

# May Newsletter

May 2014



WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.CRYSTALCITYCIVIC.ORG](http://www.crystalcitycivic.org)

## What is the Crystal City Civic Association?

The Crystal City Civic Association was established on January 28, 2014, with the purpose of advancing the common interests of the residents of the Crystal City neighborhood in Arlington County, Virginia. We are the last area of Arlington County to be represented by a Civic Association and it has become increasingly evident in recent years that residents needed a more formal organization that speaks for them and their interests. Arlington County's long-term plans for Crystal City entail decades of major change, in accordance with the Crystal City Sector Plan approved in 2010. Those plans call for density to increase by 60% and the number of residents to double by 2050. Such plans will require a very thoughtful implementation with input from everyone and many projects are already underway. As we grow, we

wish to increasingly serve as a voice of Crystal City residents.

You can visit the Crystal City/Pentagon City webpage for Arlington County to get an overview of what is being planned. In the meantime, this newsletter is intended to inform our membership and others of some key issues and development projects that will impact all of us and also to encourage you to join the CCCA and become an active participant in crafting the future of our neighborhood.

### **Come to CCCA's Very First General Meeting May 28**

The CCCA will hold its inaugural General Meeting from 7-9 pm on May 28, at the Crystal Park Condominium's party room at 1805 Crystal Drive. This is an opportunity for members and potential members

to learn about the purpose and the goals of the CCCA. Our desire is to convey a sense of why we exist and what we hope to accomplish. We will present our structure and, especially, we want to explain and discuss why and how you, as individual members, can play a role and the different ways in which your views could be heard and your insights could be put to use. Anthony Fusarelli, Senior Planner with Arlington County, will be our guest speaker to explain the purpose of the 2010-2050 Crystal City Sector Plan and its main features and implications. Finally, we will offer an overview of the current situation on development projects, open space issues, and changes regarding transit and the streetscape. Free after-hours parking is available in nearby public parking garages.

# KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

## Crystal Plaza 5 and 6:

Arlington County's Director of Planning met with CCCA representatives on April 19 to discuss the plan for Crystal Plaza 6. The Jaleo site (Crystal Plaza 5) on the corner of 23rd St and Crystal Drive is intended to be two buildings: one residential and one office—but the developer plans to proceed with the residential building first. Crystal Plaza 6, next to Crystal Plaza 5, is being considered for a new concept of residential building "We Live," such as has been done in New York City: small units with high tech capacity. The planning process for this concept is being fast tracked to June or July, but there is potential for considerable impact on Crystal City traffic if the entire 23rd Street project is conducted piece meal, rather than as an overall plan.

## "Bar Louie" Project:

The CCCA was contacted by a County Planner to ask if there were any issues or comments regarding a use permit application for live entertainment at Bar Louie Arlington, located at 320 S. 23rd Street. The application does not include dancing. When asked if the residents of the Buchanan at that location had been consulted, the answer was no, but the surprised planner hastened to say that they would be now. This contact is a good, tangible benefit from the existence of the new CCCA.

## Arlington County Budget:

On April 22, the County adopted a new budget by cutting various items and freezing all new positions. However, a new position for a

Crystal City Planner, which was created in response to CCCA pressure and which would centralize all issues related to Crystal City, would not be affected.

## Long Bridge Park Issues:

On April 9 the Long Bridge Park Design Advisory Committee (LBPDAC) held a meeting on the Park which focused primarily on the **proposed playground**. There are two proposed locations and the first site on the corner of 6th St and Long Bridge Drive (near the bathrooms and between Boeing and the park) seems to be preferred over the site next to the Esplanade. Three sections are being considered for different age groups: 1) a "Tot Lot" with bouncy things for the 2-5 year old group; 2) a "cloud room" for somewhat bigger kids with misting water for hot days and perhaps a bridge over water; and 3) a "climbing room" with various activities. Bids are due by September with a \$800,000 budget and the playground is expected to be finished by Spring 2015.

Questions raised on the future of the **Aquatic Center** were generally deflected since the project is under Virginia state law regarding bidding procedures. The low bidder and the county are in talks to find a solution to the cost problems. When further information can be released, the LBPDAC will be meeting to review the options. The Aquatic Center would be a real recreational asset to Crystal City, but ongoing concerns focus on the need to keep the costs within budget.

## Pen Place Open Space:

Although the Phased Development Site Plan approved in 2013 is for Pentagon City development, it has the potential for considerable impact on residents of Crystal City, especially with respect to traffic, so

Crystal City residents would be interested in having an attractive open space plan for Pen Place as a mitigating aspect. In April, the County and the developer Vornado held a community workshop, led by the County's project consultant, about the proposed open space the developer is required to construct at the center of the project. It remains to be seen whether the eventual plan will be for a "bare bones" open space or for a much more comprehensive one. The financial undertaking by Vornado is likely to depend on whether the cost for a more comprehensive version would be offset by having the County recognize this as a "community benefit" that should yield the full density at Pen Place that the County in principle has approved. The next community workshop to discuss Pen Place will be May 7.

