



Arlington County Civic Federation

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES, TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2023

FY2023 Award Write-Ups

- **2023 Gazette Leader (formerly Sun-Gazette) Cup** – Adam Henderson (Douglas Park CA)

Adam Henderson is the clear choice as recipient of the 2023 Gazette- Leader (formerly Sun-Gazette) Cup. Widely trusted and respected throughout the Civic Federation's broad county-wide membership, he has served for many years as a delegate (and former CA president) of the Douglas Park Civic Association; chair of the critical CivFed bylaws and nominating committees, and webmaster for ACCF. At the same time he continues to manage his private consulting business, Adam has also found time to serve for many years as the chair of the Pike Presidents Group, a 10-CA cooperative that coordinates and advances the interests of the diverse and vibrant communities along Columbia Pike.

As bylaws chair during this year, Adam was repeatedly called upon to offer parliamentary opinions as an unusually controversial resolution made its way through an often-fractious process toward eventual adoption in modified form by the federation's general membership. Especially during highly charged meetings in February and March, Adam helped to guide a ratification process that ultimately involved a series of competing amendments. This process was closely watched by the County Board, county government and CivFed's own membership. Adam's interpretations of CivFed rules and procedures were critical to moving the process along, and his clear and forthright public statements both at the meetings and in consultations off-line were crucial to the organization finding a satisfactory resolution.

Insistent on the highest integrity in the nominations and elections processes, Adam has sustained trust by the federation membership in how nominations are vetted and elections are conducted. But despite his lengthy tenure as committee chair of bylaws, Adam has shown he is open and eager to adopt sensible changes in procedure to make the organization run more smoothly. Indeed, his highest priority as a dedicated and influential volunteer public servant is that CivFed and its committees be managed efficiently and effectively, and with the interest of benefitting our overall community placed above all other considerations.

In doing so, Adam has selflessly remained in positions of influence within CivFed leadership in order to provide a steady voice of continuity and wisdom to regularly changing leadership teams, often sacrificing his own time in order to ensure that transitions are smooth and important management concerns are not overlooked.

ACCF is the fortunate beneficiary of Adam's stalwart commitment to principles of good management and effective and positive public policy. His contributions are broad, varied and sustained. It is with pleasure and gratitude that CivFed awards the 2023 Gazette-Leader Cup to Adam Henderson.



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- **President's Award** – David Smith (Bluemont CA, Secretary, ACCF)

For Outstanding Service to the Civic Federation

David Smith has been instrumental in making sure that the Civic Federation has survived and been able to continue in its service role to the County during the challenges of the COVID recovery. His quiet competence in enabling CivFed's hybrid meetings to serve people who need to attend online has been crucial. He has been unflappable in responding to challenges from attendees and presenters. Often his work has appeared seamless when behind the scenes it was anything but that. He ensures that our equipment equipment functions for hybrid meetings, arrives early and leaves late to make the meetings function smoothly for the membership. He also takes minutes for CivFed board and membership meetings in this role, absolutely essential work without which we could not make these meetings count. His careful work in counting and recording the votes in our meetings is likewise essential and this award is to honor him for all of his hard work behind the scenes.

David, currently also serving as treasurer of the Bluemont Civic Association, has made significant contributions in several other areas. Two stand out. First, he has repeatedly identified inconsistencies in CivFed bylaws and procedures that he correctly felt needed to be remedied. After diagnosing the problems, he recommended solutions that were quickly and gratefully adopted by the Board of Directors and general membership.

Secondly, David has volunteered to serve as coordinator of the Lubber Run watershed flood mitigation group, consisting of ten civic associations united in advocating for their members to County Board and staff. In the process of assembling and leading this group, David has tirelessly pushed for greater openness in county land use procedures to permit earlier and more consistent public input as large capital projects proceed through the county planning and approval process.



