



# Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

January 2023

[www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](http://www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org)

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## MVCA MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

The Mount Vernon Civic Association (MVCA) is committed to finding solutions to two of our community's biggest challenges: helping children who are failing in school and securing our children's future in the face of climate change.

To address these issues:

- MVCA is already helping Washington Mill Elementary School (WMES) purchase food which can be taken home on Fridays by children who currently receive free lunch at school, but face weekends with no food at home. No child should ever go hungry. At our October 2022 meeting some of our members brought food to donate and others contributed money that evening, a total of \$340.00 – thank you! We want to continue supporting this program.
- In January, we will expand our efforts by:
  - Recruiting MVCA members and others to assist teachers in their first, second and third grade classrooms with students who are struggling to read.
  - Raising funds to purchase books that each child can take home to practice reading.
  - Raising funds for field trips, another way to enrich learning

If you are interested in volunteering, please email Judy Harbeck at [sharbeck@aol.com](mailto:sharbeck@aol.com).

We will address the issue of climate change and our children by committing all four of our meetings in 2023 to finding ways our community can address climate change issues and inviting businesses to demonstrate their solutions to climate change. If you are interested in helping this effort, please email Christina Reitz at [christinalreitz@gmail.com](mailto:christinalreitz@gmail.com).

### *Solving Climate Change Issues*

Our speaker at our Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023 MVCA Membership meeting will be John Morrill, Division Manager for Innovation and Sustainability for the Fairfax County Government's Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. He has worked 22 years finding ways to promote sustainability. He's co-authored two books on residential energy conservation.

Mr. Morrill will cover three main topics in his presentation – basic tips and suggestions for home energy reduction/cost savings, overview of energy and climate action programs in Fairfax County and financial incentives available from the federal government.

Christina Reitz, Chair, MVCA Environmental Committee, will introduce Mr. Morrill and moderate the discussion after.

The meeting will be held at Washington Mill Elementary School. Pizza and drinks at 7 p.m., meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

## HEALTH

### Cold Season Is Here. Where Should You Get Care?

Many respiratory infections like Influenza, RSV, and COVID are on the rise. Where you can go to get the care for winter respiratory symptoms can be confusing – and it all depends on what you are feeling, what your long-term conditions are and what time of day it is! I’ve provided a few scenarios below, but here are some rules of thumb.

1. Find a primary care doctor (PCP) – this should be your first stop for most symptoms.
2. Use Urgent Care clinics sparingly. These are useful when primary care offices are closed and you don’t have an emergency. Data shows urgent care offices are more likely to over-prescribe antibiotics and they don’t know your medical history. Take your medications, or a detailed list of medicines, with you to urgent care.
3. Hospital emergency departments (ED) rule out the “bad stuff” but don’t often give you a remedy for the common cold and flu symptoms. Save the ED for true emergencies.

You might have seen guidelines that say, “cold - go to your primary care; chest pain - go to the ED.” Well, what about the in-between? Here are some ideas! Unless noted, these recommendations are for average-risk people and apply to those without chronic conditions, and those with diseases like diabetes not on insulin, controlled high blood pressure, thyroid problems, or high cholesterol.

- *Adult or child over 12 years old with COVID positive on home test:* if no fever, consider waiting these out at home. 5 days of quarantine followed by 5 days of masking in public. Paxlovid is an option for some; you can request a telehealth visit with primary care.

- *Adult or child over 12 years old with cough, congestion, runny nose and fewer than 24 hours of a fever (over 100.4):* wait it out at home. So frustrating, I know! Start Tylenol 1000mg every 8 hours, and for most alternating with ibuprofen 800mg every 8 hours is also safe.

- *Adult or child over 12 years old with sinus pressure with dental pain or headaches that won’t go away:* The rule of thumb here is 10 days. Why? That’s when most bacterial infections are considered to be present. If you have 10 days of these symptoms, get a telehealth visit or see your PCP in person. If after hours and you’re miserable, urgent care is an option.

- *Children 5-12:* with similar symptoms to those above, follow the same guidelines. BUT please use weight-based dosing for Tylenol and ibuprofen. Make sure it isn’t expired!

- *Children 5-12 with fever over 102.2\* for over 24 hours despite Tylenol or ibuprofen:* Go to the ED. For 24 hours, sometimes fevers “break though” medicines, but this shouldn’t last long. So, if they stick around for more than a day, go to the ED.

- *Children under 1 month old with a fever:* **Head straight to the ED.** You can call your doc to let them know you are going, but fevers under 1 month are never normal.

