) and posted online less than 24 hours prior to a meeting’s start time — leaving the public and Board members without reasonable opportunity to review these new materials or changes, and leaving insufficient time for the public to ask a County Board member to pull a “nonpublic” consent agenda item;

*Whereas* consent agenda items are permitted to be added to the Board’s agenda in an incomplete state — for example, lacking staff reports

or other essential supporting documents and pertinent information, containing material omissions or errors of fact, or not having met the Board’s guidelines for a full public process or review;

*Whereas* the Arlington County Board failed to ask the public or civic groups for input or feedback before passing this significant procedural change;

**Therefore be it resolved**, that the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF):

1. The ACCF respectfully requests that the Arlington County Board reconsider its new policy to classify certain consent agenda items as “nonpublic” and asks the Board to seek input and suggestions from the public and civic groups to create an alternative policy that allows the Board to conduct orderly meetings within a reasonable timeframe while also meeting the Board’s stated goals of improving government transparency and encouraging greater public participation in Arlington County government.
2. The ACCF further requests that the Arlington County Board adopt a rule requiring that all critical supporting documents and information pertinent to a **public** Board meeting agenda item or any significant change to an agenda item be sent to all Board members and posted on the County website at least 72 hours before the meeting at which a vote is scheduled, *unless* at least four Board members vote to waive the 72-hour requirement in case of emergency.

## Treemonisha Opera on March 4

Known as the first truly American Opera, Opera NOVA presents Treemonisha, Saturday March 4. 10 am and 2pm.

Students \$4 and adults \$8 – This is a fraction of cost of Virginia Opera or the Kennedy Center.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School  
125 South Old Glebe Road  
Contact 703-536-7557 or [www.operanova.org](http://www.operanova.org)

## Metro's Future – ACCF Banquet Speakers and Program Preview

*Duke Banks*

Kicking off our 101st year as a civic organization, the Civic Federation will address the future of Metro at our April 7 banquet, to be held at the Rosslyn Holiday Inn. You won't want to miss what promises to be a lively conversation discussing Metro. Invitations will be mailed soon. For those who register for the banquet online, you will see a special link to submit questions in advance if so desired.

Safe, reliable Metro service is in everyone's interest in the region, including Arlington, since it is at the core of our economic engine and planning process — especially in the Rosslyn-Ballston, Pentagon City and Crystal City sectors.

Given that Arlington County's Metro subsidy was \$30.3 million in FY2016-17 and that this subsidy is likely to increase in future years because of Metro's increased funding needs, this program is timely. The Arlington County Manager has just unveiled his proposed FY2018 budget, and it proposes a one cent tax rate increase to increase Arlington's share of Metro funding.

Metro's challenges are formidable. Declining ridership, safety concerns and service cutbacks accompany the ongoing hunt for elusive funding sources to better address maintenance and operations, and then there is the Metro Board's unusual organization (members from two states plus the District), which many have characterized as dysfunctional.

To address these challenges, we have the honor of hosting two distinguished speakers at the banquet.

**Robert Thomson** is The Washington Post's Transportation Editor also known as "Dr. Gridlock." He answers travelers' questions, listens to their complaints and shares their pain on the roads, trains and buses in the Washington region.

In addition to his twice-weekly newspaper column, he writes a daily blog on The Post's website to engage readers in online chats and presents transportation-related issues on The Post's Sunday commuter page.

A reporter and editor for 30 years in New York and Washington, Thomson joined The Post in

1988. In 1999, he became The Post's transportation editor.

**Emeka Moneme** is Deputy Executive Director of the Federal City Council (FCC).

Established in 1954, the FCC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the improvement of the District of Columbia that comprises the area's top business, professional, education and civic leaders. The FCC played a critical role in the creation of DC's Metro system.

Moneme's many years of transportation experience include serving as Chief Administrative Officer for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and Director of the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) in addition to serving on the regional Transportation Planning and WMATA boards.

At FCC, Moneme works to create an enterprising nonprofit that will develop and implement infrastructure public-private partnerships. He also works to support transportation-related projects, including the redevelopment of Union Station, continued investment in WMATA, and relieving downtown DC traffic congestion.

Our banquet program will center on the Federal City Council's [provocative proposal](#) to redo the Metro Compact as part of reform efforts. (Click on the preceding hyperlink to access a summary of the FCC Metro Reform Initiative. On this page are additional links to Editorials, op-eds, the December 2 House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing, plus a list of regional leaders who have signed on to support the initiative).

