



Ashton Heights News

www.ashtonheights.org

January 2025

The Vision Thing – Arlington 2050

By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

Our Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) meeting in January will feature Libby Garvey. Libby just served as our Arlington County Board Chair, has served on the board for over a decade after over another decade on the Arlington School Board, where she also served as its Chair.

Her last official act was to unleash an effort called “Arlington 2050”, where she brought certain vision leaders and Arlington leaders together this year to start the process over a dinner at Amazon headquarters. I was invited to this effort, and it reminded me of our early civic association leaders – principally in Ashton Heights and Lyon Park, who drove “The Arlington Way”, the Greenway, and the early historic housing inventory – to build a vision, an awareness, and an approach on how we work together and move forward together.

The Vision 2050 – or more formally “Arlington 2050: Envisioning Tomorrow Together”, is a year-long effort to engage neighbors across Arlington on what the County should look like by the year 2050 and what challenges the County, and its residents foresee. More information at: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/Arlington-2050>.

This effort needs Ashton Height’s involvement, vision, and participation. I hope you will join us at the January

AHCA monthly meeting at the Clarendon United Methodist Church social hall.

As an Ashton Heights resident since 1984, parent in 1993, founding my international sustainable energy global business in 2000, a GWU Professor since 2011, your AHCA President since 2012, and additionally teaching at GWU’s Graduate Urban Studies program in 2013 – I have a long involvement through many different vision points – and the point is – all of you do too!

Since most of us came to Arlington from other parts of the USA, have diverse backgrounds and professions – we all offer unique perspectives that we can bring together. This has served us well, and allowed us to have a robust tree canopy, an active and interactive relationship with our County in almost every aspect of almost every issue -- along with fabulous schools, walkable communities, great bike paths and parks, plus solid police, fire and ambulance services. Yes, always room for improvement – but pretty good so far.

So, I realize we are all busy with family, work, errands, hobbies, traveling, and upkeep – but visioning is important for all of us – our families, our community, and our businesses. Let’s take the time and add our joint visions. Happy 2025!

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., January 15, 7 – 9 p.m.

**Clarendon United
Methodist Church
606 N. Irving St.**

- 7:00 p.m.** Mingle and chair setup
- 7:30 p.m.** Scott Sklar, President and Committee reports
- 8:00 p.m.** Discussion with Libby Garvey on Vision 2050.

Libby Garvey served as Arlington County Board Chair and her term ended in December after 28 years of elected public service and about 17 primaries and general campaigns. Garvey was first elected to the County Board in 2012, after previously serving on the Arlington School Board, where she served for 15 consecutive years. This past year as Arlington Board chair, she announced the start of an Arlington Vision 2050, where the first meeting of over 100 Arlingtonians from all facets of the County met at an inaugural dinner session at Amazon’s Crystal City headquarters. This event will be a good time for our community to look forward and prioritize our visions.

- 9:00 p.m.** Adjourn



Editor’s Note: View the newsletter in **full color** at www.ashtonheights.org!
Articles for the **February 2025** newsletter issue are due by **January 24th**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com.

Join or Renew your AHCA Membership!

Ashton Heights Civic Association annual dues are \$15/household or \$10/individual member. Register for two years for \$25/household.

Anyone who resides or owns property in Ashton Heights and is at least 18 years old may join and then vote at AHCA meetings.

Pay your dues online:

<https://ashtonheights.org/about-ahca/join-ahca/>

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The Ashton Heights Greenway By Julie Mangis

Ashton Heights is unique among Arlington neighborhoods for its Greenway designation on Arlington's General Land Use Plan (GLUP). The GLUP, according to the Arlington County website, is "the primary policy guide for future development in the County. It establishes the overall character, extent and location of various land uses..." On the GLUP map, along the northern edge of Ashton Heights, from Irving Street to Quincy Street, there is a green line which delineates a greenway, of varying widths, separating the mostly commercial uses along Wilson Boulevard and 10th Street, from the lower-density residential uses to the south. Unfortunately, the green line is not apparent in print issues of the newsletter, but it is easily seen in the electronic version. Please check the image on the website, <https://ashtonheights.org/ahca-newsletter/>.