- *Any individual with cancer and on chemotherapy/immunosuppressants with a fever:* Head to the ED and let your oncologist know. Wear a mask to keep safe!

I hope you stay well in the New Year and don’t need ANY of this advice! Alison Huffstetler, MD

**Alison Huffstetler, M.D.**  
Health Committee Chair

## MVCA BUDGET

<b>MVCA 2023 Draft Budget</b>	<b>2022 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$12,321.42</b>	<b>\$10,394.15</b>	<b>\$10,394.15</b>
<b>Cash Inflows (Income):</b>			
Dues (checks)	\$5,875.00	\$7,700.00	
Dues (PayPal)	\$1,943.40		
Advertising: Newsletter	\$0.00	\$900.00	
Advertising: Directory		\$5,000.00	
Interest	\$3.42	\$4.00	
Other:		\$0.00	
<b>Total Cash Inflows</b>	<b>\$7,821.82</b>	<b>\$13,604.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Cash Outflows (Expenses):</b>			
Picnic	\$2,464.77	\$2,500.00	
Association Fees	\$175.00	\$175.00	
Monuments Maintenance	\$243.43	\$300.00	
Meetings (WMES)	\$134.15	\$350.00	
Directory	\$0.00	\$3,500.00	
Membership Billing Letter	\$1,508.74	\$1,600.00	
Newsletter	\$4,912.86	\$5,000.00	
USPS Box Rental	\$212.00	\$225.00	
Supplies/Signs	\$0.00	\$200.00	
Virginia State Filings	\$25.00	\$60.00	
Internet/GoDaddy	\$42.34	\$50.00	
Insurance	\$0.00	\$350.00	
Other:		\$0.00	
<b>Total Cash Outflows</b>	<b>\$9,718.29</b>	<b>\$14,310.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Ending Cash Balance</b>		<b>\$9,688.15</b>	

## EDUCATION

### Returning to Normal

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), parents and children hoped for a fully “normal” 2022-2023 school year. For the most part that has come true. Students have generally re-acclimated to school culture, and deficits, both academic and social, are being addressed with the help of the remaining pandemic funds. However, FCPS continues to be plagued with the nationwide teacher shortage, with salary challenges from neighboring systems siphoning off teachers and administrators and with absenteeism from this season’s “triple-demic”. A severe lack of substitute teachers has been particularly problematic requiring a daily scramble to fill slots.

No matter whether you have children in FCPS or you do not, the welfare of our local schools is critically important to the health of our community, our property values, and to the future of all children.

There are many ways we can help restore faith and provide support to our local schools—Washington Mill, Whitman Middle and Mount Vernon High School—all of which have highly diverse populations reflected in the relatively low average standardized test scores.

**Understanding a school’s test scores:** The most important way to understand your school’s effectiveness is to understand the facts: a school’s average scores reflect demographics much more than the quality of instruction or the scores of any particular child. Breaking down scores by demographic group shows that children from relatively affluent families with educated parents score very similarly at whatever FCPS school they attend. At the same time, children from backgrounds of poverty or language problems, do better in highly diverse schools. Why? – due to the additional resources FCPS, Virginia and the Federal

government provide through Title I funding to high poverty schools. This funding results in lower class size and increased staffing.

Students in diverse schools have other benefits not so easily quantifiable. The ability to appreciate other cultures and to work co-operatively with people of all backgrounds is increasingly necessary and valued by employers and colleges alike.

**2023 Budgets:** School and County Budgets will be released in January 2023. On the plus side, while many individual people and businesses are feeling the lingering effects of the pandemic, stock market tremors and inflation, the County has weathered the storm in relatively good condition.

**School enrollment:** Attendance this year has not returned to pre-pandemic numbers so there are likely to be some staffing reductions which may reduce some budget pressure depending on enrollment projections. However, the impending end to pandemic funds (ESSER) and continued staff retention problems due to proposed salaries in competing jurisdictions may negate staffing savings. Also, it has long been recognized that more school psychologists, counselors and social workers are needed and that the County needs to step up its staffing and co-ordination efforts since many student issues stem from family problems schools cannot directly address, nor should they.

These are some of the many school issues under discussion and I urge you, as a New Year’s Resolution, to become fully informed on the facts, to recognize the critical value of our local schools and FCPS as a whole, and to support and value teachers and schools. Be part of the solution to the many issues dividing our nation as we move forward.

