

Newsletter of the Arlington County Civic Federation
October 2022 | Volume 107 | Number 02

October General Membership Meeting October 11, 2022 @ 7:00PM

HYBRID: via Zoom, **and in-person** at Hazel Auditorium, Virginia Hospital Center.

Delegates, Alternate Delegates, others associated with member organizations, and the public are invited to attend this meeting.

No registration is needed to attend in-person, please arrive early for check-in as the meeting will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Please [register in advance](#) by noon on Oct 10 if you intend to join by [Zoom](#).

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

***The secretary@civfed.org must be notified of voting member substitutions by 12 PM on the day of the meeting.*

***The annual certification request has been sent out and needs to be completed in order to ensure we have the correct delegates identified. If you have not already, please update your organizations certification at: [ACCF FY23 Certification Form](#).*

Meeting Agenda

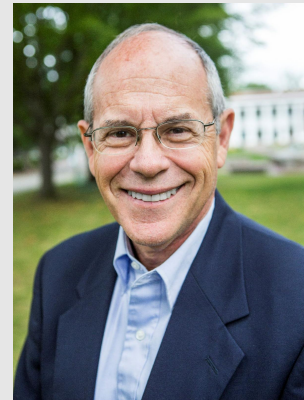
- 7:00 - Welcome and Pledge
- 7:05 - A Civic Conversation on Missing Middle
- 8:50 - Approve [September Minutes](#)
- 8:55 - Annual Certification and Dues Reminder
- 9:00 - Adjournment

***We are seeking volunteers to assist in member check-in at the Hazel auditorium. Please contact secretary@civfed.org if you can support.*

President's Message

At our best, I think Arlington's Civic Federation is about ideas. Right now, we've got plenty of them, ranging from trees to flooding to governance to discussing housing. In some cases, our ideas have led to collaboration with the county and resulted in real progress. On other subjects, greater effort will be required as we work together.

The highly influential Arlington Tree Action Group (ATAG) has by its skill, dedication and persistence elevated to greater significance the curation and maintenance of the county's tree canopy. Developers and county staff tell us they are much more aware of not only the essential nature of our trees but also of the fortitude with which ATAG will defend them. That serves us all.



After July 2019's disastrous flooding, nearly all of our most affected member civic

associations banded together in watershed-based coalitions to partner with county staff in a collaborative effort to ensure future resilience when future climate change-influenced storms again threaten homes, businesses and even lives. One result is a ten-fold increase in bonding authority stormwater mitigation commitment by the county in its most recent 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Civ Fed's Task Force in Government Election and Reform (TIGER) has stimulated county-wide reconsideration of issues ranging from ranked-choice voting to County and School Board terms of office and compensation to the way our local government is structured. As our TIGER committee expands its reach and scope, more of its ideas will garner more public attention and catalyze analysis and change. TIGER-related issues will highlight an upcoming membership meeting.

Our county prides itself on fairness, civility and inclusiveness, but an occasionally acrimonious divide has emerged over a county housing initiative. Misinformation and distrust have inflamed passions on both sides and discussion has become divisive. Civ Fed's annual Candidates' Forum revealed the disparity of views on this crucial subject. Civ Fed will continue to promote frank but respectful discourse with an October 11 meeting focused on MMH. More on this program is below.

To respect and accommodate member preferences, we plan to continue with hybrid meetings and will continue to try to make the experience equally rewarding for in-person and virtual participants.

With best wishes,

John Ford
President

Toward a Civic Conversation on Missing Middle

Recently, Arlington's public discourse has been full of presentations from speakers focusing on the pros and cons of the "Missing Middle Housing Framework." The topic is controversial, and emotions run high with dueling facts and heated exchanges.

We are trying to change the dialogue to promote a respectful exchange and discussion of differing points of view. Our objective is to establish a base that will support an ongoing civic discussion working together to examine proposals and seek common objectives. We have talked with numerous advocates from multiple perspectives about their ideas for meeting this challenge. For our October 11 membership meeting, we have invited and worked with speakers who are committed to a balanced and civil discussion

Our four speakers have met and discussed objectives, ground rules, and suggestions to de-conflict facts that are perceived as mis-matched. Speakers from different perspectives have told us that they often feel that they are talking past each other in public presentations. On October 11, we aim to reduce these disconnects and provide an opportunity for exchange. We understand that this is a first step and a big challenge for all of us. But we think it's important to try, and that the ACCF membership meeting is a good setting.

