

# BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL NEWS

Nov 2018

A newsletter for and by the residents of Brookland, Bush Hill, and Gunnell Estates in Alexandria, VA.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Living with Trees

*Sandra "Jeannie" (Graham) Henry, President*

### BBHCA Meeting Nov. 13

Please join us at Bush Hill Elementary for the Brookland-Bush Hill Community Association meeting, beginning at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, Nov. 13th. Our invited speaker (confirmation pending) is a representative of the Fairfax County urban forestry program. In real estate advertisements, mature trees are a major selling point, and the mark of a high quality neighborhood. However, as new families arrive from less leafy regions, many questions arise about caring for the Virginia trees they have inherited. For long-time residents, the questions may have to do with worries that the stately trees around their homes are subject to more extreme water and wind events than in the past. This is your opportunity to pose your questions about tree care and safety, questions about the trees you have now and the best trees to plant in the future, and the many benefits and trade-offs of living with trees.

### Special Meeting on Proposed Senior Living Apartments

On Oct. 1st a special BBHCA meeting was held at Bush Hill Elementary to hear representatives of the Fairfax County Housing and Redevelopment Authority talk about a proposed development on

the 6+ acre county property on the southeast corner of Oakwood and Van Dorn. This property backs up to several homes at the west end of BBHCA and development there would both remove the forested area between BBHCA and Van Dorn, but would likely also affect all future development on the northern boundary of BBHCA. The county has received 3 proposals for apartment buildings on the site that would hold about 150 affordable senior living units. The meeting was well attended by BBHCA residents and a number of concerns were raised, including the proximity to BBHCA homes, intrusive nighttime lighting, and suitability of the site due to heavy traffic noise and its isolation from shops or services. The most frequently raised concern, however, was the loss of what many residents had understood was protected green space and habitat for a diverse range of wildlife species including hawks and a bald eagle. While there are numerous steps needed for final approval, the county hopes to move quickly to make decisions. Updates on the process, and plans for involvement of BBHCA residents, will be provided at the Nov. 13th BBHCA meeting.

### November BBHCA Elections and Budget

## COMMUNITY MEETING

**November 13**  
(Tuesday)

**7:30 pm**

**Bush Hill  
Elementary School**  
(cafeteria,  
right side entrance)

### AGENDA

Board and Committee Reports  
Board Elections  
2018 Budget Proposal

### PRESENTATION

James McGlone Ph.D.  
Urban Forest Conservationist  
Virginia Dept. of Forestry

Elections will be held for the BBHCA Board at the Association's November 13th meeting. As of this writing, most of the current officers are willing to stand for re-election, however nominations for

*Continued on page 4*

# Oakwood Senior Housing Project: A Lot of stuff in a small space

Robert Michie  
Contitution and Bylaws Chair

Fairfax County is entertaining multiple proposals to develop a 150-unit affordable senior housing development next to the western edge of Brookland-Bush hill. The County calculates that it is short over 30,000 such units, and it is unlikely that private development will dedicate the necessary land acquisition expense to build so many units for an expected low return on investment. Fairfax County chooses to build what it can on county-owned land. The land will be offered to developers on a 99-year lease and therefore lower the risk for the chosen developer. The County has three interested developers so far, but the land must be transferred to the Fairfax County Housing and Redevelopment authority first. Afterwards, a seven-step process starts with the selection of a developer and ends with occupancy by Decem-



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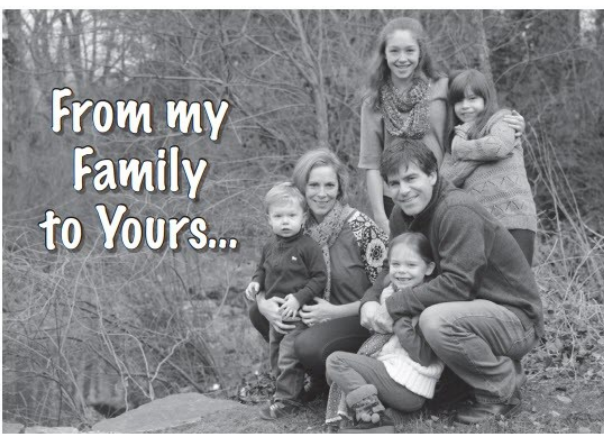
ber 2023.

The site under consideration is the storm water dry pond located at Oakwood Road and Van Dorn Street. It is a bit over six acres in size and one of the objectives is to retain the storm water management function in an as-yet unspecified way. The BBHCA residents most likely to be affected by the development are BBHCA residents on Piedmont Drive and Saratoga street. Staff and residents will have access to the development from Oakwood Road and at least one of the proposals has emergency vehicles entering the development from Bent Willow Drive in the Willow Creek townhouse community on Van Dorn Street.