Dr. Gridlock has written several columns on Metro's plights that are as follows:

[Metro did remarkably well during 8-hour stress test](#)

[What's ahead for the region's travelers in 2017](#)

[Changing Metro board's members doesn't change its parochial mind-set](#)

[Virginia governor rips Metro board's political theater](#)

[Metro makes case for more track work hours](#)

[You don't have to ride Metro to care about its future](#)

## Resolution: Include Retirement Funding Summary for Budgeting

Roger Morton

**Whereas**, the yearly Arlington County budget contains no centralized information on the status of the employee retirement system;

**Whereas**, according the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Consolidated Annual Financial Report (CAFR) the general employee retirement system currently assumes a 7.25% rate of return on retirement plan investments (sometimes called the discount rate) ;

**Whereas**, the actual return on approximately \$2 Billion in retirement plan investments was approximately 2% or \$40 million leaving the taxpayer to pay approximately \$50 million in benefit payments;

**Whereas**, a reduction of the assumed rate of return by just even 1%, to 6.25%, would cause a \$246 million, shortage in the retirement plan's funding;

**Whereas**, according to the FY2016 CAFR the growth rate of the general employees retirement benefits is about 24% of labor costs having grown from 9% in 10 years,

**Therefore** be it resolved, that the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF):

Requests that the Arlington County Board include a summary of the important retirement plan information including the yearly funding required by taxpayers in the yearly budget and future projections so the Board's deliberations each year on staffing and compensation levels can be considered keeping in mind the status of the retirement system impacts and further,

Requests that the Board examine ways to consider steps to maintain the long term health of the retirement system for the sake of the employees and taxpayers alike.

[Newsroom for Arlington County](#)

[Building Arlington for One-Stop Permitting](#)

## Resolution: Shirlington Dog Park Maintained and Improved in Current Location

Edie Wilson

### Shirlington Civic Association Resolution

Approved by SCA Members on February 22, 2017

**For the reasons discussed below, be it resolved that the Shirlington Civic Association (SCA):**

**Respectfully requests to Arlington County Staff and the 4MRV Working Group that the Shirlington Dog Park be maintained and improved in its current location; and**

**Designates two SCA members to the Board of the Shirlington Canine Recreation Area; and**

**Commits our community to be responsible, educated and active stewards of the environmental well-being of this area of Four Mile Run.**

### First, Location of the Shirlington Dog Park

The Shirlington Civic Association (SCA) welcomes the opportunity to renew and improve the industrial, park and recreation areas offered by a County-mandated long-range, comprehensive planning exercise led by the Four Mile Run Valley Working Group launched in 2016. We participate actively on that body.

The purpose of this resolution is to provide input on the Shirlington Community Canine Area (SCCA or Dog Park). This is not simply a park "for dogs" and thus a 'diversion' of county resources as some seem to think; it is a hugely successful park for *Arlingtonians* with their dogs. *Tens of thousands of County residents* come to walk along the stream, to enjoy the scenery, to share our love of dogs. People also come to enjoy a vibrant, diverse community where long lasting friendship are formed and people of every age, income group and heritage find companionship.

The Shirlington community is aware of initial master plan proposals presented in two successive 4MRV Working Group meetings in

February. Several of these would relocate the dog park, reduce its size, and place it within Jennie Dean Park near the playground, picnic areas and ball fields.

**The Shirlington community would like to go on record that the Dog Park in its present form and location provides an asset with unique attributes for local and County-wide residents and is vital to our local economy.**

These attributes include:

The quarter-mile length offers a long pathway with shade and trees along the stream where people stroll and dogs play hard, even in hot weather;

The current shape and landscape of the park is interesting and relaxing to both human and canine visitors, unlike some recently installed dog parks;

Its location is close to residents, including the amenities of the Village at Shirlington, but positioned well away from residences and businesses.

The current location between warehouses and the stream and opposite the Trades Center also buffers the inevitable noise of barking dogs in a manner that would not be possible in other proposed locations.

It is fully-handicapped accessible, including parking and pathway.

The physical separation between a multitude of large and small dogs to the west and the children, ball players, families and picnickers with food in play areas of Jennie Dean to the east provides protection for both dogs and people.

**Secondly, Improving Dog Park Governance through Civic Association Representation**

Arlington County requires that each dog park have active volunteer participation, the only kind of park with this requirement. To contribute to this governance and maintenance effort, **the SCA has for the first time designated two representatives from our civic association to the Board of the Shirlington Dogs II.**

These representatives will report to the Association as needed and help us provide more support and effective two-way communications.

We hope other nearby civic associations will do the same.

**Thirdly, Responsible Environmental Stewardship**

Our community is well aware that the Dog Park and Jennie Dean Park are located in a Resource Protection Area, one that has in our view been neglected for many years. We hope that the 4MRV planning effort will result in substantial improvements in the overall environmental health of the valley.