We have carefully selected a group of conversation leaders including some who will present facts covering the range of discussion topics and some who bring a civic association and civic volunteer perspective. Some identify with support for going forward with Missing Middle, perhaps with a few changes. Others support further review and study of Missing Middle, changes in elements, or steps to help test approaches to objectives. All believe that important principles and values are involved.

Our panel of conversation leaders will be Michael Spotts, from Neighborhood Fundamentals; Anne Bodine, from Arlingtonians for a Sustainable Future; Eric Berkey, president of the Douglas Park Civic Association and service on the Arlington Housing Commission; and Julie Lee, president of the Glencarlyn Civic Association and member of a group of 15 civic associations that have been meeting with the county board to discuss Missing Middle.

The format will include presentations and viewpoints from each leader and discussion with each other about some of the key issues and questions. The panel presentations and discussion will be followed by an opportunity for Q and A from Civic Federation delegates, both in person and via Zoom. Please ensure that your questions are short and direct so our panel can accommodate as many as time permits. We will field questions to balance coverage of topics and perspectives.

Since we expect many questions, we encourage you to send questions in advance to both the program co-chairs, Nadia Conyers (bod.member2@civfed.org) and Jackie Snelling (bod.chair@civfed.org).

Nadia Green Conyers, Jackie Snelling
Co-Chair

Missing Middle Panelists

Anne Bodine

Anne is a leader in Arlingtonians for a Sustainable Future. Anne has lived in Arlington's Lyon Park neighborhood since 1990 and is a member of Lyon Park Civic Association. She is a retired Foreign Service Officer and served most of her career in the Mideast and Afghanistan. She is a lifetime member of the Sierra Club, a member of the American Foreign Service Association, and she serves on the Environmental Justice Committee of the Arlington NAACP. She is also active in Arlington Tree Action Group and has been a member of Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future since 2019.



Michael A. Spotts is the founder and President of Neighborhood Fundamentals, LLC and serves as the Senior Visiting Research Fellow for the Urban Land Institute's Terwilliger Center for Housing. He has over 15 years of experience providing housing-related research and technical assistance to on-the-ground practitioners in both the public and private sectors, at every level of government, and in urban, suburban and rural areas. Prior to founding Neighborhood Fundamentals, he worked for Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. from 2009-2017 as part of the Public Policy team. During this time, he conducted research and analysis of affordable housing and community development policies. Michael serves as a member of the board of directors for the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance and was previously a member of the board of directors for the Arlington (Va.) Partnership for Affordable Housing.



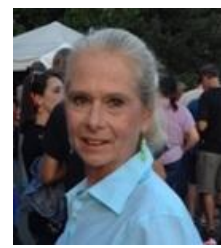
Eric Berkey

A native of the Cleveland-area, Eric Berkey has been President of the Douglas Park Civic Association since March 2021 and an Arlington resident since 2007. A focus of Eric's work with the civic association has been increasing community building within the neighborhood

Eric has also served on the County's Citizens Advisory Commission on Housing since January 2016. Additionally, Eric has led community work regarding affordable housing policies and development and recently oversaw the passage of recommendations regarding aging affordable housing properties in Arlington. Eric served on the South Arlington Working Group for a new Elementary School (Fleet Elementary) and the Civic Federation Board of Directors. Eric is an attorney specializing in civil rights law. Eric lives in Douglas Park with his wife Rachel and their three children.



Julie Lee was born and raised in Arlington. She has served as the president of the Glencarlyn Civic Association for six years. Julie and other civic association presidents have been meeting with County Board Members to address questions concerning the Missing Middle framework.



Candidates' Forum Outbrief

Our Arlington County Civic Federation traditionally hosts its Candidates' Forum just after Labor Day. The Forum has become the kick-off to the political season in Arlington, though COVID considerations have inhibited in-person participation for the past several years. On September 6, we were pleased to resume in-person member and guest participation at Virginia Hospital Center's Hazel auditorium.

All eight candidates for the three contested positions on the county ballot were in attendance. Incumbents for County Board and the House of Representatives faced spirited challenges from their two challengers in each race. Two candidates debated education issues in the contest for an open School Board seat.

Attendance was robust both via Zoom and in person. News coverage focused on the candidates' messages on issues most critical to voters and the differences between the candidates' positions.



