



# Civic Pride

Newsletter of the Yorktown Civic Association

## In This Issue ...

- Feb. 15 YCA Winter Meeting
- Nottingham School Construction
- Greenbrier Park Renovation Plans
- Traffic Calming Project Status
- Property Tax Assessments in the Neighborhood

## Neighborhood Plan Ready for Adoption at Winter Meeting

**A**fter more than a year of work that included a lengthy survey of every household in the neighborhood, the Civic Association's executive committee has completed its draft of an updated neighborhood plan for submission to the County Board under the County's Neighborhood Conservation Program. Residents of the neighborhood will be asked to vote on the plan when the Yorktown Civic Association holds its winter meeting on Tuesday, February 15, at Yorktown High School.

The Neighborhood Conservation program is the County's primary vehicle for providing funding for important neighborhood infrastructure improvements such as installation of sidewalks and curb and gutter, as well as improvements to neighborhood parks. Only neighborhoods that have current plans are eligible for funding through that program.

Two recent examples of neighborhood projects funded through this program are the installation of curb and gutter on N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street across from the Greenbrier Park football field and the clean up of the public land along Yorktown Boulevard at the Glebe Road underpass. The most notable projects funded in the neighborhood through this program include major improvements at Rock Spring Park and the expansion of playground equipment at Chestnut Hills Park.

A sidewalk project on N. 25<sup>th</sup> Street between George Mason Drive and N. Columbus Street has been approved by residents and is currently awaiting funding under the program. And residents on 27<sup>th</sup> Street between George Mason and N. Greenbrier Street have completed an initial petition for the design of another sidewalk project.

The last neighborhood plan was adopted by the County Board in 1995. By completing a major update to our plan, our neighborhood will receive additional points that can be applied to these pending and other projects during the funding process.

In addition to identifying specific areas of funding through Neighborhood Conservation grants, the plan also identifies desired traffic safety, school and park improvements, land use and zoning changes. In total, the plan contains over 3 dozen specific recommendations.

Over 400 households completed the neighborhood survey just over a year ago at the start of the planning process. That survey served as a major input into the planning process.

A complete copy of the plan is available by following the link on the Civic Association's website at <http://www.YorktownCivic.com>.

The winter meeting on February 15 begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in Room 1B at Yorktown High School. A detailed agenda for the meeting will also be posted on the website prior to the meeting.

## Nottingham School Construction Set to Begin

Most elementary school children in the Yorktown neighborhood attend school at Nottingham School on Little Falls Road. However, those students began attending school in mid-January at the Wilson Building at 1601 Wilson Boulevard.

Now that the students have moved out, the construction workers are moving in.

Nottingham School is about to undergo an \$8.3 million facelift that renovates everything but the gym. An addition of 22,000 square feet will be added to the existing 50,000 square foot facility that includes constructing a new administration suite, kitchen, multipurpose room and wing for additional classrooms.

The project was funded in the school bond election approved by voters in 2002. However, it was necessary to delay construction until after completion of the recent renovation of Glebe Elementary since those students also were required to move into the Wilson Building during the construction.

Several additional bus stops have been added around the neighborhood to pick up and drop off the additional students that will now be riding the bus to school. Just over 400 students are enrolled at Nottingham. The construction is scheduled to be completed in about 18 months, hopefully in time for the start of the 2006-07 school year.

For additional information on the move to the Wilson Building and the school construction process, check out Nottingham PTA's website at <http://www.nespta.org>.



## Yorktown Neighborhood Property Assessments Up 24%

The Arlington County Department of Real Estate Assessments distributed the annual property tax assessments to homeowners on January 18, and for the third straight year Arlington homeowners have been notified of double-digit assessment increases.

For all Arlington property, annual assessments increased 18%. However, continued strong demand for homes in Arlington once again resulted in much higher increases in residential property than in commercial property categories. The rate of increase for single-family homes is 25%, while multi-family residential property is up 15.5% and commercial property, such as office buildings and hotels, increased by just 7% for 2005. These figures include the additional values resulting from new construction.

In the Yorktown neighborhood, residential property values were also up over 24% for 2005.

In fact, no Yorktown neighborhood homeowners missed out on this year's significant increase.

Here are the results of a complete analysis of the 2005 assessments for the 1,065 residential properties in the Yorktown neighborhood:

- The average assessment was up by more than \$120,000, or 24.1%.
- The smallest increase received by any homeowner in the neighborhood was \$65,000.
- The average neighborhood property is now worth \$618,600.
- \$52,600 of the average property's 2005 increase was on the house and \$67,700 was on the land.
- The neighborhood now has 72 homes assessed at more than \$1 million.
- Two years ago, 50% of the neighborhood's homes were valued at less than \$400,000. Now, only one property falls below that level.
- The total assessed value of all residential property in the neighborhood now stands at \$660 million.
- 431 homes, or just over 40%, fall within the range of \$500,000 to 600,000.

For homeowners who want to challenge their assessments, there are two key dates to keep in mind. March 1 is the deadline for a Department of Real Estate Assessments review and April 15 is the deadline for a Board of Equalization review. More information on the appeals process is available at:

<http://www.co.arlington.va.us/Departments/RealEstate/RealEstateAssessmentsMain.aspx>.

The County does have a property tax relief program for elderly and disabled property owners. The eligibility level for the program is a gross income of \$62,000 or less and assets of \$240,000 or less.

