

# BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL NEWS

February 2021

A newsletter for the Residents of Brookland-Bush Hill and Gunnell Estates in Alexandria, Virginia

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Heading Towards Normal?

Sandra "Jeannie" (Graham) Henry, [president@bbhca.net](mailto:president@bbhca.net)

### Register for Next BBHCA Virtual Meeting, February 23rd, 2021

As 2021 begins and the Covid-19 pandemic continues to rage, social distancing requirements and other disruptions mean that BBHCA is unlikely to return to a regular schedule of in-person meetings prior to the fall. However, we do expect to hold at least two on-line meetings prior to the summer break and the first of those will be on Tuesday, February 23rd, at the usual time, 7:30 PM. To ensure that you can attend the meeting, please send your name and email address to [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net). We will use the information to send the Zoom link and login information to you. It is important to register for each meeting individually, even if you attended the previous virtual BBHCA meeting in November. Registration makes it easier to exclude Zoom hackers (I've experienced such hacks and it's not pretty) and to ensure that you have the correct meeting link.

We hope to bring back the tradition of an invited speaker for the February meeting. Invitations have gone out, but the holidays and Covid closures are slowing responses, so please check the meeting page at [bbhca.net](http://bbhca.net) for a speaker announcement when you receive this newsletter.

### Oakwood Road Development

As those of you who attended the November meeting and have been following our reports know, the developer's request to be able to develop the northern boundary of BBHCA with up to 1.6 million square feet of residential and other buildings has moved into a study phase. (Please see the Land Use Update article for the latest information, as well as your past newsletters and email alerts for more details.) At this stage, our only real avenue for influencing the decision-making process may be your phone calls and emails to our elected county representative, Supervisor Rodney Lusk ([LeeDist@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:LeeDist@fairfaxcounty.gov)). Residents

## BBHCA COMMUNITY MEETING

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 7:30 pm

Virtual via Zoom—Send your name, address, and email at least two days prior to: [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)

### AGENDA

- Board and Committee Reports
- Zoning Updates
- New Business

### GUEST SPEAKER

"Recycling and Composting"

Christine McCoy, FFC Solid Waste Program and VA Recycling Assn

of BBHCA have expressed very strong concern about the impact this development would have on quality of life and property values, but our Supervisor has heard from very few of you. If this issue is a concern, I would urge you to express your views while there is still a little time. Emails written in your own words will get more attention than group emails or petitions.

### Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine

Most of us are eagerly awaiting the day when we can get protection from a threat that has turned our lives upside down, and Covid vaccinations have begun in Fairfax County. As of this writing, those over 75 are being urged to make a vaccine appointment via the Health Department vaccine hotline: 703-324-7404. The general public will receive the vaccine through their normal health care provider when vaccinations begin for their group, although there is the possibility that it will become available at locations such as schools and community centers. Fairfax County is using multiple methods to let people know when it is their turn, including websites, social me-

dia and news media. After receiving the first dose, you will receive an information card to remind you when you need to take the second dose. You must receive the same vaccine for both doses. The vaccine will be free, although you may pay a small administrative fee for the shot. Get the latest updates: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus/vaccine>.

### **New Fairfax Food Composting Program**

Food waste makes up as much as one-third of the trash we dispose of every day and takes up a huge amount of space in overflowing landfills. Fairfax County has been composting yard waste for several years and has recently begun a food-scrap drop-off program. This does not include a curbside pick-up option, but this is a pilot program and I suspect that if enough people participate, we might see more convenient options rolled out in the future. In the meantime, the two locations where residents can drop off food waste to be composted are the I-95 Landfill Complex and the I-66 Transfer Station. They are open from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM seven days a week. You can drop off your food waste in one of the green bins at those locations. Information about what you can include, and tips on ways to store scraps and transport the scraps, can be found at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/food-scraps-composting-drop](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/food-scraps-composting-drop).