**Judy Harbeck**  
*Education Committee Chair*

## MVCA TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

Hello from the MVCA Transportation Coordinator for monitoring and reporting on those issues and actions relevant to MVCA and many Mount Vernon residents.

To better understand my purpose in serving MVCA, I attended the virtual meeting held by Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association's (MVCCA) Transportation Chair. This meeting prepared me for a National Park Service (NPS) Dec 6 virtual meeting, on the proposed plan and environmental assessment to improve the southern portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) and the Mount Vernon Trail (MVT):

- I was introduced to the other MVCCA "Citizen Associations" representatives who had similar concerns to ours including, local transportation issues and GW Parkway improvements.
- Our concerns included (1) need for traffic safety (lane marking), (2) speed control, (3) clear signage/road surface markings, (4) road (GWMP) resurfacing (5) unifying the Belle View Blvd. and Belle Haven Rd. intersections, (6) reducing traffic speed and considering making a pedestrian crossing near Belle View intersection with GWMP.

On Dec. 6, 2022, I attended the virtual National Park Service (NPS) Proposed Plan and Environmental Assessment meeting for improvements to the southern portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Mount Vernon Trail (MVT). This meeting was held by NPS Superintendent Charles Cuvelier, who presented options the NPS has for:

- The Parkway's intersection with Belle Haven Road.
- Improving long-term safety concerns and addressing maintenance needs along the parkway and the trail.
- Implementation of a new road diet (reducing lanes via pavement striping to improve vehicular safety).

- In some areas, new crosswalks and intersection changes may be implemented. The area affected includes the Southern portion of the 15.2-mile Parkway from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Mount Vernon.

- The NPS proposed improvement plan would decrease the number of lanes from two to one along most sections of the southern Parkway.

- Other NPS proposals involve a road diet for northbound drivers starting at Belle View Boulevard. Essentially, the right lane would use pylons on the lane toward Old Town Alexandria, while the left lane would become a left-turn-only lane onto Belle Haven and subsequently serve as a dedicated acceleration lane for drivers turning left (northbound) from Belle Haven onto the Parkway. The road diet option of narrowing lanes, would only take place in the northbound direction. The project is expected to be carried out before summer 2023 with minimal traffic disruptions expected. More details of proposed improvements can be found at [http://parkplanning.nps.gov/GWMP\\_South](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/GWMP_South).

And from the VDOT's Traffic Study website: Speeding has been a persistent problem along the Richmond Highway corridor. The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) final report on whether to lower the existing 45-mile-per-hour speed limit along the corridor between the Capital Beltway interchange and Fort Belvoir has been delayed to early 2023. The VDOT study is assessing the 45 MPH speed limit on about eight miles of Richmond Highway (Route 1) between Belvoir Road/Meade Road and I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway) to optimize safety and operations for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users. Richmond Highway (Route 1) averages about 47,000 vehicles a day within the study limits.


**Mark Yonchak**  
*Transportation Committee Chair*

# PUBLIC SAFETY

- Winter brings darkness, motor vehicle accidents, crimes of opportunity, slippery conditions for pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists.
- Precipitation leads to reduced visibility and often increased stopping distances for motorists.
- Fire prevention is key all year and particularly in colder weather when heating plants are running 24 x 7, fireplaces are often in use, and ashes need to be disposed safely,
- Consider using battery-powered "candles" to avoid fires from traditional candles,
- Check fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and also that your fire extinguishers are fully charged and accessible.
- Be very careful using auxiliary heaters and the use of extension cards.
- Have an Escape Plan in the event of fire and consider whistles or boat horns to alert all to evacuate. Choose a logical meeting spot to congregate outside to ensure all are accounted for.
- When calling 911, it is essential that you have the correct street address.
- Wear a helmet if bike riding, sledding, skiing, etc. and a safety vest with reflective strips.

**John Hurley**  
*Public Safety Chair*

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Chris.White@LNF.com | 703.283.9028



We love the Mount Vernon community and have appreciated the support now and through the years. We hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. We hope to reopen our doors soon and look forward to seeing you all again. In the meantime, we are open for carryout Tuesday through Sunday. See our website for full hours and menus.

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## Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

### Officers

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### Please join us for our MVCA Membership Meeting!

With our **Wednesday, January 11, 2023**, MVCA Membership Meeting, we will resume meeting again at Washington Mill Elementary School (9100 Cherrytree Drive)

7 p.m.: pizza and drinks

7:30 p.m.: meeting starts