Indeed, it should be noted that the dog park has already contributed substantially to this. Until it was created by volunteers out of a dumpsite, chemical and trash dumping was common along this section of the stream in the 4MRV industrial area. At present, the County's monitoring reveals that bacterial levels are higher above the SCCA than below it, and that the pollutants are primarily manmade discharges and spills, and pollutants carried to the stream by passing across impervious surfaces.

This is why we would like to turn the discussion about the dog park from relocation inside Jennie Dean to how it can be improved and protected in its present site over the short- and long-term. This would include increased storm water management and erosion control, protection of mature trees, and stabilization of the stream bank. We would like to develop a set of practical, affordable actions that can be taken, beginning as soon as practicable. We do not want to see the perfect suddenly become the enemy of the good in this effort, leading to closing the dog park along the stream when the County is not in a position to offer a comparable area.

**We commit ourselves as dog park users, volunteers, and area residents to be informed about this area's environmental needs. We will continue our current efforts to clean up trash and dog waste. To the best of our ability, we will engage with the County on public education and outreach, and will participate in volunteer efforts as stewards of the stream that adds so much to the enjoyment of all who use this dog park, as well as Jennie Dean Park.**

## Civic Federation Meetings Schedule and Programs for 2016 - 2017

Meetings are the 1st Tuesday of each month at the NEW TIME of 7 p.m.

**March 7:** School Board; Arlington Tech and the Future of Secondary Education; Resolution Vote for County Board Consent Agenda Process; New Resolution Introductions

**Friday, April 7:** Banquet Speakers: Mr. Emeka Monome, Deputy Executive Director of the Federal City Council, and "Dr. Gridlock" Mr. Robert Thomson

**April 4:** Nominating Committee Election; Complete Streets; Residential Parking; Joint Facilities Advisory Committee (JFAC); Revenues & Expenditures Resolution on Retirement Discussion and Vote

**May 2:** Virginia Commonwealth Legislative Panel (tentative)

**June 6:** ACCF Elections

**June 30/July 1:** Fiscal Year Closeout and Officer transition

### Arlington County Civic Federation Mission

The ACCF is dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. Its purpose continues to be promoting the general welfare of Arlington County and vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner.

## Committees of the Civic Federation

The committees provide the basis for most actions of the Federation. We strongly encourage every delegate and alternate to serve on at least one committee. If you have an interest in any topic please contact the chair. If a chair is not listed, contact our President Stefanie Pryor at [stefanie@civfed.org](mailto:stefanie@civfed.org)

Committee	Chair(s)	Email Address
Executive	Jesse Boeding	<a href="mailto:jesse@civfed.org">jesse@civfed.org</a>
Awards	Elected at Dec 2016 Membership Mtg	Postponed to January
Audit	Jay Wind	<a href="mailto:Jay@civfed.org">Jay@civfed.org</a>
Bylaws	Sarah Shortall	<a href="mailto:sarah@civfed.org">sarah@civfed.org</a>
Community Relations	Duke Banks	<a href="mailto:duke.banks@gmail.com">duke.banks@gmail.com</a>
Cultural Affairs	Chair(s) needed	TBD
Emergency	Jackie Snelling	<a href="mailto:jackie@civfed.org">jackie@civfed.org</a>
Environmental Affairs	John Seymour	<a href="mailto:john@civfed.org">john@civfed.org</a>
Housing	Chair(s) needed	TBD
Legislation	Ron Haddox	<a href="mailto:ron@civfed.org">ron@civfed.org</a>
Membership	Chair needed	<a href="mailto:membership@civfed.org">membership@civfed.org</a>
911 Scholarships	Chair needed	TBD
Nominating	Elected at April 2017 Membership Mtg	
Parks and Recreation	Michael Thomas	<a href="mailto:michaelthomas@civfed.org">michaelthomas@civfed.org</a>
Planning and Zoning	Martha Moore	<a href="mailto:martha@civfed.org">martha@civfed.org</a>
Public Services	Jackie Snelling	<a href="mailto:jackie@civfed.org">jackie@civfed.org</a>
Revenues and Expenditures	Chair(s) needed	TBD
Schools	Michael Beer	<a href="mailto:michaelbeer@civfed.org">michaelbeer@civfed.org</a>
Special Events	Joe Pelton	<a href="mailto:joepelton@civfed.org">joepelton@civfed.org</a>
Transportation	Jerry Auten	<a href="mailto:jerry@civfed.org">jerry@civfed.org</a>