Three parts of the Ashton Heights Greenway have already been established. (1) The first section of the Greenway, between Irving and Ivy Streets, was negotiated in the 1960s between the Ashton Heights Civic Association, the neighbors, and the Ford dealer who owned commercial space facing 10th Street. He was required to create and maintain the landscaped strip, 20 feet wide, in exchange for a Use Permit (U-1794-68-2) for a public parking lot on land zoned residential. (2) When the County acquired land for and established Herselle Milliken Park, it completed the Greenway between Lincoln and Monroe Streets; and (3), more recently, the Kenmore Street property acquired by CVS for a drainage area is located such that it is considered a part of the Greenway.

The Ashton Heights Greenway is a significant element of the Ashton Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan, first accepted by the Arlington County Board on April 24, 1976. The Plan was developed after a comprehensive neighborhood survey in November 1973, and a series of 1973-1974 community meetings and workshops, culminating in a charette in January 1975. During the discussions, Ashton Heights residents articulated concerns about speculative land ownership and commercial encroachment, which was already occurring in the 1970s, and which might be expected to accelerate with the planned opening of Metro stations along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. The following is a quote from the Neighborhood Conservation Plan:

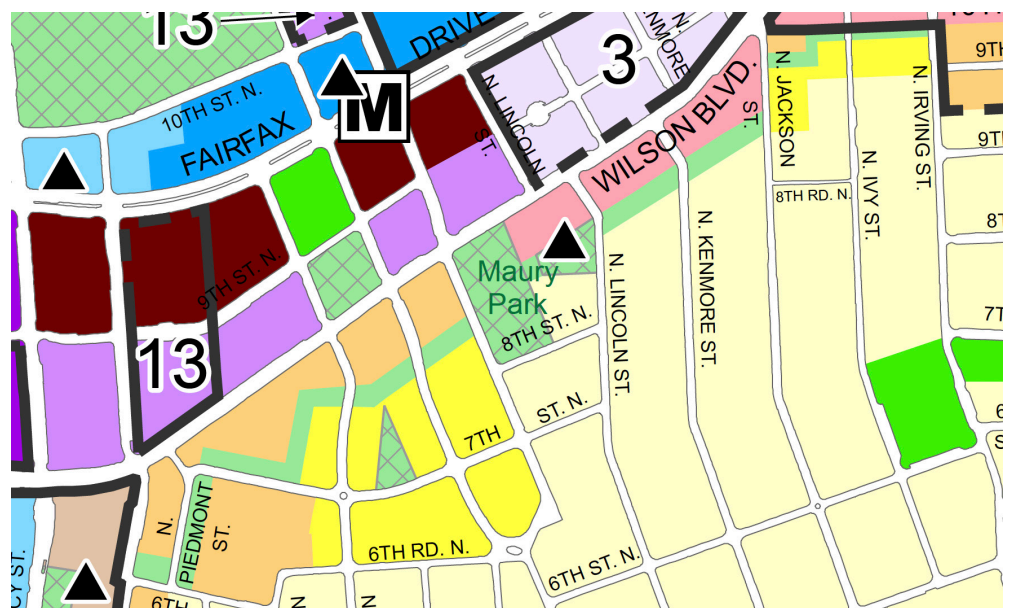
"Ashton Heights has regularly been faced with intrusions of commercial enterprises upon its borders, particularly in the Wilson Boulevard corridor. Several transitional use permits have been granted, in addition to rezonings to commercial and apartment categories. In the past, these intrusions have not always been considered a threat, but with the prospect of high-density redevelopment around METRO stations, Ashton Heights residents

have become concerned about creating some sort of buffer area. The solution offered during the Neighborhood Conservation process was a 'greenway,' extending from Irving Street on the east to the proposed Quincy Street extension on the west..."

Soon after accepting the Ashton Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan, the Arlington County Board directed that the Greenway be placed on the GLUP. It has remained there ever since. As development pressures have only escalated in recent years, the Greenway's importance as a planning tool is more relevant than ever.

