

BROOKLAND-BUSH HILL NEWS

May 2021

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Edging Towards Normal

Sandra "Jeannie" (Graham) Henry, president@bbhca.net

Register for Next BBHCA Virtual Meeting, June 22nd, 2021. Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk will be our guest speaker.

As disruptions associated with Covid-19 continue, the usual Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association (BBHCA) May meeting has been moved to June. Other than that, we are nearly back to our usual meeting schedule and will break over the summer after this June meeting.

Please join us on Tuesday, June 22 nd for a Zoom meeting of the BBHCA. We will be hearing from Lee District Supervisor, Rodney Lusk, on a wide range of subjects relevant to our neighborhood. Supervisor Lusk represents you on the Fairfax County Board and this will be his first presentation to our Association since his election. The decisions of the Fairfax County Board have a direct and immediate impact on all of the residents of BBHCA and—in fact—the Board has recently voted on a number of issues that directly affect our neighborhood, such as the acceptance of an Oakwood Plan Amendment as a work-project and zMod (see Land Use Report inside). Please come ready with questions you would like to pose on recent or upcoming Board decisions, his philosophy on land use issues, environmental preservation, and affordable housing. These were all major issues during the 2019 campaign for Lee District and, while we were not successful in arranging a candidates' debate at a BBHCA meeting, this is our chance to hear more about where Supervisor Lusk stands on issues affecting our neighborhood.

To ensure that you can attend the meeting, please send your name and email address to membership@bbhca.net. We will use the information to send you the Zoom link and log-in information. It is important to register for each meeting, even if you attended a previous virtual BBHCA meeting. Such registration makes it easier to exclude Zoom hackers and ensures that you have the correct meeting link.

BBHCA COMMUNITY MEETING

Tuesday, June 22, 2021 @ 7:30 PM

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

AGENDA

- Board and Committee Reports
- Zoning Updates
- New Business

GUEST SPEAKER

Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk

Spring in BBHCA

As of this writing, Spring is in full swing in our neighborhood and BBHCA has never looked lovelier. Our rainy Winter must have particularly agreed with the daffodils because they bloomed in astonishing numbers this year. Many of our lawns have already transitioned through lovely waves of green, along with white, pink, and purple clover, lamium, grape hyacinths, and violets. Early flowering crabapples and cherries have been succeeded by stunning dogwood blooms. Birdsong has filled the neighborhood as robins, mourning doves, mockingbirds, wrens and cardinals all jostle for their favored nesting sites. If you are fortunate enough to have enough native trees and shrubs around your home, then you will find that your real estate is in hot demand by songbirds seeking to feed their babies, and you will be treated to singing competitions that will put "The Voice" to shame. If you would like to add some of that music to your sanctuary, as well as harbor a richer variety of native pollinators like butterflies, you can visit the native plant section of most nurseries, or one of the many plant sales organized by Virginia Native Plant Society: see www.vnps.org/native-plant-sales.

Getting Back to Normal?

Beginning mid-April, anyone over the age of 16 is eligible to get a vaccine in Virginia, and Fairfax County is recommending that the most convenient way to get a shot is to use vaccinefinder.org to schedule a vaccine near you. As increasing numbers of people receive their second vaccine dose, there is cautious optimism spreading that we may see a return to normality in the coming months. However, acting on that optimism has led to an increase in infections in many places, and health experts warn us that we should not drop our guard in the homestretch. Even with highly effective vaccines becoming widely available, it is possible to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Nor is there certainty regarding when, or if, we will achieve the level of herd immunity necessary to safely drop all of the precautions put in place over the last year. We are still in a rapidly evolving situation and it behooves us to continue to keep ourselves and our families safe by observing the most current guidelines recommended by health officials.

Going Solar in 2021

Shading your house with trees is one of the best ways to reduce electricity use, but solar panels are becoming an increasingly affordable way to cut back on utility bills as well. If you've ever thought about going solar, this may be the year to take the plunge. The solar investment tax credit was extended last year, meaning that the government will pay for 26% of any solar residential facility installed before the end of 2022. If you aren't sure where to begin looking at your options, there are two non-profits in Virginia that can provide advice, help you understand the process, and even help with reducing costs through group purchasing. One is called Solar United Neighbors of Virginia and the other is Solarize Virginia. See their websites for more information: <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/virginia/> and <https://solarizeva.org/>.

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BBHCA Land Use Update

Carol Alim, landuse@bbhca.net

Oakwood Road Site Specific Plan Amendments (as of April 2021)

PC19-LE-006: 5605 Oakwood: currently zone 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 Board of Supervisors met on January 26th to determine whether the applications should be accepted as a Work Project. Both applications were among those that were accepted to be included as a Work Project. Both applications will be considered as a single project. At some point, the Task Force will reconvene to consider this work project.

zMod (Modernizing Zoning Ordinance)

Access to summary information: <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/planning-development/zmod>

Links to documents: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod/documents>

zMod is Fairfax County's process to update its zoning policies. A key objective of zMod is to modernize permitted uses and their regulations, remove gaps and inconsistencies, make them forward-looking, and to make them easier to understand.

