

SUMMER 2024

Mount Vernon Civic Association

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

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Mount Vernon Grove • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverbend • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Washington Woods
Westgate • Wycliffe on the Potomac • Yacht Haven Estates

May Association Meeting

Please join us on May 8th at 7:30 PM at Washington Mill Elementary School for our MVCA Association meeting. Pizza and beverages will be available at 7:00. Two Neighborhood Partner Representatives from National Park Service (NPS) will join us and speak to the changes planned for the GW Memorial Parkway South and the capability of NPS Police to enforce expected traffic behaviors caused by road redesign/narrowing measures. Following this presentation, our committee chairs will provide a brief update.

2024 MVCA ANNUAL PICNIC!

**May 11, 2024
1:00-4:00 pm**

Rain or Shine

ST JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
5614 OLD MILL ROAD,
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22309

Please swing by our annual kid-friendly picnic anytime for food, friends, and games. This year's picnic will feature live music, games, a bounce house, lunch from Mission BBQ, and drinks. Meet with local leaders, our emergency crews, including fire and police, and your neighbors. If you don't have one yet, pick up your MVCA 2023-2024 community directory.

Haven't joined MVCA in 2024? Do it now!
Use the QR code to access the online membership form.



Data Center and Land Use: Proposed Changes to Regulations of Land Use

Over the past 24 months, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has discussed and approved new data centers across the county. In Chantilly, 12-acre parcel was rezoned to accommodate a 110-foot tall data center near Route 50; the center will span 402,000 square feet. This center is approximately 0.5 miles from any neighborhoods. Concerns about noise, aesthetics, and diesel leaks have come to the Board of Supervisors attention during planning and proposals.

On 4/25, the county published the most recent proposal information regarding zoning updates for data centers. The county proposed new regulations on noise, building aesthetic and design, as well as setbacks. The proposed changes are open for public comment. Additionally, residents are encouraged to attend a virtual community meeting to hear about and comment on the data centers. The meetings will be held:

- Thursday, May 2, at 12 p.m.
- Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m.
- Monday, May 6, at 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 8, at 12 p.m.

Please see the Data Center project website (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/data-centers) for more details.



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Get Trained and Save a Life

Fairfax County is offering virtual opioid overdose training with naloxone training on May 10, 2024. The 60-minute training is offered to help community members identify an overdose, how to administer life saving medications, and how to assist in next steps if needed. The course is all virtual, you just need a smart phone or computer! After completion, participants will receive a REVIVE! Kit with CPR mouth barriers, vinyl gloves, stickers, instructions, and naloxone. Naloxone is also available for any person to pick up at pharmacies (Virginia Department of Health issued a standing order for the medication to be sold). It is about \$25 at Wegmans with a GoodRx Coupon (GoodRx.com).

Sign up at:

<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/9540a6c0-c515-4750-930f-5f46477953fa@a26156cb-5d6f-4172-9d7d-934eb0a7b275>

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CORRECTION

The following information on the Cherrytree Drive Traffic Calming Initiative is updated here as correction and clarification to information the MVCA Transportation Committee Chair provided in the Summer Edition (May 5, 2024) of the Mount Vernon Civic Association Newsletter. Errors and correct information were brought to MVCA attention, and with help from Kevin Diana, Cherrytree Drive Traffic Calming Task Force Member, the following information is provided. MVCA Transportation Chair apologizes for any miscommunication and misperception of the Cherrytree Drive Traffic Calming Task Force objectives and activities.

Update on Cherrytree Drive Traffic Mitigation Measures

On March 14, 2024, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) held a virtual public forum on a traffic calming proposal for Cherrytree Drive, which has had a known speeding problem for nearly a decade. Community members had a chance to learn about the traffic calming process, hear the proposal from FCDOT, and ask questions. A question was posed whether or not the local Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and the Fire Department participated in the traffic calming process. FCDOT representatives explained that Fairfax County Fire and Rescue has opted out from participating in the program because the installation of traffic calming devices poses a negligible risk in their response time (3-10 seconds per Fairfax County's official website). Following the meeting, Cherrytree Drive Traffic Calming Task Force reached a decision to move forward with the proposal and initiate the community vote. On April 15th, 2024, ballots were distributed to the community members in the designated voting area with ballots needing to be returned to Supervisor Storck's office by this upcoming Friday, May 10th by 5pm. If the vote passes, the vote will go to the Board of Supervisors for final review/vote and then to VDOT. Kevin Diana, Cherrytree Drive Traffic Calming Task Force Member

