



Arlington County Civic Federation

The Civic Voice

The Newsletter of the Arlington County Civic Federation
March 2026 | Volume 110 | Number 8

President's Message

Thank you to all who joined our recent **work session** with the **Arlington County Board**. Your engagement made the conversation both substantive and productive. We covered a remarkable amount of ground, including discussions centered around the **economic/social safety net, planning and zoning, and connecting with local government**. Our three team leads and panels did an outstanding job teeing up the key issues that will shape Arlington's future.



For anyone who could not attend or wants to review the proceedings, the full session is available on the **County Board's YouTube channel**, [link](#). Our thanks as well to **Alex Sakes**, who captured the conversation in photos, a gallery is available here, [link](#).



Looking ahead, our March meeting will feature our annual discussion with **Arlington Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Francisco Durán** and the **Arlington School Board**. **Todd Truitt** is assembling a thoughtful and timely program -- be sure to read his article in this newsletter for details.

We will also vote on the membership of this year's **nominating committee**, chaired by **John Ford**. All board and officer positions will be on the ballot. If you or someone you know is interested in helping advance CivFed's mission of strengthening civic engagement and improving Arlington, please consider stepping forward.

Finally, we are once again seeking nominations for Arlingtonians who go the extra mile—those whose service deserves recognition at our **April 24 Banquet and Awards Ceremony**. If you have someone in mind, please reach out to awards chair John Ford. And speaking of the banquet, **early-bird tickets are now available**. You'll find the ticket sales here, <https://bit.ly/40maK0c>, or detailed in Jean Henceroth's article in this issue.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community. I look forward to the work ahead.

Regards,

Nick Giacobbe
President, Arlington County Civic Federation

March 2026 General Membership Meeting Agenda

- 7:00 - 7:05 Open and [January](#) and [February](#) minutes approval
- 7:05 - 8:30 Arlington Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Francisco Durán
Arlington County School Board
- 8:30 - 8:45 First reading and discussion of transportation [resolution](#)
- 8:45 - 8:55 Approval of Nominating Committee
- 8:55 - 9:00 Other business from the floor and adjournment

Date: Tuesday, March 10th 2026 @ 7:00 PM

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

Delegates: All requests for delegate swaps with alternates must be submitted to the secretary@civfed.org by **Sunday March 8th** at 12 noon. No exceptions.

Options for attending the meeting:

- 1. In-Person (Delegates, Other Guests):** No registration is needed to attend in-person. See parking instructions below in this newsletter.
- 2. Facebook Live (Other Guests):** No registration is needed to watch the live stream which can be found on the [ArlCivFed Facebook page](#).
- 3. Zoom (Delegates):** Registration is required ([link](#)) by Monday, March 9th at 12 noon. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The Zoom passcode is 123456, but if you use the links provided after you register you will not have to enter it.

Schools Committee Update

Submitted by Todd Truitt, Schools Committee Chair

At our next meeting, we will be having our annual visit from APS Superintendent Dr. Durán and the Arlington School Board. They will be presenting on the APS Capital Improvement

Plan (CIP), which is up for renewal this spring. We will also have time for a robust Q&A from the audience as to the CIP and other topics.

The renewal of the CIP is something that's been in the news ([here](#)), and dear to a number of our civic association members. Specific issues that will be covered in the presentation include how APS' CIP relates to the County's CIP and bond capacity, the opening of the new Grace Hopper Center (f/k/a the Career Center) in the 2026-27 school year, what to do with the existing Career Center, and the plan for APS' significant amount of excess seats, especially in light of flatling population growth of County school age children.

We look forward to an informative presentation, and an interactive Q&A session with our delegates.

Arlington County Civic Federation 2026 Banquet and Awards Ceremony Early Bird Ticket Sales

Submitted by Jean Henceroth, Banquet Chair

Mark your calendars for the ACCF Biannual Banquet!

Friday, April 24, 2026 -- 6:00 PM

**Spates Conference Center Ballroom, 214 McNair Road
Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall**

Join your fellow Arlingtonians for the 2026 ACCF Biannual Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Friday, April 24, 2024, in the Ballroom of the recently renovated Spates Conference Center on Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall. The banquet is open to our members, their guests and government and civic leaders from across the County (including ACCF member delegates, alternates, officers, board members, and other active participants in Arlington's civic life).

Tickets are available online at <https://bit.ly/40maK0c>.

April 10: Ticket prices increase -- Buy yours now!

April 20: Reservations close

Be a Sponsor!

Sponsorship includes a table of eight and a listing in the program.

Cocktails will begin at 6:00 PM (Cash Bar) and the Buffet dinner will be served at 7:00 PM.

The program will include the presentation of the 2026 ARLnow Cup and the ACCF 2025-2026 awards.