I am not concerned in this article about a site plan or any other aspect of running the senior housing development. The County does not have a site plan yet and won't get a final plan until sometime in 2021. I am focusing this article on the site itself: can such a facility be built on the land.

It will be a very compact and crowded housing facility since the three site sketches shown to BBHCA has the buildings centered directly on top of the present stormwater dry pond. The City of Alexandria is presently building a stormwater management facility for Old Town that is underground. I suspect that is what is in the minds of the developers. One of the amenities that the developers want to keep is as much of the green space bordering BBHCA as they can. My issue is that there is not much greenspace available.

I walked the area today and I saw that most of the reasonably level ground is behind Saratoga Street. That area will be disturbed by the planned entrance road in at least two of the planning concepts. The flat area extends from Saratoga Street up to Ambler Street, but it narrows as it approaches Ambler from about 70 feet wide to about 20 feet. The land makes a sharp drop-off on the BBHCA side into our back yards. That drop-off becomes shallower and disappears as you approach Ambler Street. Backyards at that point are basically on the same plain as the development site. As you cross the flat ridge there is



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**2019 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
**Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association**

Membership Year: January 1, 2019–December 31, 2019

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BBHCA provides many opportunities for you to take an active role in decisions that affect your quality of life and property values as well as make a difference in your community. BBHCA prints a newsletter, maintains a Web site, and e-mails community updates and alert notices. Only members have a vote at BBHCA meetings on decisions that affect the community and the governance of BBHCA. Join today and support your civic association's efforts to keep our neighborhood a great place to call home. For current information on BBHCA activities, please visit Facebook or go to [www.bbhca.net](http://www.bbhca.net).

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**Enclosed are my member dues:**  \$20.00 (household)  \$10.00 (individual)

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY** The information provided here will be considered confidential and used only for BBHCA communications and membership verification.

NAME: (LAST) \_\_\_\_\_ (FIRST) \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: (LAST) \_\_\_\_\_ (FIRST) \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (703) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
(required for e-mail communications and community alerts; see below)

**E-mail Communications**

**Please notify me *by e-mail*** of community concerns deemed important by BBHCA. I may request that e-mail communications be discontinued at any time. Your e-mail will be used only by BBHCA.

**Request for Donation**

Your donation will be used to help offset the cost of printing and mailing the BBHCA print newsletter, the website, and other member-approved services. Thank you!

I would like to make a donation to BBHCA for  \$10  \$20  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this completed form with your check (payable to "BBHCA") to:**

BBHCA Membership  
5779 Westchester Street  
Alexandria, VA 22310

**Questions?**

E-mail: [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)

[www.bbhca.net](http://www.bbhca.net)

# Neighborhood Watch Report

Mary Breeden,  
Neighborhood Watch Chair

Recently, you may have read or seen on the news the story about a police barricade on Route 1 in Alexandria, about 1/2 mile south of Huntington Road. The man they were looking for, Alton Thodos, escaped through the ceiling and was on the loose again. He has stolen multiple cars, including one recently on Burgundy Road of Franconia Road. I am not sure at the moment if he was responsible for the recent car thefts in Brookland/Bush Hill that I wrote about in September issue of the BBHCA newsletter. Good news is that he has been captured by the police in Prince Georges county after being seen and chased by police here is Alexandria. Although the culprit has been captured, I still think this is worth mentioning because it's a reminder that we all have to be diligent in protecting ourselves

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and our property.

Another dangerous situation occurred here at the BB&T in Rosehill where there was a bank robbery (unsure if the man had a weapon). I am hopeful nobody from our neighborhood was there at the time. That had to have been a very frightening experience for the employees of the bank as well as any customers there at the time. There is not much we can ever do in a situation like that, only to try to be aware and act on anything you see that is suspicious.

Lastly, when I am in the Kingstown shopping center, I often notice that people leave all kinds of things in full visibility on the seat of their cars, including purses or totes. I don't know if the car doors are locked as I don't peer into the cars to see, but leaving objects of value in plain site is awfully tempting for thieves. Recently, someone had their credit cards stolen from their vehicle and the thieves went on a shopping spree with the cards. We all have to leave things in our cars when shopping, but do your best to not leave in plain site with the doors unlocked, especially with the Holidays upon us.

# May Meeting Minutes

## President's Report:

Next meeting is elections for BBHCA Board (all offices). If you are interested, email one of the board members. There was a special meeting to discuss the pedestrian refuge and Westchester & Franconia. There was a good turnout and the county is following up on remaining issues. No final decision has been made. Notice that there is discussion about adding more lights to Clermont Park (baseball fields).

## Secretary's Report:

Motion to waive the reading of the last minutes since they were published in the newsletter. Approved.