Updating the revived aircraft noise study (2023)

A public meeting (virtual) was held 29 April at 7 p.m. for an update on the DCA South of Airport Noise Study. DCA (Reagan National Airport) South of Airport Aircraft Noise and Mitigation Study Project was Kicked-Off as a community project on 17 May, 2023. Community members are also invited to complete a community engagement survey regarding the topic. This study faltered over a year ago due to contract funding and priority coordination. MVCA Transportation Chair will participate and ask for FFXCo and City Alexandria accountability for documenting project priorities that include the frequent public complaints for noise generated by commercial aircraft frequently transiting airspace over Mt Vernon neighborhoods. Please see or contact the Transportation Chairperson Mark Yonchak if you want to attend or participate in the above activities.



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As the 2023-4 school year draws to a close, while schools are still suffering the aftereffects of the pandemic academic and behavioral setbacks, progress has been made and (fingers crossed) next year should be back to normalcy. Schools will however have to continue to deal with attendance problems—kids not in school obviously negatively affects those kids but also disrupts the rest of the class as teachers have to change lesson plans and prepare make-up work. For tweens and teens chronic absenteeism also promotes dangerous and/or criminal behavior. This is a multidisciplinary problem which schools cannot cure alone—family and community involvement and County services are needed. Nor is the problem just “bad kids”; taking kids out of school for family vacations or events also contributes and are not “excused absences” under Virginia accreditation standards. Chronic tardiness creates similar issues.

Also, Virginia has instituted new academic benchmarks particularly for elementary schools to go into effect in 2024-5. New state programs inevitably introduce a certain level of disruption even when the changes are seen as positive.

However, many have suggested that, instead of constant revisions to expectations for students and teachers, Virginia would do better to focus on improving its near US bottom rank in financial support for education. As the recent Joint Legislative Audit Committee Review (JLARC) once again showed, for years Virginia has substantially underfunded education according to its own standards and constitutional obligations by billions of dollars. Fairfax County Public Schools, it is estimated, have been shorted hundreds of millions of dollars which has forced Fairfax County taxpayers to foot the bill to meet Commonwealth standards let alone provide the quality education we expect beyond those minimal requirements.

It was hoped (and promised by the legislature and Governor) that education funding would be increased as a priority but the ongoing (as of this writing) budget impasse also throws the budgeting process of Fairfax County and FCPS into uncertainty when it comes to teacher salaries. FCPS needs at least to meet market conditions as we continue to lose quality staff to our neighbors. As it stands now, based on the financial support in the County budget, teachers might only receive about a 2% raise, less than inflation, less than offered County employees, less than planned for federal workers and less than expected in our local competitor school systems. This is certainly not going to improve retention or morale.

Here, in the Mount Vernon Pyramid, we have not had as much administration turnover as in some areas, but we will welcome a new Mount Vernon High School principal soon. The principal of Whitman Middle School is completing a first year but, fortunately, our Washington Mill principal, Brad Bennink is continuing to provide leadership! All schools do have something of a scramble to deal with teacher turnover and fill positions, especially in Special Education, math and sciences.

By next school year, I would like to have some community members who have a special interest in education and/or have children in our three local schools to provide more insight on our schools. I also encourage you to consider subscribing to FCPS information services like “News You Choose” on the website www.fcps.edu or local PTA news to learn about events in schools such as plays, concerts, sports events, art shows and craft fairs you could attend to support schools and students and have fun!

Road Toll Text Message Scam - Don't Be Fooled!



*Smishing = social media phishing

The FBI released news about a "smishing*" scam taking place across the US, and for those who drive on toll roads around our area. Scammers are texting individuals and requesting money for unpaid tolls.

The FBI released this text message example:

"(State Toll Service Name): We've noticed an outstanding toll amount of \$12.51 on your record. To avoid a late fee of \$50.00, visit <https://myturnpiketollservices.com> to settle your balance."

The addresses look quite similar to VDOT services. Don't be fooled! Check your toll balance through the EZPass Virginia website, or TollRoadsInVirginia.com (VDOT website) to see about missed tolls. Report the text to IC3 - www.ic3.gov.

Don't click the link.

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Mark Your Calendar!

Join Us For Association Meetings

All meetings will take place at Washington Mill Elementary School • 7:30 pm
Pizza and drinks served at 7 pm. Typically, local speakers join for the first 45 minutes
of the meeting, followed by 15 minutes of updates from our community.

May 8, 2024 • October 9, 2024 • January 9, 2025

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

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