Maintaining the Greenway has been a consistent issue for neighbors, as well as the Civic Association. In 2012, the tenant businesses adjacent to the Irving-Ivy Street segment replaced the landscaped strip with gravel and removed the fence that had been installed as part of the 1968 agreement, moving it to the property line and parking trucks on the Greenway portion. The Civic Association joined with neighbors demanding County code enforcement, and on March 30, 2012, a notice of violation was issued to the property owner. Eventually, the fence was restored to its proper location and the tenant provided some plantings in the Greenway portion. Unfortunately, much of the gravel and paving material was not removed and the landscaping did not thrive. A variety of incompatible commercial uses continues to take place on land still zoned residential and designated in the Use Permit to be used for parking only. Proper maintenance has been neglected. Over time, the fence itself has deteriorated and the 20-foot width of the Greenway appears diminished. County violation notices were again issued in February and April of this year, and in December, the Greenway was re-landscaped by Merrifield Gardens. But many of the neighborhood concerns remain.

In the coming months, the Civic Association plans to continue the discussion about stabilizing and extending the Ashton Heights Greenway. We would like to invite everyone to participate in the conversation.



Meet Your Neighbor — Kathleen Murray

By Erika Derr

If there's a heartbeat to Ashton Heights, it might just be found on Kathleen Murray's front porch. On an unseasonably warm October afternoon, Kathleen enjoys the gentle bustle of the neighborhood from this vantage point as the air hums with the anticipation of Halloween. This Jackson Street resident knows the drill —stockpiling candy and hanging decorations as the pedestrian traffic amps up in the days before October 31. For over 20 years, she and her family, joined by friends from the neighborhood and beyond, have handed out 1,500 pieces of candy on this storied Halloween street. She's been known to host a "candy counting party" for the grown-ups. "It just got bigger and bigger," she says, laughing. "People came in and out, all night long." She has since passed the torch to other families, but enjoys the season just the same.

Kathleen and her husband, Bill, now retired from the IMF, have been fixtures of Ashton Heights for over three decades. Their children—twin daughters and a son—provided an anchor to the community, navigating the same local schools and sports fields as generations of neighborhood kids. In those busy years, Kathleen managed not one but two travel soccer teams, juggling these responsibilities with support on the sidelines of field hockey games and diving meets, as well as event planning work for a local non-profit. The Murrays' much missed golden doodle, Lizzie, was a Jackson Street celebrity, once delighting Halloween visitors as a "live decoration."

Holidays and family milestones are notably special for Kathleen's Ashton Heights community. For the past 30+ years, she and three other neighborhood couples have celebrated New Year's Eve together with a progressive dinner party, moving house to house. "It started when the kids were little, and they'd tag along," she says. "Now, it's just us adults—but the memories are incredible." Another reminder came this past summer at the wedding of a dear friend's daughter in the Lyon Park Community Center. As she teared up watching the couple take their vows, Kathleen realized that she knew every bridesmaid and the photographer

- (all having grown up alongside her children) it was truly a community celebration!

Kathleen's ties to Ashton Heights go beyond porch chats and holiday traditions. As co-leader of We of Action Virginia, a local progressive organization, she's deeply involved in election activism, from canvassing to voter education. From her VOTE earrings to her stacks of postcards, she's known as a source of advice to neighbors and newsletter readers alike about the

best ways to stay engaged. "It's all about free and fair elections," she says. This November, Kathleen worked on Voter Protection and served as a poll observer. Next year, she's gearing up for Virginia's high-stakes state assembly and governor's races.

In her rare downtime, Kathleen's energy shifts to pickleball, a hobby that grew to an addiction on the courts at Walter Reed. She gravitates to the competitive "Shark Tank" court, where players joke it's "eat or be eaten." She loves pickleball for the diverse, intergenerational community and the pure fun of it. Recently, she and her husband have shifted gears and found a small place in West Virginia close to country roads and mountain vistas, which

offers plenty of time for cycling and skiing (him) and reading, cooking, and staying cozy (her).