## Membership Report:

Membership is tracking consistent to 2017 but a little lower in terms of the number of households. Some checks are still coming in.

## Treasurer's Report:

Presented the audit report and 2018 income & expenses spreadsheet. The audit took place on June 21st and there were no issues. One recommendation – newsletter expense lines consolidated into one (mailing/printing). Some discussion and, in the end, decided to keep separate. Revenues total \$5657, expenses totaled \$3,883, leaving \$1,774 in profit for year and a total balance of \$23,336 in the account. The large budget items in 2018 include: \$2,700 from dues, \$760 from donations and \$960 in advertising. The large expenses were from newsletter printing

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## Now is the time to renew your Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association Membership!

Page 3 of this newsletter is the 2019 BBHCA Membership Form. For only \$10.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for households you can help keep our neighborhoods a great place to live. We are always accepting new members and welcome donations which go directly toward helping BBHCA remain an effective voice for the community. For the most current information on BBHCA activities, please visit our website at [www.bbhca.net](http://www.bbhca.net) or the "Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association" Facebook page.

(\$1,028), postage and mailing (\$908) and the membership mailing (\$442).

## Neighborhood Watch Report:

Car thefts on the rise recently. There have been 11 thefts reported in 2018 with 7 of those preventable (e.g. keys left in car). There was a recent robbery on Van Dorn Street on 8/16 at 10:00 a.m.

## Land Use Report:

Two proposed trails were deleted from the overall Huntley Meadows Park plan.

## New Business:

Area residents brought up a home on Brookland Rd. where a man has been seen in the street with his pants down, peeing in the street, and screaming. A discussion of a possible group home rented by Fairfax County ensued. A resident working as an EMT advised residents to call 911 every time something occurs to alert authorities. Another resident reported a stranger lurking around her home and trying to get into the house. If someone sends Elise more information she can get a neighborhood alert out. A resident reported that the Bush Hill Elementary School has won a special Olympics National Award. Jeannie is checking with the County about a no littering sign. Discussion on a strategic spot on Westchester to locate it and possibly an additional trash receptacle. Question on feasibility of a crosswalk between Mayfair & Franconia. Discussion on how to prepare for a hurricane. Among the suggestions:

- Stock up on bottles of water
- Make ice or buy and put in freezer
- Clean out gutters
- Flashlight on each floor
- Clear the storm drains
- Buy a tarp – to cover any leaks
- Extra batteries on hand
- Charge your cell phone
- Fill up your car with gas



**BBHCA Board and  
Committees**

President: Sandra Graham (aka Jeannie Henry), [president@bbhca.net](mailto:president@bbhca.net)  
First Vice President (Newsletter): Jackie Hawkins, [newsletter@bbhca.net](mailto:newsletter@bbhca.net)  
Second Vice President (Membership): Elise Swinehart, [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)  
Treasurer: Joan Akins, [treasurer@bbhca.net](mailto:treasurer@bbhca.net)  
Secretary: Danny Hawkins, [secretary@bbhca.net](mailto:secretary@bbhca.net)  
Constitution and Bylaws: Bob Michie, [bylaws\\_constitution@bbhca.net](mailto:bylaws_constitution@bbhca.net)  
Land Use & Transportation (Lee District): Carol Alim, [landuse@bbhca.net](mailto:landuse@bbhca.net)  
Neighborhood Watch: Mary Breedan, [neighborhoodwatch@bbhca.net](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@bbhca.net)

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**President's Message**

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all positions are open to all current members of BBHCA. These elected positions include the president, vice-president newsletter, vice-president membership, treasurer and secretary. We will be taking nominations up to and during the November meeting. If you have questions about any of the positions, please contact Jeannie Henry at [president@bbhca.net](mailto:president@bbhca.net). In addition, 20 member households must be present in order to hold an election and last November we came up short for the second year in a row, creating a delay of several months. It is very important that we have a good turn-out for this meeting to ensure that our election results are official for the year and that BBHCA can continue to work for you, so please be sure to join us on the 13th. We will also vote on our proposed 2018 budget at the November meeting.

**Oakwood Senior Housing Project: A Lot of stuff in a small space**

*continued from page 2*

another sharp descent into the stormwater dry pond. I also noticed that the backyard fence lines are drawn as a straight line on both the presented concept map and the County's online property map. Houses near Ambler Street have fence lines extending further back in the woods and into the proposed development property than houses further north on Piedmont and Saratoga streets. I cannot say who is correct: the homeowners or the County.

My assessment is that there will be tree removal and considerable construction noise as the site is developed. My wife and I live on Piedmont Drive and we are in favor of providing affordable housing for senior citizens. Our opinion, however, could be quite different if we lived further south on Piedmont Drive or on the western side of the street.