### **Emergency Preparedness and Resilience**

At the request of BBHCA residents, this is a topic we visit from time to time through speakers or articles. Unfortunately, events of recent years—and even recent weeks—have brought the topic increasingly to the forefront of people’s minds. Since there is a great deal of unreliable and fanciful information out there about emergency preparedness, The Science & Entertainment Exchange decided to use the Ask a Scientist series to separate fact from fiction. In this first installment, Hollywood producer Diana Williams asks disaster-ologist Samantha Montano what people should have on-hand to be prepared for disasters of any kind. Find the entertaining video on YouTube by searching: A Hollywood Producer and a Scientist Talk Disasters Part 1: Prepare.

## **Smashed Sidewalk—Easy Fix**

**By Robert Michie**

The Brookland Estates Community Improvement Program (CIP) was finished over 20 years ago, so we should not be surprised that maintenance and upkeep issues are starting to appear. Some of our neighbors spotted a broken sidewalk on Brookland Road in the vicinity of Ambler Street and contacted the BBHCA. I was until recently the Lee District representative to the County’s Trails and Sidewalks committee, so I investigated. I called our Supervisor, Rodney Lusk, and he explained that the fix was easy. Rodney even offered to make the phone call himself.

Sidewalks in Brookland-Bush Hill belong to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and not to either the county or to the homeowner. VDOT will repair a damaged sidewalk at no charge. In our case, all that was needed was a call to the County Supervisor, but citizens can call VDOT directly and report the damage themselves. Rodney cautioned that VDOT will not pour concrete until favorable weather arrives. However, VDOT has already visited the site and marked the damaged sidewalk for the repair crew. They marked another portion of the Brookland Road sidewalk for renewal as well.

With all the exercise/walking done by teleworkers, we are likely to find more damage as the year progresses. The sidewalks in general are less than two inches thick. Rainwater can make sink holes underneath a section. In other cases, water can also freeze and stress the sidewalk upwards. When warmer weather arrives, all that is needed is a heavy weight on the section and the sidewalk cracks. A loaded wheelbarrow or a car can supply the weight.

The same weather and weight-related issues are responsible for potholes in our street. This is pothole season, so please notify VDOT when you see damage in our streets. BBHCA members can preserve our CIP and the appearance of Brookland-Bush Hill by calling in such problems when they are discovered.

For more information on VDOT, please visit [https://www.virginiadot.org/about/nova\\_quick.asp](https://www.virginiadot.org/about/nova_quick.asp) or call 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623).

# Selling in 2021? Don't leave money on the table!



With our 1-hour FREE ASSESSMENT, you'll find out how to maximize your return on your home sale. Whether remotely or in-home, we share our time-tested advice on what to do and what not to do as you prepare for the market. And be sure to take advantage of our Pre-Launch Gameplan that builds awareness and increases demand so you hit the ground running. Give us a call. We'd love to help you.



**TOM  
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# BBHCA Land Use Update

Carol Alim, landuse@bbhca.net

## Oakwood Road Site Specific Plan Amendments (as of 1/25/21)

PC19-LE-006: 5605 Oakwood: currently zoned Planned Development Commercial and is approved for 850,000 sq ft of office development

PC19-LE-009: 5400-5604 Oakwood: currently zoned Residential, Commercial, Industrial

The Public Hearing was held on November 19th, 2020. Anne Blas, one other resident of Gunnell Estates and I spoke at the hearing stating our objection to the rezoning, expressed our communities' concerns, and requested that the applications not be accepted as work projects.

The Planning Commission Mark-up Session was held December 2nd, 2020. The two applications for Oakwood were discussed individually. Commissioner Daniel Laguna (Lee District Commissioner) presented the applications. He indicated that although both Staff and the Task Force (TF) recommended inclusion as a Work Project, the TF vote was close and that concerns were expressed by neighboring communities at both the TF meeting and the public hearing. The Commissioner thanked our TF chair and all members of the Task Force by name for their work on this project. He identified the following issues: traffic on already heavily congested Van Dorn Street, storm water management, protection of the watershed, impact on the Bush Hill School, and concern about future road connectivity. He then moved that both applications be accepted as a Work Project, to be considered together, along with the undeveloped portion of Land Unit E and the road connection to Vine Street. There was little discussion, but Commissioner Cortina from Braddock District expressed concern about the impact this development would have on the watershed and stated that consideration needs to be given to the protection of the watershed with any development in this area. The motion to include the Oakwood applications as a Work Project passed unanimously.