Even as her children have spread out—to New York and Philadelphia—Kathleen remains rooted. "I can't imagine living anywhere else," she says. "Ashton Heights just has a vibe—it's friendly, walkable, and full of life. It's home."



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Jon's Joint By Oliver Fry, age 10

250 N Glebe Rd
Arlington, VA 22203

Jon's Joint at 250 N Glebe is a smash burger establishment that also has halal options and chicken. Personally, I think it's one of the best smash burger places I've ever been to.



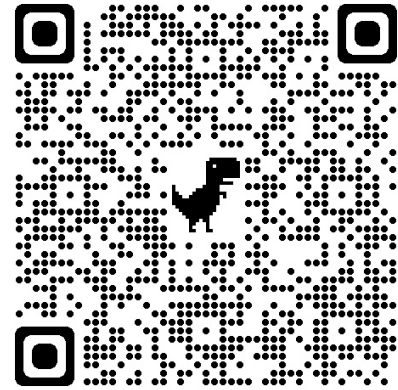
The smash burgers are just the right consistency; they are neither mushy nor soft. I thought their mango ice cream was delicious. There are two flavors, vanilla and mango, a quite odd choice of flavors but every restaurant is different I guess.

They have a wide variety of drinks ranging from regular canned beverages to non alcoholic malts; so you can experiment with new things if you haven't tried them already. Overall this place is great and I really recommend it.

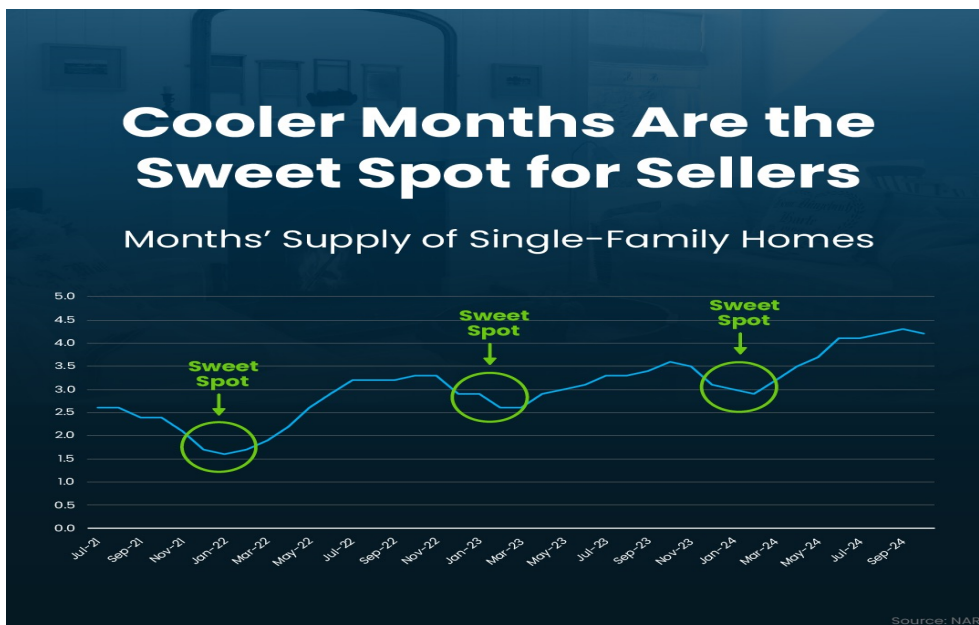
Calling for Nominations!

The Meet Your Neighbor column is a popular one, but we need your help. Do you know someone who we can feature in the coming months?

Please consider nominating yourself or a neighbor! Fill out the form at this link: <https://bit.ly/3RBQjsZ> or use the QR code below.



Don't wait until spring to sell your house. Winter may actually be the sweet spot to make your move. History shows, you'll have less competition from other sellers, more serious buyers, and a better chance to stand out since fewer homes are typically on the market during the cooler months.



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Monthly Recycling Tip By Amy Miller

Compost your food scraps!