Base Access: at least 24 hours before the Banquet, please request a visitor pass online, using a real ID (DL) at this link:

https://pass.aie.army.mil/steps/branch_selection,

Choose ARMY and then JBMHH

- Entrance is via Second Street S to Hatfield Gate; stay in the left lane and show your real ID.
- Parking is across street from Spates Conference Center, on McNair Road. There is no public transportation; carpooling is an option. Access is limited to privately owned vehicles.

Please write to me at banquet@civfed.org with any questions about the event or tickets. I hope you will join us.

Budget FY2027, 1.1% Overall Property Value Increase in 2026

Submitted by Suzanne Sundberg, Revenues & Expenditures Committee

By the time this *Civic Voice* edition is distributed, the County Manager will likely have proposed his fiscal year (FY) 2027 budget. Once the proposed budget is released (likely in late Feb.), it and other budget information can be found here:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Budget-Finance/FY-2027-Budget-Information>.

At the link above, you'll also find the County Board's budget guidance to the Manager and an [infographic](#) illustrating this year's challenges in closing a projected \$35–\$45 million gap. A gap similar to ones in past years, but this time revenue growth (chiefly revenue from real estate assessment growth) is the lowest in recent memory.

As of January, real estate assessed values increased just 1.1% in calendar year (CY) 2026, as compared to 2% overall growth in CY2025 (and 2.5% in CY2024):

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/About-Arlington/Newsroom/Articles/2026/Arlington-Property-Values-See-Overall-1.1-Increase-for-2026>. Overall, this 1.1% increase falls below the current inflation rate of 2.4%: <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/>.

Though slower assessment growth may sound like good news, it also means less additional incoming money to cover cost/spending increases in FY2027. Real estate taxes account for nearly 60% of the County's total revenues (income sources).

Currently, residential properties (detached/attached single-family homes, townhouses and condos) account for 57% of total assessed value, with commercial properties (including apartments) accounting for 43%. With residential assessments rising 3.2% in CY2026, Arlington homeowners are increasingly shouldering the tax burden.

At the recent CivFed-County Board joint forum, Board members noted that federal cuts to housing and some other benefits were less than expected in the current fiscal year (FY2026): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzaUmVmLtiA&t=1s>. But more federal cuts are expected in coming years, and this year there is also a surprisingly large federal cut to emergency management funding.

Expense drivers for FY2027 include Metro funding and Arlington County employee compensation (salary and benefits):

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/budget/documents/fy-2027/fy25-closeout-fy26-monitoring-fy-27-budget-planning.pdf>.

Between FY2020 and FY2026, county employee salaries alone (not including benefits or APS employees), grew from \$328,372,827 to \$437,243,243, almost \$109 million or an increase of 25%. County employee salaries alone represent roughly \$1 out of every \$4 dollars being spent in FY2026.

As a percentage of the total \$1.69 BILLION FY2026 budget (which includes the APS budget allocation), employee compensation (salaries + benefits of \$635,200,412 for county employees only) represents 38% of that total. If you subtract the APS allocation from the budget (which shrinks it down to \$1.04 billion), county employee compensation represents **61% of the county's portion of the budget.**

Arlington County is conducting the 2026 Resident Satisfaction Survey to gather feedback on County services, programs, and overall quality of life. Resident input will help inform County priorities, decision-making, and future planning. The survey is voluntary and confidential and is open to all Arlington County residents. The survey will be open until March 31, 2026.

Take the survey here: <https://www.research.net/r/2026ArlingtonCounty>

Nominating Committee Update

Submitted by John Ford

The following people have volunteered for the Nominating Committee. This slate will be up for approval at the March 10th ACCF General Membership meeting.

- John Ford, Chair (Tara-Leeway Heights CA, former Civ Fed president)
- David Smith, Co-Chair (Bluemont CA, current Civ Fed Board Chair)
- Lois Koontz, (Alcova Heights CA, former Civ Fed Board Chair)
- Ron Haddox (Columbia Heights CA, former Civ Fed vice president)
- Dixie Duncan (Glen Carlyn CA)

Timeline, per bylaws:

- March membership meeting - Election of Nominating Committee
- May - Introduction of nominating committee recommendations
- June membership meeting - Election of new officers and board

Teaming Up with AI: A Civic Association Leader Shares What Works

Submitted by Sara Kirwin, Green Valley Civic Association president

Green Valley Civic Association's president, Sara Kirwin, is offering an informal, peer-to-peer session sharing practical experience using AI tools to make civic association work more manageable.

This is one civic association leader sharing practical tips and exploring how associations can collaborate and learn from each other.

What will be covered:

- AI basics: what it is, what free tools are available
- Governance and safeguards: setting boundaries before you start
- Tips and tricks to customize tools for your association's needs
- Walkthrough of different AI tools and how they can help with both administrative tasks and getting up to speed on complex community issues

Whether you're drowning in meeting minutes or trying to understand a complicated zoning proposal, this session explores how these tools might give you back some time and mental energy to focus on what really matters in your community.