## Renovation of Greenbrier Park to Begin in Fall 2005

### Final Public Forum Scheduled for February 17, 2005

With voter approval of the 2004 Park Bond, which included \$8.6-million for improvements at Greenbrier Park, the Arlington County Parks Department is moving quickly to finalize construction plans for major renovations at the park. The current estimate is that the County Board will approve construction contracts late this summer, and major construction efforts will begin right after the end of the fall football season. Construction is expected to last about 18 months.



Greenbrier Park is owned and maintained by the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources even though it is the home of the Yorktown High School athletic fields and the school is the park's biggest user.

Three public forums were held late last year on the renovation plans – on September 21, November 18 and December 14 – and a final meeting is scheduled for February 17 at Yorktown High School.

The focus of the final meeting is on operational issues. To guard against excessive increases in traffic and noise, especially late at night, the Civic Association has asked the County to close the park at 10:30 p.m. and to put

clear limits on hours of sound system usage. Area residents have also expressed concerns about access to the track during sporting events.

Some of the major changes that will be made during the renovation include:

- Splitting the park into 3 tiers at different elevations.
- Moving the baseball diamond off of the football field.
- Placing the track around the football field.
- Constructing two new softball diamonds.
- Constructing new bleachers, restrooms and concession stands.
- Provision of new and additional landscaping and fencing.
- Installation of new "dark sky" lighting and new sound systems.
- Installation of synthetic turf on the football field.
- Replacement of storm drains and underground drainage systems.

The design also reconfigures and reduces the amount of parking, but the parking lot size will be reduced even more after Phase II of Yorktown High renovations are completed in a few years. Those plans call for an increase in parking spaces south of the school building. In the meantime, installation of the outdoor basketball court will be delayed at Greenbrier Park under the latest design.

As its design consultant for the renovation of Greenbrier Park, the County is using Lewis Scully Gionet, Inc., with assistance from Bowie Gridley Architects, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. and Straughan Environmental Services, Inc.

The County planner leading the design effort is Robert Capper. Robert can be reached at (703) 228-3337 or by email at rcapper@arlingtonva.us.

### Do You Shovel Your Walk When It Snows?

In a letter to families with students in Arlington schools, Superintendent Robert Smith and County Manager Ron Carlee made this plea: "Icy or snowy sidewalks are dangerous for all residents, especially children and seniors. The condition of the sidewalks can even affect Arlington Public Schools' decision to open."

Arlington County does not have an ordinance mandating snow removal on sidewalks. However, that does not mean it isn't your responsibility. In addition to young people that must use the sidewalks to walk to school, many of your neighbors walk to bus stops and to shop and to walk their pets. The County urges that, "sidewalks be cleared to the pavement (to help the sun melt residual snow) at least one shovel's width within 24 hours after snowfall ceases."

The County has set up a web page dedicated to winter weather preparedness at: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/winter/WinterMain.aspx>. The County also has set up a snow clearing status hotline at **703/228-6485**.

## Traffic Calming Approved for 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Little Falls Road

At the January 24, 2005, meeting of the Arlington County Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee (NTCC), traffic calming projects developed by Yorktown neighborhood residents for N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Little Falls Road were selected among seven projects countywide for funding in the Committee's semi-annual funding session. The County Board is expected to approve funding for the 7 projects next month.

The project on N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street runs from N. Lexington Street to N. Harrison Street. The final design involves the installation 3 speed humps in this section. Of the 68 households included in the petition area for this project, only 4 voted "no." Karen White served as block captain.

The Little Falls project extends from N. Harrison Street to Yorktown Boulevard. The project will involve the installation of nubs and stamped crosswalks at the Little Falls/Harrison intersection with similar improvements at the Greencastle and the Yorktown Boulevard intersections. One speed cushion will be installed in this segment of Little Falls Road. The block captain for the Little Falls project has been Daphne Lathouras. Of the households petitioned for this project, only one voted "no."

The NTCC selected these two projects for consideration during the fall funding round at its July 2004 meeting based on speed, traffic volume and other objective measures. That step triggered the assignment of staff to provide technical assistance. However, the selection of the specific solutions is left to residents living in the immediate project area. Project solutions that are agreed to by over 60% of adjacent households go back to the NTCC for final approval.

In its spring 2004 funding round, the NTCC also approved a very large traffic calming project for N. 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Streets from George Mason to Glebe Road. The first phase of those projects includes several speed humps, which will be installed in early 2005. That project is currently awaiting funding under the County's Neighborhood Conservation program.

### YCA Executive Committee

Position	Name	Phone
President	David Haring	703/241-8111 (h) 703/208-5660 (o)
V.President	David Friedman	703/241-2091 (h)
Secretary	Cate Mueller	703/237-4706 (h)
Treasurer	Bob Littell	703/534-3826 (h)
At large	Ted Weihe	703/533-2815 (h)
At large	Sally Lopez	703/534-0530 (h)
At large	Bill Nary	703/538-6132 (h)
At large	Bob Gatewood	703/533-8906 (h)
At large	Eileen Colton	703/534-7445 (h)
At large	Margaret Eubank	703/532-0989 (h)
At large	Claudia Volk	703/536-3305 (h)

**Yorktown Civic Association**  
**2827 N. Harrison St.**  
**Arlington, VA 22207**

**Please attend the YCA Winter Meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2005, at 7:30 p.m. at Yorktown High School Room 1B.**

For additional information about the Civic Association and the issues covered in this newsletter, check out our website at <http://www.YorktownCivic.com>.