The final step in Phase 1 is the review by the Board of Supervisors, currently scheduled for January 26th, 2021, to determine whether the applications should be accepted as a Work Project. The Work Project phase will determine whether the Comprehensive Plan will be amended.

If these applications are approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOA), the next step would be for the applicants to submit an application to change the language in the Comprehensive Plan to support the proposed plan. They would also need to request a zoning change to permit residential development. These two requests could be made in a single application. I will try to reach out to Supervisor Lusk prior to the BOA meeting.

## zMod (Modernizing Zoning Ordinance)

zMod is the county's process to update its zoning policies. A key objective is to modernize permitted uses and their regulations, remove gaps and inconsistencies, make them forward-looking, and make them easier to understand. Two components of the planned changes that could have an impact on residential neighborhoods are accessory living units and home-based businesses.

An accessory living unit (also known as an accessory dwelling unit) is a secondary living space found in conjunction with, but clearly subordinate to, a single family detached dwelling unit. This could be an "apartment" for a family member who cannot live alone due to age, disability, or financial hardship. Changes to the accessory dwelling unit ordinance would relax existing requirements. Restrictions on age and/or disability as justification for a second living unit in your home are recommended for removal.

Home business uses are being reviewed since there are uses that did not exist when the current policies were put in place.

See the BBHCA November newsletter for more details. See the county website for current information, planned meetings, reports, etc... <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod>

Public Hearing before the Planning Commission is scheduled for January 28th, 2021

Public Hearing before the Board of Supervisors is scheduled for March 9th, 2021

For more information on BBHCA land use and the history of Oakwood Road, please contact Carol Alim, landuse@bbhca.net.

**2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
**Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association**

Membership Year: January 1, 2021–December 31, 2021

**Join us—for the good of *your* community.**

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.org](http://www.bbhca.org).

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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  
6020 Mayfair Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22310

**Questions?**

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

[www.bbhca.net](http://www.bbhca.net)  
[www.facebook.com/bbhca.net](https://www.facebook.com/bbhca.net)

## Neighborhood Watch

By Pamela Shearer, Neighborhood Watch Chair

As we welcome 2021, I would like to take this opportunity, as your neighborhood watch representative, to highlight some 2020 trends. I am happy to report we did see some positive trends in our local community. The Franconia District Police Station reports crime down 24% for 2020 when compared to 2019.

While overall crime is down, they did report an increase of 26% in motor vehicle thefts. Fairfax County Police Department cites this as a continuing problem in this county and most of these crimes involve unlocked vehicles. Here are some steps we can take to decrease our risk of vehicle thief: park in well-lit areas when possible, take valuables inside or store them out of site, and of course, lock our car doors.

There are a lot fewer cars on the road since many of us are now working from home and a lot of students are taking classes online. As you would anticipate, with fewer cars on the road, we have less traffic and therefore, fewer traffic violations. For 2020, Franconia Police reports a 55% reduction in traffic violations compared to 2019. More time at home, however, can mean more time on the internet. Please be careful of computer scams and do not provide online criminals the opportunity to sell either your personal information or your money.

As a friendly reminder, if you see something, say something. Do not hesitate to report any suspicious or outside-the-norm activities by calling 703-691-2131 (for non-emergencies). And if you see a crime in progress, immediately call 9-1-1.

**Look out for your neighbors and be safe in 2021!**

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# November Meeting Minutes

The Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020 meeting was held as a virtual event via Zoom.

## President's Report

- The Fort Belvoir Army Museum to open. Nov. 11th. There have been some loud booms heard due to practicing.
- BBHCA Elections were held.
- Vote on BBHCA budget was held.
- Covid-19 continues to create uncertainty in timing of meetings, but we hope to hold next meeting in February.
- Development on Oakwood Road was discussed. For those not familiar with the location, it is where woods now exist at the entire northern boundary of BB HCA. The property backs Westchester, Piedmont, Saratoga, Pratt and Gunnell Estates. A July Task Force meeting was held. A Planning Commission meeting was scheduled at the Fairfax County Government Center, Nov. 19th. The meeting was open to the public: anyone can attend in person or via phone. Contact the Government Center for more information.
- There is a temporary moratorium on housing evictions through Dec. 31.
- Instructions for using Zoom during the meeting will be discussed.