Two session options:

- **In-person:** Saturday, March 7, Central Library Quincy Room, 12:30pm - 2:00pm
- **Virtual:** Thursday, March 12, 7:00pm – 8:30pm (Register for link)

Register or express interest: [Google Form](#)

Schools Committee Meeting on Proposed CivFed Resolution on APS CIP

Submitted by Todd Truitt, schools.chair@civfed.org

The CivFed Schools Committee will meet on Monday, March 16th at 7 pm over Zoom.
Registration Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85766604298?pwd=sIP2hUJ8DRiaUamcFxiYxt0yMwFb2.1>

Claire Noakes of the new CivFed member County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (CCPTA) will present a proposed CivFed resolution regarding Arlington Public Schools' Capital Improvement Plan, which will be introduced at the April CivFed general meeting. All are invited to attend. Please reach out to Schools Committee chair Todd Truitt at @toddetruitt@yahoo.com if you would like to attend or have questions.

ACCF Housing Committee Meeting

*Submitted by Anne Bodine, Housing Committee Co-chair
housing.chair@civfed.org*

Thursday March 19 at 6:30 pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Registration link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/V8VYK3trQyK7uUP7Fuk7sQ>

Join us as we begin – essentially at the same time as county staff and commissions begin reviewing – a significant development proposed at the site of the old Key Bridge Marriott. That iconic building was torn down a few years ago, after the developer failed to move forward with a major site plan amendment approved in 2020.

The new project proposes over 1700 new housing units – as well as a new hotel and greenspace – at 1401 Langston Blvd. This is probably the largest planned delivery of new housing units in 5 years and affects a spaghetti-like assortment of stakeholders especially on transportation.

We hope to be joined by North Rosslyn Civic Association representatives and we will review elements of discussion from the County's Long-Range Planning Commission, regarding process and zoning and land use, as well as very preliminary discussion of community benefits (to include affordable housing). Given the large scope, we hope to learn lessons that can be applied in other site plan efforts in your neighborhood!

Hope to see you there (virtually)

Transportation Committee

Submitted by Nicole Toulouse, Chair

After comments on the first Transportation Resolution, a second draft with additional provisions has been updated for the general membership to consider. You can read that resolution [here](#).

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be held at 7pm on March 23.

Registration link https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Y4KlAqsvQ62MRN_9WXuH8g

CivFed's Full Planning and Zoning Committee meeting

*Submitted by Brian Harner, Chair, Planning and Development Committee
plan.zone.chair@civfed.org*

Thursday March 26th at 6:30 pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please register at this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/N1p2DS6_QLa92mvb3tzadQ

Agenda:

The committee and its two subcommittees will continue the discussion from the Feb meeting and include updates on three principal issues where CIVFED will continue to be active:

- (1) the pending update of the County's comprehensive plan that guides its planning and zoning policies,
- (2) the process and criteria for evaluating site plans that seek exceptions from existing zoning rules, including the identification of "community benefits" as justification for such exceptions.
- (3) the County's pending "low residential" study, which reverses its prior decision to study whether to reduce current limits for lot coverage and building footprints for single-family homes, and centers instead on a possible limit of impervious surfaces more generally.

Planning and Zoning Committee Chair Brian Harner will lead the discussion, supported by Subcommittee Chairs Jack Spilsbury and Bill Richardson. The first two of these issues have also been addressed in a June 2025 CivFed resolution.

See: Planning and Zoning Committee Resolution to Improve Planning and Zoning Policy and Processes [Jun 2025] APPROVED Resolution (use [link here](#)).

We hope that you can join us on Thursday, March 26 to help develop CivFed policies and strategy on these P+Z priorities.

Brian Harner, Chair, Arlington CivFed Planning and Development Committee. For questions contact Brian plan.zone.chair@civfed.org

Glebe House Grounds Open to the Public – Celebrating 11 Years of Preservation

Submitted by Duke Banks, AHS delegate

The grounds of the Glebe House, the historic Octagon-shaped landmark that has been witness to much of Arlington's long history, will be open to the public on Saturday, March 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This year marks eleven years of preservation under a conservation easement held by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. The Arlington Historical Society, which was founded at the Glebe House in 1956, will co-host and offer guided tours of the grounds. For more information, see [link](#).

Location: One block off of N. Glebe Rd, corner of North Wakefield and North 17th St.