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- **Group Award #1** - Mark Greenwood (Highland Park – Overlee Knolls), Lilith Christensen (Westover Village), John Ford Tara-Leeway Heights), Kathleen Trainor (HPOK), Mike Weinstein (Leeway-Overlee), Bob Ortung (WV), Rob Swennes (LO), Ed Cole (HPOK), Alyssa Cowden (TLH), Jim Little (HPOK)

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On July 8, 2019, a heavy monsoon rain devastated many parts of Arlington County, few more disastrously than the Westover area. At that time, the new Cardinal Elementary School was a year away from opening. By Labor Day, the four most affected civic associations had formed a tight-knit coalition that, in close collaboration with the County Board, government and Arlington Public Schools, has helped to lead an effort that has seen the production, installation and entry into service of what may be the largest capacity stormwater detention vault on the East Coast.

Through well-attended public meetings, focused sessions with County and School Board members and staff, weekly consultation with Department of Environmental Services principals, this Westover Group urged a then-unprecedented County-APS collaboration that permitted construction of the new vault as a County-funded change order to the existing APS contract to complete the Cardinal School.

This saved years of procurement process and led to the expeditious completion of the mammoth project. With each member of the Westover group contributing to the effort under the skilled leadership of HPOK's Mark Greenwood, momentum was maintained during the past four years.

Early in the process, CivFed Public Services chair John Ford led the export of the successful Westover template to establish similar multi-civic-association coalitions for the Spout Run and Lubber Run watersheds.

This collective effort has been hailed as one of CivFed's signature achievements in recent years, and was cited as one of the reasons the County Board proposed --and voters approved -- a ten-fold increase in the County's stormwater flood remediation bonding authority.



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- **Group Award #2** - Esther Bowring (Arlington Forest), Julie Lee (Glencarlyn) and Howard Solodky (Old Glebe)

For several years Arlington County has simmered with strong feelings both for and against a controversial County Board housing initiative called Missing Middle, an aspirational attempt to diversify traditional single-family home neighborhoods via broad up-zoning and construction of more multi-family units in those areas.

As passions and tempers rose during the past 18 months, many citizens adopted varying methods of expressing their support or dissent. These often became acrimonious and confrontational.

In the midst of all the furor, the three awardee civic association presidents led an effort to focus their members' passionate views in an effort that forged a coalition of 16 different civic associations. This group then successfully sought meetings with County Board members and other influential county figures to powerfully and collectively represent those member views.

This powerful joint expression of commonly held views represented one of the most effective means of reaching the county's decision-makers. While the County Board ultimately decided differently than the CA coalition wished, members have cited the group's organization and impact.



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- **Individual Award – Neighborhood Advocacy to Improve Hospital Project – Michael Bruce (Waycroft-Woodlawn CA)**

For Outstanding Civic Engagement and Community Service

During the past four years, Virginia Hospital Center has been constructing a large new medical office and treatment center on property along N George Mason Drive formerly known as the Edison site. This massive project, by far the biggest in the area since the hospital modernization and expansion 20 years ago, has generated tensions with the adjoining communities, most notably the Waycroft-Woodlawn and John M Langston Civic Associations.

A succession of noise, dirt, lighting and other disruptions to the community's tranquility have naturally strained and vexed the neighbors. Quickly and skillfully taking the lead for the community as a locus and voice for these complaints was the current and past president of Waycroft-Woodlawn CA, Michael Bruce. Both a near neighbor to the hospital and a veteran of the community response to the earlier hospital expansion, Michael has tirelessly led a group of concerned residents who have met each month with hospital administrators, senior contractor representatives and county staff. A sitting member of the County Board is also now a regular attendee, at Michael's persistent invitation.

Michael is an effective strategist, a careful researcher, a thoughtful discussant and a diligent negotiator. Michael is a master in his meetings of keeping the focus on the issues and resolutions sought. He has earned the respect of critical county staff and ACB members. He has become the champion of an aggrieved community.