Did you know that placing food scraps in your [organics cart](#) instead of the trash cart reduces the amount of material processing at the waste-to-energy facility and EXPANDS available composted material to build healthy soil?



Make a new year’s resolution to start reducing food waste and promoting healthy soils today!

Condensed information from a Solid Waste Bureau flyer from 2023.

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[COFFEE & CAKE FROM 10:00–11:00 A.M.]

ADULTS: \$15 | KIDS AGE 4–10: \$5

CONTACT LYON.PARK.PANCAKE.BREAKFAST@GMAIL.COM TO VOLUNTEER

Visual Clearance when Entering an Intersection By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair



Some people have expressed difficulty seeing approaching traffic when stopped at certain corners in the neighborhood. This was the subject of a recent Ashton Heights listserv discussion and was also discussed at November's AHCA meeting. The lack of visual clearance can be due to landscaping and/or fencing.

The County has a regulation on this! See the graphic connected to this article. The citation is: Arlington County Zoning Ordinance 2024. Article 3 Section 3.2.6.A.4.(a). (This is on page 29.)

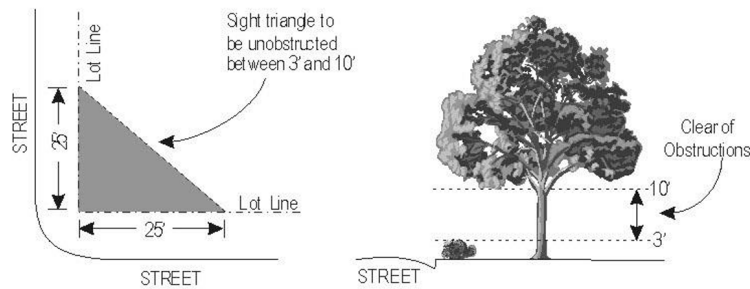
If you have a corner lot, please check the visual clearance at the corner. Neighbors rely on visual clearance in order to drive safely in the neighborhood.

4. Visual clearance (corners)

(a) R and RA districts

On any corner lot in an R or RA district there shall be no planting, structure, retaining wall,

fence, shrubbery or obstruction to vision between a height of three feet and a height of 10 feet above the curb level within the triangle formed by the street right-of-way lines and a line connecting said street lines 25 feet from their intersection.



Ask Us About Green Burial

Today, many families are choosing green burial, where their loved one is shrouded or placed in a wicker biodegradable casket. We use flowers from our meadows and Memorial Rose Garden for a ceremonial flower placing at the graveside service. Our staff is very knowledgeable about this environmentally friendly burial option. We can help you decide if green burial is the right choice for you and your family.



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Going Dry in January Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

For many looking to recover from the holiday season or start their New Year's resolutions, Dry January is the answer. Dry January is a month-long commitment where people abstain from consuming alcohol for the entire first month of the year. It is steadily gaining popularity in the United States with over 30 million people signing up to the challenge in 2024.

Frank Posillico of Huntington, New York held the first known Dry January in 2008. His dramatic weight loss and increased energy level inspired others, including Emily Robinson who launched the Dry January campaign in the United Kingdom in the winter of 2012-13. The goal was simple: to encourage people to rethink their drinking habits by going alcohol-free for one month. While many people had already begun this practice, Robinson was the first person to formalize and trademark the initiative for the nonprofit organization Alcohol Change UK. Today, Dry January has official partners in Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Iceland, France, the Netherlands,, and the U.S.

Dry January provides a structured way for people to evaluate their relationship with alcohol, free from the social pressures and habitual patterns that often accompany drinking. It offers people a chance to avoid stigma as they realize that they do not need alcohol in every social setting to enjoy themselves. Taking this month off from drinking can also impact health – both physically and mentally.

The impacts on physical health are clear. Studies have shown that abstaining can lead to improvements in sleep patterns, as alcohol often disrupts sleep cycles. Many participants report feeling more rested and energized as a result. Additionally, the liver, which works hard to process alcohol, gets a much-needed break. This can help reduce liver fat and improve overall liver function. Dry January has also been linked to weight loss, as alcoholic beverages are high in calories and often contribute to unhealthy food choices. Other research has reported lower blood pressure and clearer skin complexion.