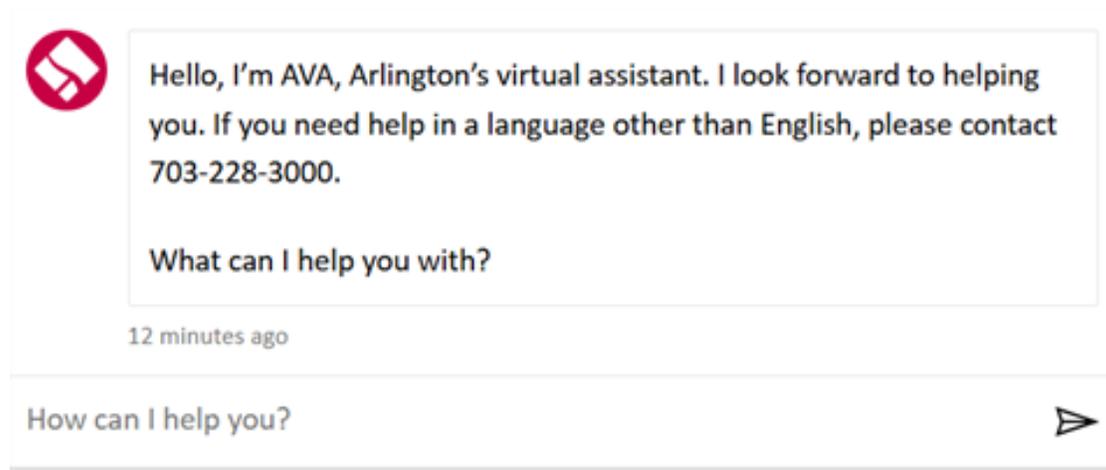
Have you met AVA?

Submitted by Jackie Snelling bod.orgdev@civfed.org

AVA stands for **Arlington Virtual Assistant**. It's a chatbot made to help you find information on the Arlington County website. AVA can answer questions and give information about **Arlington County services and programs**. You can ask about things like recycling, trash, transportation, parks, voting, and more. Look for the red logo at the bottom right of the County web pages.

Although this is AVA 2.0 it is still expanding to cover more topics and improve its utility. If you want to leave feedback, you can "Rate your experience" during your chat and share more details to help improve AVA. Or, I'm gathering feedback for compiling for the developers.

Check it out and let me know what you think.



For more information here's a link. Or just ask AVA.

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Constituent-Services/AVA-Arlington-Virtual-Assistant>



Virginia Hospital Center Hazel Auditorium Parking and Access Instructions for General Membership Meetings

Reminder: Parking passes will be provided. Meetings are held in the 'Conference Center' depicted on the map below.

The VHC Director of Security has advised CivFed that we should begin to park in Parking Garage C (map below). You can then walk across to the Oncology entrance and gain admittance until 8 p.m. **After the meeting, you MUST EXIT via the Women's and Infant lobby.**

ENTER (until 8 p.m.): Zone C Ground floor Oncology entrance (only open until 8 pm, Monday-Friday)

- Sign into the visitor kiosks (**need driver's license each time**)
- Get visitor sticker and wear at all times when inside the hospital
- Take a right at the double doors by the visitor kiosks
- Take a right at the single door
- Go to elevators and take to lobby floor
- Exit elevators and go left to hall directly behind welcome desk in lobby
- Take a left at the single door and continue down the hall toward a set of double doors
- Go through double doors and go right

- Conference center auditorium is directly ahead

ENTER or EXIT (24/7): Zone C first floor Women’s and Infant lobby entrance (please use this entrance to exit after 8 pm, open 24/7):

- Sign into the visitor kiosks (**need driver’s license each time**)
- Get visitor sticker and wear at all times when inside the hospital
- Walk to hall directly behind the welcome desk in the lobby
- Take a left at the single door and continue down the hall toward a set of double doors
- Go through double doors and go right
- Conference center auditorium is directly ahead



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ACCF PUBLIC INTEREST COMMITTEES

- Arts and Culture - if interested contact bod.orgdev@civfed.org
- Diversity – Chair TBD - if interested contact bod.orgdev@civfed.org
- Environmental Affairs – Chair Mary Glass
- Housing – Co-Chairs Anne Bodine and Matt Hall
- Legislation – Acting Chair, Dave Schutz
- Parks and Recreation – Chair TBD

- Planning and Zoning – Chair Brian Harner
- Public Services – Chair John Ford
- Revenues and Expenditures – POC Suzanne Sundburg
- Schools – Chair Todd Truitt
- Transportation – Chair Nicole Merlene Toulouse

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 Nick Giacobbe 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.

joinus@Civfed.org

[The Civic Federation's Website](#)

CivFed Calendar FY2026

Looking Ahead:

- 03/10/26 - General Meeting
- 03/16/26 - Schools Committee
- 03/19/26 - Housing Committee
- 03/23/26 - Transportation Committee
- 03/26/26 - Planning and Zoning Committee
- 03/28/26 - Glebe House Grounds Open to Public
- 04/14/26 - General Meeting
- 04/24/26 - CivFed Banquet

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