## Reading of the Minutes

A motion was made to approve the previous meeting minutes that had been distributed by email. The motion passed.

## Treasurer Report

- A report was presented on income and expenses.
- The 2021 proposed budget was presented and unanimously approved.

## Membership Report

Due to Covid-19 and the lack of newsletter mailings, very few dues had been collected for 2020.

## Land Use Committee Report

Area land use changes presented, but Oakwood discussion was deferred to New Business.

## Board Elections

Elections Officer Robert Michie described the open board positions, named the candidates, and called for additional nominations from the floor. There were no additional nominations and the following officers were elected for the upcoming year by unanimous consent.

- President S. Jeannie (Graham) Henry
- VP Membership Elise Swinehart
- VP Newsletter Margaret Maxwell
- Secretary Denise Hurst
- Treasurer Katie Mitchel

## New Business

Topics covered included:

- Plans and Status for Comprehensive Plan change for Oakwood Road properties. Residents spoke up against removing phasing requirement for residential development, and opposed industrial development or storage buildings at site. Traffic, impact on school, and quality of life issues were extensively discussed. A lack of viable connection to transit area was raised.
- Problems with yard waste and leaves at the curb. Leaves should be placed in paper bags or in residents' yard next to curb (not in the street) for pick-up.
- Neville Court is being repaved.
- Problems created by parked cars at Bush Hill Elementary.

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## New to the Neighborhood?

**Elise Swinehart, [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)**

Welcome new neighbors! BBHCA represents over 800 households and advocates on issues that impact our specific community. We invite you to send your name, address, phone number, and email so we can add you to our newsletter mailings and special email bulletins of developments on key issues that impact us all. Send your email to: **[membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)**.

Please consider joining BBHCA for 2021. An application will be provided in the December newsletter for your convenience. For more information about BBHCA, please visit us at **[www.bbhca.net](http://www.bbhca.net)** or on Facebook (Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association).

**Note: Due to Covid, BBHCA did not solicit dues for 2020. Stay Safe!**

**Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association**

c/o 5800 Piedmont Drive

Alexandria, VA 22310

**www.bbhca.net**

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**BBHCA Board and Committees**

**President**

Jeannie Henry / [president@bbhca.net](mailto:president@bbhca.net)

**First Vice-President, Newsletter**

M. Maxwell / [newsletter@bbhca.net](mailto:newsletter@bbhca.net)

**Second Vice-President, Membership**

Elise Swinehart / [membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)

**Treasurer**

Katie Mitchell / [treasurer@bbhca.net](mailto:treasurer@bbhca.net)

**Secretary**

Denise Hurst / [secretary@bbhca.net](mailto:secretary@bbhca.net)

**Constitution and Bylaws**

Bob Michie / [bylaws@bbhca.net](mailto:bylaws@bbhca.net)

**Land Use**

Carol Alim / [landuse@bbhca.net](mailto:landuse@bbhca.net)

**Neighborhood Watch**

Pam Shearer / [neighborhoodwatch@bbhca.net](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@bbhca.net)

**Yard Sale**

Katharine Medina / [yardsale@bbhca.net](mailto:yardsale@bbhca.net)

**Website**

Sharada Gilkey / [webmaster@bbhca.net](mailto:webmaster@bbhca.net)

**Facebook** / <https://www.facebook.com/bbhca.net>

**November Community Meeting  
To Be Held on Zoom**

**Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021 7:30 pm**

Mark your calendar to participate in a virtual Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association community update via Zoom. With COVID-19 still impacting our ability to meet in person, BBHCA will hold a virtual meeting to present and discuss several important land use concerns/issues that will directly impact our community.

If you wish to participate in the community virtual meeting (or have any questions), please send your full name and address via email to: **[membership@bbhca.net](mailto:membership@bbhca.net)**

You do NOT need a Zoom account to participate, but you will need to provide BBHCA with your current email. A day or two before the meeting, BBHCA will send an email invitation with access information. Instructions on how to use Zoom will also be emailed to those who wish to participate.