The mental benefits of Dry January are also significant. Participants often experience increased clarity and improved focus. Alcohol is known to affect mood and mental health, and by eliminating it, people may feel less anxious, depressed, or stressed. The challenge also fosters a sense of accomplishment and empowerment, as individuals take control of their habits and make positive choices.



In addition to its physical and mental benefits, Dry January has sparked wider conversations about the role of alcohol in society. For some, it serves as a stepping stone toward a more balanced relationship with alcohol, potentially leading to long-term changes in drinking behavior. For others, it simply offers a chance to experience the benefits of sobriety, even if just for a month.

While Dry January is often seen as a temporary challenge, many people who participate in Dry January do not go back to their previous intake after the month is over. They develop new habits and alternatives to drinking alcohol, extending the benefits of their original month-long commitment. For those looking to reset, recover, or reevaluate their drinking habits, this initiative offers an accessible way to do so. Whether it's for physical health, mental clarity, or social reasons, Dry January provides a chance to recharge and build healthier habits that can last beyond this one month.

Tips for sticking to your dry January pledge

- Partner with a buddy for mutual support.
- Switch an alcoholic drink with a new non-alcoholic drink.
- Avoid routines that lead to alcohol and replace them with other healthier habits (e.g., instead of meeting at a bar, meet for a walk).
- Try to find new learned habits that are not damaging to your body.
- Keep track of things that make you feel better or how your health has improved (e.g., sleep, blood pressure, weight).
- Keep track of objective benefits (e.g., money saved by eliminating alcohol).

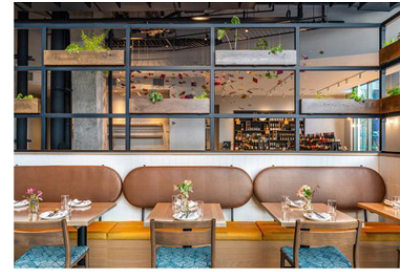


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Bringing the Irving-Ivy Greenway Section into Compliance By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

This is a saga about the first AH Greenway section, and I wish it had a better ending. The first Greenway section came to be with the granting of Use Permit U-1794-68-4 on R-6 zoned properties at 930 N. Irving Street and 927 N. Ivy Street.

Where is this located? It's on the neighborhood side of the businesses along 10th Street (Vespa, WBM used cars, and Budget Rental) between N. Ivy and N. Irving Streets. [Julie Mangis' article on page 3 explains the history of the Greenway](#), and how this Use Permit for a public parking lot and 20-wide landscaped strip came to be in 1968. I will relay to you what has happened since!

A little history. I got involved because of the landscaping.

In the summer of 2023, the County was pressing for the landscaping to be re-installed because most of it had died. I approached the tenant to ask if he would be interested in installing native plants, relying heavily on canopy trees with an understory of perennials for pollinators. The land is owned by Edmunds Motors. The tenant, Ali Nezam, was enthusiastic in his support for this idea.

He asked me if I would make him a plan. I agreed. He asked me to source and price the material, to which I also agreed. I developed a landscape plan which was cheaper than re-installing the plants that are called for in a 1982 County landscaping plan.

The plan I developed had the additional benefits of adding to the neighborhood tree canopy and feeding the local ecosystem, as well as complying with the Ashton Heights Tree Canopy and Native Plant Principles.

To change landscape plans required an application to the County. Mr. Nezam asked me to fill out the form, which I did, including the proper sized graphics, and thumb drive requirements. I also spoke with the county staff on the owner's behalf to affirm that the Administrative Change

would be positively reviewed.

I obtained 6 free trees that I kept alive on my driveway, awaiting planting; offered my member discount on native perennials from Earth Sangha and to deliver the plants; and arranged a free Tree Canopy Fund tree which was planted. Mr. Nezam asked me to oversee his landscape crew in planting the 6 trees. But on May 2 the landscaper (and I) discovered that there is 7 inches of packed gravel on this site. This is inhospitable to plants and likely contributed to the previous plants' demise.