Arlington County Board Candidates (from left to right)

Adam Theo (I)
Audrey R. Clement (I)
Matthew D. "Matt" de Ferranti (D) - incumbent



Arlington County School Board Candidates (left to right)

James Vell Rives IV
Bethany Z. Sutton



US House Of Representatives, Virginia's 8th Congressional District 8 Candidates (from left to right)

Teddy Fikre (I)
Karina Lipsman (R)
Don Beyer (D) - incumbent

New Member: Arlington Rotary Club

At our September 6th General Membership meeting we voted and approved a new

Rotary Club of Arlington



Arlington Rotary Club (of Virginia) was founded July 4, 1929. Our club is one of approximately 30,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and territories, with 1.2 million members of Rotary International dedicated to the simple motto, "**Service Above Self.**"

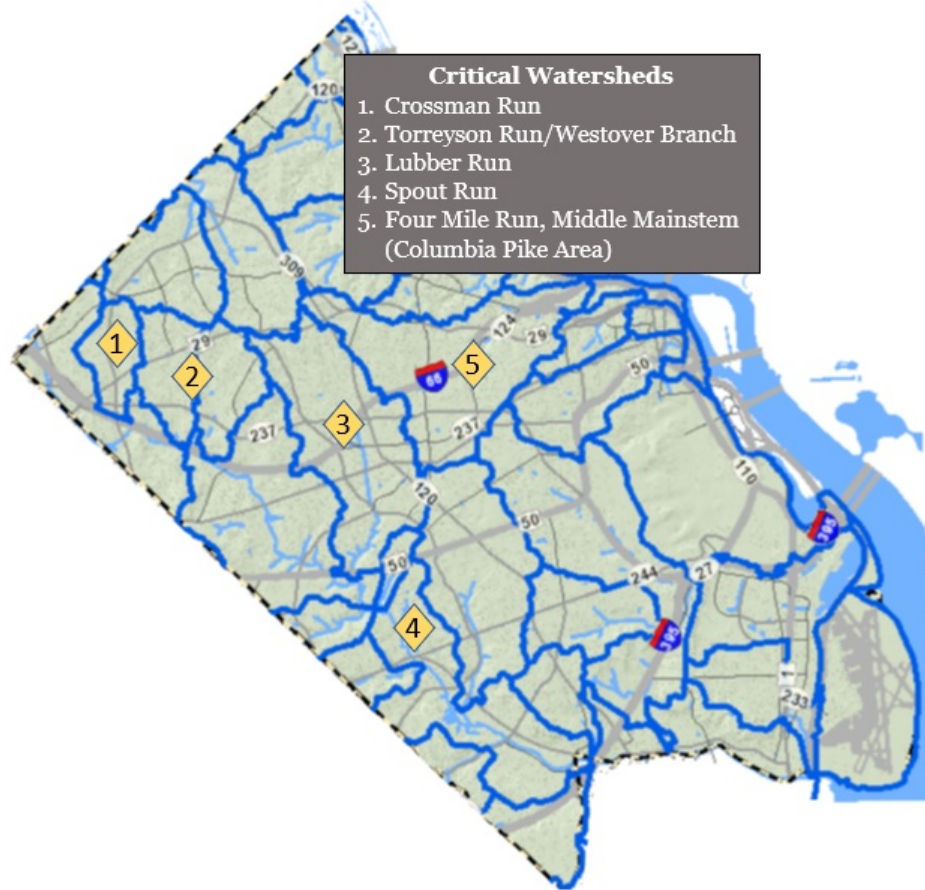
Arlington Rotary is a group of approximately 40 dedicated leaders in our community from a variety of different professions who want to apply their combined talents and resources toward making a difference in the world while also enhancing the exchange of ideas across professional boundaries. Our service projects range from the very local (e.g. picking up litter along Glebe Road), to the global (e.g. our participation in Rotary International's campaign to eradicate polio in the world).



Watershed Meetings

County staff have been working with Civic Federation leaders over the past several months to plan and execute public meetings to update county residents on plans and developments in the five Arlington watersheds deemed most critical from a stormwater flooding perspective. Well-attended, informative sessions were held in September with residents and civic association members from the Spout Run and Lubber Run watersheds, and with residents of the four civic associations along the western end of Columbia Pike earlier this month. Sessions for residents of the Crossman Run (East Falls Church area) and Torreyson Run (Westover area) are planned for October 19 and November 2.