Two components of the planned changes that could have an impact on residential neighborhoods are 1) accessory living units and 2) 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. Currently, this could be an "apartment" for a family member who cannot live alone due to age, disability, financial hardship. There was considerable opposition to both the accessory living units and home-based business changes at both Planning Commission & Board of Supervisors (BOS) Public Hearings.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the documented modifications, although many of the Commissioners had concerns about eliminating public input from the process. The Board of Supervisors deferred their decision on zMod due to concerns about several

components. The document was modified before being re-presented to the BOS for a vote on March 23 rd . The BOS approved zMod: 5 in favor, 3 opposed. Primary objection was lack of public input. The new policy goes into effect July 1 st, 2021. Notable changes include:

Flags & Flagpoles: Maximum flagpole height of 25 feet for lots with single-family dwellings or manufactured homes; 60 feet for lots with other uses; can requests special exception for increased height. There is no limit on size of flags.

Accessory Living Units: Many of the Supervisors believe that the new policy will be better than the current one. Today an owner can rent to 2 unrelated adults with no restrictions. Some discussion proposed that this is a means to provide more affordable housing in Fairfax County, although these units can be rented at market rate. Here's an overview:

- Separate living unit within the home; includes kitchen and bath, up to two bedrooms
- Removed the age and disability requirement for accessory living units
- Changed the application process from requiring a Special Permit to an Administrative Permit for interior units
 - Either the primary or accessory unit must be occupied by property owner
 - Restriction on size unless the accessory unit comprises the entire basement
 - Off street parking required
 - Both units must use the same driveway
 - Administrative approval, no public hearing
 - Neighbors do not need to be notified

Home-Based Businesses (HBB):

- Updates permitted uses to include businesses that did not exist in the past (cat lounge)
- Business will require a special exception, which would require a public hearing, in order to have customers/clients visit the HBB
- Barbershop and hair salon (no massage, nails, facial) modified from By-Right to Special Permit
- Homes with well water and/or septic system will require approval from the health department

Accessory Structures:

- These structures (which may include sheds, children's play equipment, and gazebos, up to 12 feet in height) are to be located five feet from the side and rear lot lines.

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Land Use Meetings Update:

There were no meetings in January or February.

2021 Update: Lee Automotive, Backlick Road – Information Only: Owner is looking to revert zoning to pre-1986 status. The owner passed and the widow would like to sell, but cannot with current zoning. There are two parcels; requested change applies to only one parcel. Committee requested that plan be changed to improve storm water management to both parcels.

April 2021: Select Auto, Van Dorn Street – Information Only: Owner is requesting a zoning change in order to improve the property. An error was found in the Tax Map and other county documents that recorded the entire property as commercial. However a small portion of the property is zoned residential. Select Auto will build a new office building toward the rear of the property and redesign guest parking and vehicle parking/display error.

BBHCA Annual Treasury Audit

The BBHCA Community Meeting was conducted on November 10th, 2020. The Treasurer presented the 2021 Proposed Budget. It was voted on and approved.

On December 8th, the annual BBHCA Treasury Audit was conducted. The Treasurer (Joan Akins) presented the January to December 2020 Income and Expense spreadsheet to the Audit Committee (Kevin Henry and Katie Mitchell). The Auditors compared the Income and Expense spreadsheet with the bank statements and deposit slips from Burke and Herbert Bank, membership dues and donations received, and invoice expenses paid. Revenues were received from annual membership dues, donations, ads, and bank interest for a total of \$1,559.69. Expenses were incurred from the development, printing, and mailing of the newsletter, liability insurance, fidelity bond, and webpage hosting for a total of \$1,879.09. The 2020 expenses exceeded the income received by a total of \$319.40. The year-end bank account balance (for both the checking and money management accounts) was \$24,631.59. The Auditors agreed that the revenue and expenses annotated on the spreadsheet matched the bank statements, vendor invoices, and membership dues and donations.

The Audit Committee was satisfied that the BBHCA's money was collected, reported, and spent as reported on the Income and Expense spreadsheet. Many thanks to our Treasurer and Audit Committee!

Let's Talk Dirty! (Soil and Compost, that is!)

By Katie Mitchell

That clay soil we all have in our Brookland – Bush Hill yards is tough to work with and, as we know, the best way to get things to grow in this clay is to amend the soil with organic matter such as compost.