When I looked more deeply into the 193 pages of County records on the permit, I found that in 2012, the fence along the Greenway had been removed, and the Greenway paved over with these 7 inches of packed gravel, in order to enlarge the parking lot. The County subsequently required the plantings to be re-installed, and that was done in 2014. Unfortunately, the County did not require that the paving be removed at that point.

Current status: After all this elapsed time, and work, the owner and tenant installed plantings on Dec. 4, unfortunately they used the 1982 plan. They did not apply for an Administrative Change for permission to use the native plants. This is disappointing on several fronts, but they have the right to do just that. The 7 inches of packed gravel remain. Oh, and the plants on the Ivy Street frontage were planted in the wrong place.

Before this occurred, the AHCA wrote to Arlington officials about the landscaping and other compliance issues. "We request that if the landowner does not wish to pursue the alternative plan developed by Brooke Alexander, that the landowner be required to bring the property up to Arlington's current code for landscaping for parking lots as a condition of renewing the Use Permit," the letter states.

From 1968 until 1996, the County reviewed this Use Permit every 6-36 months. The County has not reviewed this Use Permit since 1996. Ashton Heights named 15 compliance issues, in addition to the landscaping issues, in this recent letter to the Board. The County is moving to examine these now. I will be able to update you next month. Stay tuned!

Save the Date

There are many events coming up in our area and here are a few to put on your calendar. If you're reading this newsletter online, all of the underlined text are hyperlinks that will take you to the website for details on each of these events.

- The Arlington Public Library [Winter Reading program](#) runs from January 1–March 1, 2025. Celebrate your success on March 1 with a hot chocolate party!
- The Arlington Public School [Summer Activities Fair](#) will take place on Wednesday, January 15 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Kenmore Middle School.
- Love is in the air at Arlington Public Library in 2025. Next year's [Arlington Reads series](#) will feature several award-winning romance writers – first up is [Julia Quinn](#), best-selling author of the *Bridgerton* series on Thursday, February 13, 2025.
- The [Feel the Heritage Festival](#) will take place on Saturday, February 22, 2025 from noon to 5 p.m. at the Charles Drew Community Center.



The Custom of the Country by Edith Wharton

By Denise Cormaney

Follow all her reviews at [@findyourgoldenhour](#) on Instagram

FIVE STARS!

I've been drawn to reading more classics lately. I find them to be a perfect antidote to the dreaded reading slump, especially when I've read too many similar contemporary lit books in a row.

Edith Wharton wasn't really on my radar, but bookish serendipity prevailed! Many of us have what I call "Lunchtime TV Shows, right? Something running in the background while you eat lunch or do some kind of menial task. These shows should be enough to keep you company, but not a show that requires your full attention. I was watching *The Gilded Age* on HBO (the show is basically *Downton Abbey* set in 1880s New York. Predictable characters and storylines with fun sets and clothes.)

ANYWAY...just as I was getting settled into this world and thinking about that time period, Chelsey and Sara at [@novelpairingspod](#) picked it for their winter read! I was intrigued! I would never have picked this up if it wasn't for the TV show and the podcast, but that bookish serendipity prevailed.

It's so good! A page turner with an anti-heroine you'll love to hate (well, maybe not *hate*, but judge strongly for her morally questionable choices). This edition has an introduction by Sophia Copella. She's written a script for a 5-part series, and it was in production with Apple TV starring Florence Pugh! Yay! Except Apple TV canceled the project, saying they didn't want to produce a show with such an "unlikeable" female lead. Because male antiheroes are fine, but women must be, above all else, likeable.

Read this one and enjoy the ride! And join me in hoping that someone else greenlights Sophia Copella's project.



KIDS, INC.

Our local youth are ready to help when the household hands are not enough. If you would like to be added to this list, please send updates to Ann Felker: gr8est9@gmail.com. Include your child's name, birth year, contact information and list the jobs that they are interested in being contacted for hire.