Representatives of at least 25 of our member civic associations have played major roles in this ongoing collaboration with the county Department of Environmental Services staff and other county and even schools staff members as a broad mitigation and remediation program begins to take shape. Much work remains, but ACCF members remain at the heart of these necessary deliberations. For additional information on future watershed meetings please contact John Ford at president@civfed.org.



Big Change in Stormwater Tax/Fee Is Coming

Arlington currently funds its stormwater program using the Sanitary District Tax—a separate component of a property owner’s real estate tax bill—which is based on assessed value.

Arlington plans to switch from this assessment-based tax to a new stormwater utility fee, where a property’s percentage of impervious surfaces (buildings, driveways, walkways, etc.) will determine the new stormwater fee:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/environment/documents/stormwater-utility-anv.pdf>.

Impervious surfaces typically determine how much water runs off when it rains—the larger your building footprint and the more hardscape, the more runoff you send into the public stormwater system.

Property owners who don’t currently pay property taxes (nonprofits, churches and other places of worship, and federal buildings with no separate MS-4 storm water permit) have not previously been required to pay the Sanitary District Tax. But they will have to pay the new stormwater utility fee. This model is thus designed to shift the tax/fee burden to those who generate more runoff.

State law requires the county to offer a stormwater credit program, allowing property owners to receive credit for taking certain actions that reduce stormwater fees. However, it remains unclear how beneficial Arlington’s credit program may be to residential property owners.

Civ Fed will offer a comprehensive information session at an upcoming membership meeting as implementing details on the stormwater utility are ironed out. The new program would prospectively be implemented during the latter half of 2023 or later.

For residential properties (single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses and condos), the new billing unit, or Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), is 2,400 square feet of impervious area (IA)—the median for Arlington residential parcels:

This online [Stormwater Utility Fee Estimator](#) (link embedded) helps owners determine a property's estimated billing units used to calculate the future stormwater utility fee:

For the latest information on a program still in development, email Aileen Winquist at awinquist@arlingtonva.us with questions.

Task Force in Governance and Election Reform (TiGER)

The Task Force in Governance and Election Reform (TiGER) continues our work this fall. We finalized our report, with our full set of recommendations, and proposed a CivFed resolution. We will host a panel at the December General Membership meeting to review our recommendations, answer any questions, then hold a vote on the resolution, which will be introduced at the November membership meeting and published in the December newsletter.

Our recommendations have received widespread attention, including among elected officials on the County Board and State legislature. Our next steps are to provide further education about our suggestions, beginning with Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). The County Board is looking to adopt multi-seat RCV with next year's primaries. TiGER members met with Board Chair Katie Cristol to discuss the implementation, and our recommended approach.

For our outreach program, we presented to the Committee of 100, and are in the process of meeting with civic associations and other interested parties. We plan to host a community education event with local elected officials to further our outreach.

How RCV works:

To vote, a voter ranks their candidates in order of preference, they may rank as many or as few other candidates as they want.

Under proportional ranked choice voting, more than one candidate wins.

The basic process is to eliminate the lowest vote getter from the tallies, then take the second choice of the people who voted for the person eliminated and add their votes. This process takes place in several rounds until the number of seats open have been filled.

RCV benefits:

Multi-seat (or proportional) ranked choice voting of Board members is the election system most likely to increase diversity of candidates and Board members. Proportional RCV ends winner-take-all politics, lowers the threshold number of votes needed to win, and decreases barriers to running for elections. This makes it easier for minority communities (racial, ethnic, or other) to elect candidates who represent them. Multi-seat RCV also allows candidates to seek support from communities of interest across the County, whether or not they are geographically concentrated. Although seats are all technically at large, lower election thresholds mean an ability for candidates to focus campaigning on groups or specific communities of interest.

For additional information on TiGER, please contact Allan Gajadhar at bod.member1@civfed.org.

Resolution to Restore the Public's Confidence in Arlington County Governance

A draft resolution *to Restore the Public's Confidence in Arlington County Governance* was presented at the September Civic Federation meeting. It is currently with Civic Federation committees for review and comment. A final draft, incorporating committees' input, will be included in the November 2022 newsletter and with a vote scheduled at the

November 15 Civic Federation meeting.