## Pentagon City Multimodal Project:

Arlington County unveiled the Pentagon City Multimodal Project April 24 in a ceremony highlighting the key safety and access improvements in the heavily traveled corridor. The project revitalizes the busy South Hayes Street corridor between 15th Street South and Army Navy Drive. With more than 30,000 metro travelers, 2,800 bus riders and nearly 600 estimated Capital Bikeshare trips per day, the area's improvements are intended to enhance the access, safety and experience for all transportation users. The new facilities include traffic signals, designated crossing areas, "green street" environmental features and landscaping enhancements, creating a sense of place for the gateway to Pentagon City.

**Met Park 4 and 5:**

Construction of phase 3 (the Acadia residential building) of the 8-phase Metropolitan Park project is underway. Phases 4 and 5 for a 22 story building with 699 residential units have been combined to allow for a grocery store on the first floor facing (the not-yet-built) S. 12th Street and S. Eads Street. Only half of the “park” required to be constructed by the developer has been built so far since the Eads Street side has not been finished, but this park is a good example of the passive open space that developers build when not required to develop an active open space.

**Train Whistle Committee:**

Crystal City residents have long complained about the loud train whistles that sometimes blow extensively during the middle of the night. A small committee at Waterford House has worked with CSX, VRE, and Arlington County over the last few months to seek remediation of this annoyance and has had success. CSX has just approved a new rule, effective immediately, to silence the train whistles when the VRE station in Crystal City is closed, between 8 pm and 5:30 am. This applies to all trains on the CSX tracks, so it covers Amtrak as well.

**April 22 Transitway meeting:**

Construction will begin soon on the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway. The County held a meeting April 22 for the community to learn about the project’s construction plans and impacts for Arlington’s section of the Transitway. A joint effort with the

City of Alexandria, the 4.5-mile Transitway will connect the Crystal City and Braddock Road Metrorail stations and provide faster, more reliable bus service. Arlington’s section of dedicated transit lane and seven new stations in Potomac Yard and Crystal City are scheduled to open in early 2015.

**April 24 Site Plan Meeting for 400 Army Navy Drive Site Plan:**

This was the third session of the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) on the proposal to replace an empty office building with two residential towers (one rental, one condo) in accordance with the Crystal City Sector Plan. The first half of the meeting was devoted to a County presentation on the “teardrop” parcel adjacent to the proposed project. This is controversial as the County proposes to use the parcel, acquired as part of the Pen Place approval, for facilities related to the trolley. The County is aggressively negotiating with State, Federal and other parties to acquire an alternative site near the Navy Annex, a site which is sufficiently large for all trolley-related uses and which might include straightening Columbia Pike and improving the intersection of Joyce Street and the Pike. The developer’s presentation reviewed its project and its orientation toward the south and west--Metro, retail and other projects--rather than north to the highway. The committee identified outstanding issues to be addressed by staff and the applicant at the next SPRC meeting TBA.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

CCCA representatives will attend the following meetings to ensure that the residents of Crystal City have a voice in future development and to report back to the membership. With the exception of the Civic Federation, all of the meetings are open to the general public, and we would welcome attendance by more Crystal City residents.

**May 6 Civic Federation Meeting:**

The Arlington County Civic Federation, formed in 1916, today has more than eighty member organizations dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. Its purpose is to promote the general welfare of Arlington County and vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner. The CCCA was recognized by the Civic Federation as a civic association member on March 4 and now has four Delegates and three Alternate Delegates to the Civic Federation. CCCA representatives will attend the next meeting on May 6 which will include focus on a resolution concerning Long Bridge Park and the Aquatic Center. We welcome your input on these issues in advance of the meeting.

**May 5: Crystal Plaza 5 and 6 Long Range Planning Committee Meeting on Block M****May 7: Pen Place Project Open Space Community Workshop held by Parks and Recreation Committee**

# CCCA OFFICERS

Contact us:  
[board@crystalcitycivic.org](mailto:board@crystalcitycivic.org)

President

Sandra Borden

Vice President for Policy and  
Planning

Christer Ahl

Secretary

Carol Fuller

Treasurer

Diane Oksanen-Gooden

Communications Director

Eric Cassel

Established January 28, 2014

Join on our website:  
[crystalcitycivic.org](http://crystalcitycivic.org)

Or send a check for \$10 to:  
Treasurer, CCCA  
1200 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, VA 22202