Many of us already compost our yard waste and perhaps even put our fruit and vegetable waste in with it. We might use a barrel, a pit, or partition an area off with some fencing or screening for our organic material. Did you know you can compost without any of these?

If you are thinking about planting a tree or shrub, before you buy it, dig a hole bigger than you typically would dig. Layer that hole with rich soil and compost making it a little compost pit. Let it sit throughout the summer or winter and when you go to plant your new tree or shrub, you've got the hole already dug and rich compost right there waiting for you. The compost is easy to remove, put your new plan in, and put the compost back in around the root ball.

Lightening the clay soil is so important and yet, so difficult...but worth it if you like to plant a vegetable garden or flowers. Partially decomposed compost helps loosen clay soils and is good in warm climates where decomposition is quicker. In soil like ours, it is best to put at least two inches of compost over the clay and then work it in to a depth of about four to six inches. The more compost and the deeper the better.

Want to learn more? Check out *Let it Rot! The Gardener's Guide to Composting* by Stu Campbell or *Tips for the Lazy Gardener* by Linda Tilgner.

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.

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

www.bbhca.net
www.facebook.com/bbhca.net

February Meeting Minutes

February 2021 Meeting Minutes

The Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021 Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by the BBHCA President.

President's Report

Introduction of New Board Members:

- Margaret Maxwell / VP Newsletter
- Denise Hurst / Secretary
- Katie Mitchel / Treasurer

Secretary's Report

• The minutes of the November 10th, 2020 meeting were published in the newsletter. It was moved and seconded to waive the reading of the minutes. There was no discussion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

Newsletter Report

- The newsletter was published on time.
- There will be one more newsletter before the summer break.

Treasurer Report

- Donations are higher than anticipated and they include a donation from an advertiser.
- Proceeds from newsletter ads are lower than expected and more ads will be solicited.
- Cost for newsletter and webpage hosting were reviewed.
- Total assets were reviewed.

Membership Report

- 58 memberships have been received.

Neighborhood Watch Committee

• Follow-up on noise pollution from enhanced mufflers: the General Assemble has changed this to a secondary offense. The police cannot stop people just for a loud muffle; therefore, there is little that can be done unless there is another infraction.

Constitution and Bylaws—No Report

Land Use Committee

- Board of Supervisors Meeting covered the following:
 - Approved the Chick Filet with a double drive thru and outdoor seating in Kingstown.
 - Discussed and approve four single site comprehensive plan amendments.

—The Beulah/Telegraph road shopping center was pulled secondary to opposition.

—Oakwood Development Approved as work project.

- Discussion about land-locked nature of this development. Currently only egress is to Van Dorn street. A vehicle bridge from Oakwood to Vine had been discussed.
 - Discussed other egress: current plan specifies no egress thru our neighborhood and developer will honor that part of the plan.
 - There is not a plan to improve traffic flow on Van Dorn in the current plan.
 - Concern is that after development those living in the newly constructed area may seek other egress options including thru BBHCA communities.
 - INOVA plans to build 126 bed hospital adjacent to the INOVA Springfield complex.

Zoning Modifications (zMod):

- There is a move to allow administrative approval for some zoning projects. There was significant disagreement from residents and supervisors regarding Ancillary Living Units (ALUs) and Home Based-Businesses approval by this process: it would not require notification of owners of adjacent properties, it would ease restrictions for whom could live in ALUs, and increase the square footage. There would be an increase the number of daily clients entering a home-based business.
 - Next Zoning Meeting: February 24th, 2021 at 7:00 AM.

Guest Speaker

- Christine McCoy (Fairfax County's Solid Waste and Environmental Services) presented "Composting and the Do's & Don'ts of Recycling." She covered organic diversion, back yard composting, food scrap drop off, and the glass recycling program.

New Business

- Next virtual meeting will be in June 2021
- Residents have been reporting gas smells on several Brookland streets, including Hopark, Neville, and Foldi. Please send information about continued issues to the president@bbhca.net.
 - Visit the website, www.bbhca.net, and follow on Facebook.

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

First Vice-President, Newsletter

M. Maxwell / newsletter@bbhca.net

Second Vice-President, Membership

Elise Swinehart / membership@bbhca.net

Treasurer

Katie Mitchell / treasurer@bbhca.net

Secretary

Denise Hurst / secretary@bbhca.net

Constitution and Bylaws

Bob Michie / bylaws@bbhca.net

Land Use

Carol Alim / landuse@bbhca.net

Neighborhood Watch

Pam Shearer / neighborhoodwatch@bbhca.net

Yard Sale

Katharine Medina / yardsale@bbhca.net

Website

Sharada Gilkey / webmaster@bbhca.net

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

June Community Meeting

To Be Held on Zoom

Tuesday, June 22nd, 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**

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.