The draft appendix, in support of the draft resolution, includes many specific examples, which were assembled and reviewed by nearly a half dozen reviewers. The resolution urges restoration of an Arlington governance which provides genuine inclusive community engagement, thoughtful and respectful decision-making, transparency, and data-driven decisions with analysis.

You can find the draft resolution and the appendix with governance examples now published on the CivFed website: <https://www.civfed.org/archives/resolutions/>

Comments may be directed to president@civfed.org.

Environmental Affairs Committee Wants Your Priorities for 2022-23 Planning Meeting October 12th, 7-8 pm Virtual

Whether you or your organization are interested in air quality, water quality, natural resources, climate change, heat islands, toxics, whatever, please let us know what issues/concerns you think we should address in the coming year. We have made great progress over the last two years on citizens' concerns about Arlington's declining tree canopy and produced reports that have influenced the County's plans. Now we have the chance to give voice to other environmental opportunities and/or concerns. Delegates, alternates, and any interested citizens are welcome. Please join us for an enjoyable, wide-open discussion of the possibilities!

To be added to the mailing list for this event, contact Mary Glass at bod.member3@civfed.org

2022-2023 ACCF Certification and Dues Information

Membership Dues for 2022 – 2023 are \$65 per member organization

Please visit our dues webpage: [Pay Member Dues - Arlington County Civic Federation \(civfed.org\)](https://www.civfed.org/pay-member-dues)

If you have questions, please email treasurer@civfed.org for payment information.

Annual Certification

Our annual recertification, due by October 31st, is in full swing. 2/3rds of our members have re-certified - Thank-you! If your organization has not recertified, you may still do so for a several more weeks by visiting our [ACCF FY23 Certification Form](#). Please contact the secretary@civfed.org with questions.

Please Donate to the Arlington County Civic Federation

We need your financial support, in any amount your organization can afford.

In the last two years, the Arlington County Civic Federation has, at considerable expense, taken a number of steps to expand access to its member meetings in order to allow you and your organization to continue to safely participate.

We have decided to continue all meetings in hybrid in-person and online format to continue to allow flexibility for all delegates in how they want to participate. While we have raised dues in the past, we have done our best to hold off on further increases in dues, at least for now.

But part of our decision to keep our dues at the same amount is based on our ability to

raise additional funds from our new donation campaign. Please, if your organization can afford it, consider donating today. *Your donations help us to keep our dues the same as last year and to limit the burden on smaller organizations that might not be able to afford higher dues.*

Visit civfed.org and click on the [donate](#) button. Any amount is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

2022-2023 Board of Directors

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Vice President, [Ron Haddox](#)

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Diversity Committee – Chair Alistair Watson

Environmental Affairs – Chair Mary Glass

Housing – Chair John Vihstadt

Legislation – Chair Ron Haddox

Parks and Recreation – Chair TBD - if interested contact president@civfed.org

Planning and Zoning – Chair TBD - if interested contact president@civfed.org

Public Services – Chair John Ford

Revenues and Expenditures – Suzanne Sundburg

Schools – Chair Todd Truitt

Transportation – Chair TBD - if interested contact president@civfed.org

Any Delegate, Alternate Delegate, or member of a Member Organization may participate on any Public Interest or Support Committee. Please contact the applicable Committee chair, point-of-contact, or President John Ford if you are interested in participating on ACCF Committees.

[Link to Committee Website](#)

Interested in being an Arlington County Civic Federation Delegate?

The Arlington County Civic Federation was founded in 1916. Today, it has 80+ member organizations dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. The Federation membership reflects the broad array of interests and talents found in the County and is open and welcoming to all groups within Arlington, firmly believing that a broader range of groups creates better problem-solving outcomes for Arlington and its residents. Our purpose continues to be promoting the general welfare of Arlington County and its vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner.

Arlington County Civic Federation Delegates enjoy the full benefits of participation, voting, and serving in Civic Federation leadership positions. If your organization is a member of

the Civic Federation, ask if it has open slots for delegates. If it is not a member organization of the Civic Federation, encourage it to join. Here is a [link](#) to our website for more details.

[The Civic Federation's Website](#)

ACCF Calendar FY2023

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 General Membership Meeting
Sunday, October 16, 2022 Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 General Membership Meeting
Sunday, November 20, 2022 Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 General Membership Meeting
Sunday, December 18, 2022 Board Meeting

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