Dog walking



Pet sitting



Babysitting



Leaf raking



Plant watering



Yard work



Snow shoveling



Parents helper



Technology



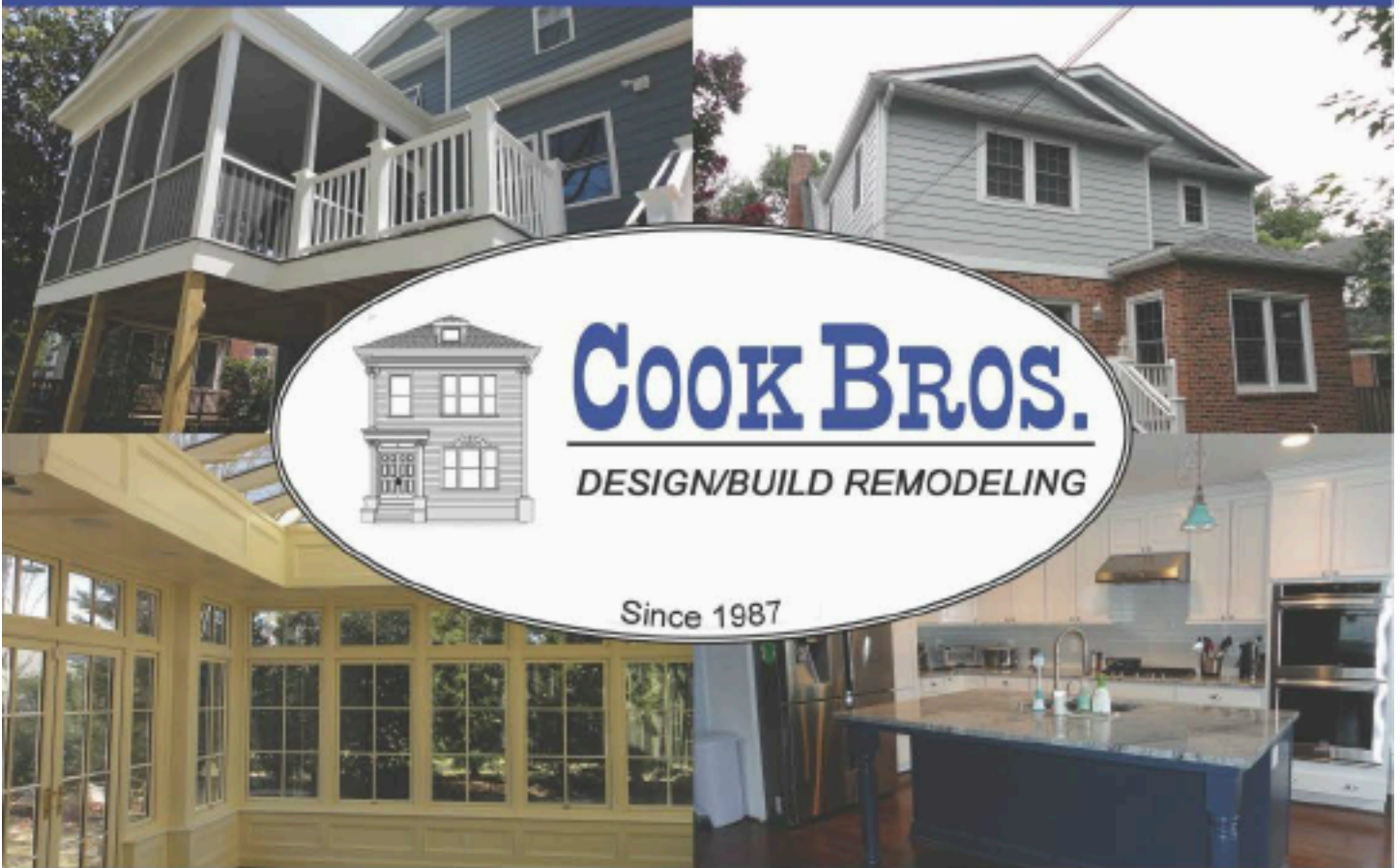
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