



Ashton Heights News

www.ashtonheights.org

October 2025

Getting Down to Business By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

The Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) is in full gear this fall. Sometimes it's the little things that are harbingers of bigger issues. And in many cases, the goal is balancing different interests to make everyone in our community feel their concerns are addressed.

Most of this balancing and consensus building is the focus of our seven AHCA Committees: Development, Housing, Open Spaces (Parks & Playgrounds), Safety & Security, Schools, Transportation, Tree Canopy & Native Plants, and some special interest groups – "Noise" and "Inter-organization Cooperation" and Specialty Reps – stormwater and safe streets.

This fall the top three issues for AHCA are:

1. Tree Canopy Campaign – where AHCA received funding from the Virginia Department of Forestry to distribute tree whips to AHCA residents and educate on care and best plants sites.
2. Development – focusing on upcoming development projects, interfacing with County Board & staff on lot coverage of buildings, and coordinating with our sister civic associations on housing density, tree canopy preservation, and pavement, etc.
3. Vehicle speed calming, new stop sign placement, and controls on 12-16 wheeler trucks through

residential neighborhoods, and intersection corner visibility relating to trees, bushes and fences obstructing driver views threatening pedestrian and vehicle safety.

We have many ongoing activities that rise to the top from our other committees and special-focused activities as they come up.

In the end, we always need a new influx of AHCA residents to participate in committees, the AHCA listserv, and at our eight monthly meetings.

Please look on page two of this newsletter to contact committee chairs. You can also submit monthly meeting program ideas to AHCA's VP of Programs Dave Schutz (david.evan.schutz@gmail.com), ideas for newsletter articles or even writing an article for AHCA's newsletter editor Amy Miller or broader AHCA association issues to Scott Sklar, AHCA President (solarsklar@aol.com).

As always, as we balance our family obligations, errands and home repairs, our paid jobs, various interests and organizations, it can be quite hard to pay attention to these various community issues -- but you are the residents -- the ones that live here and it is you that need to help address the quality of life, safety, and future issues facing our community.

As always, I appreciate everyone's input, ideas, complaints and insights – keep them coming. Wishing you a most happy Autumn 2025.

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., October 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. We have joined with our neighbors in Lyon Park to present the candidates from Arlington in this election.

Lyon Park will host the School Board and Delegates from HD 2 on October 8 and AHCA will host the County Board candidates at our meeting on October 15.

President Sklar will introduce the candidates and each candidate will have two minutes to speak. Afterwards, there will be a short Q&A. At 8:45 p.m., we will shift to closing statements. Whether you reside in Lyon Park or Ashton Heights, you are welcome at either meeting to hear from the candidates.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in **full color** at www.ashtonheights.org! If you have an idea for an article, reach out, we'd love to have you. The next issue will be the **November 2025** newsletter issue – submissions are due by **October 24th**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com. Thanks in advance for your contributions.

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/>

Advertise with us!

The Ashton Heights newsletter is distributed to 1,200+ households 8 months of the year. Our readers enjoy supporting local businesses. If you know of a local business that would benefit from advertising in the Ashton Heights newsletter, please email: newsletterads@ashton-heights.org.

Business card: \$60
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2025–2026 AHCA Officers and Executive Committee

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In today's market, buyers have more choices and tighter budgets, making your initial positioning strategy critical to success. The first two weeks on the market are the most important—if your home is overpriced, it risks going stale and selling for less. Sellers who prep their home, price strategically based on actual sales, and stay flexible in negotiations are still achieving top-dollar results. Let's connect if you have a situation you need help with!



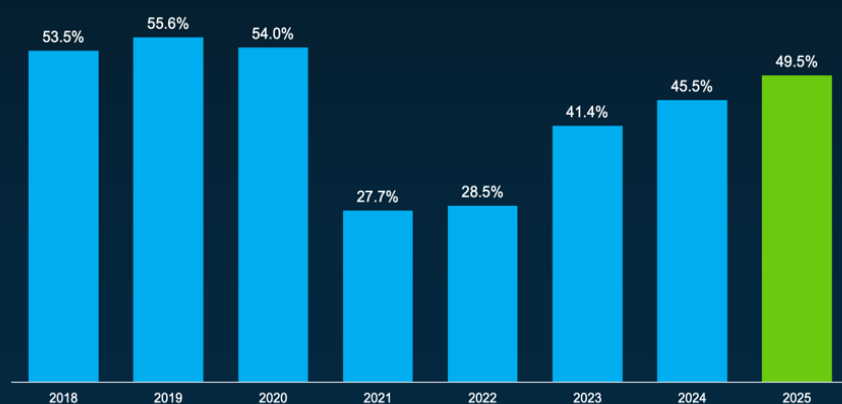
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Almost Half of Homes Are Selling Below Asking Price

Percent of Homes Sold Below Asking Price, June of Each Year



Source: Zillow

Friends of the Arlington Public Library (FOAL) Fall Book Sale

The Friends of the Arlington Public Library book sale will be held **October 23 to 26, 2025.**

This event is for all ages. All proceeds from the sale directly support funding for library programming.

Thursday, October 23 is [FOAL member night](#).

Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25 are open to the general public. Sunday, October 26 is open to the general public and is half-price day on books.

Full details about the book sale can be found here: <https://arlingtonlibraryfriends.org/about/faqs/>



Restaurant Review: Astor Mediterranean By Ginger Evans

2300 N. Pershing Drive
Arlington, VA 22201
Website: astormedfoods.com



Our family was delighted to learn that Astor Mediterranean has re-opened. It was long our favorite "go to" for a fresh, delicious, healthy and reasonably priced Friday night meal.

We returned and were not disappointed (though prices understandably, have gone up). The cauliflower appetizer is delicious - we highly recommend it. If you order the fabulous mixed grill be prepared to share it for dinner and also have leftovers for lunch the next day. It includes a lamb chop, steak, chicken and kufta - along with salad, rice and lots of roasted vegetables.

The hummus and eggplant dips are thick and well seasoned - and the servers will bring as much warm bread as needed to enjoy every bite! Tabouli is always great when someone else does all that chopping. But Astor's well seasoned fresh parsley, tomato and onion is good for your heart as well as your appetite. Another good dinner choice is to start with a falafel or chicken sandwich - which saves room for one of their wide selection of rich desserts.

Help us Register Ashton Heights as a Pollinator Pathway

By Melania Flores, Pollinator Pathway Subcommittee Chair, AHCA Tree Canopy and Native Plant Committee

Many of us may agree that one of the main reasons we love our neighborhood is because it feels like a little haven surrounded by urban areas. We enjoy the best of both worlds: peace, quiet, nature and wildlife at home, and the comfort of being within walking distance of urban areas. One of my favorite moments when I go to work is my walk from my house on Ivy Street to 10th street while I listen to the birds, enjoy the sunshine over the canopy, see what new plants have grown, and check what is flowering now.

But the foundations of what we love are at risk, and we may not even realize it. Canopy is slowly disappearing and not being replaced at a similar rate. Gardening practices for decades served towards defined aesthetics, not towards sustainable ecosystems. Since critters do not have the right place to raise their young, natural predators for unwanted pests dwindle, which prompt us to use chemicals to kill them. But chemicals, especially those fogged outdoors, kill not only the pests we want to get rid of, but also all of those that keep the world alive.

The beauty of today is that we have information and tools at hand, and with a collective effort, we can help reverse these courses in our area. I learned about the Pollinator Pathway's initiative by [Plant Nova Natives](#) a few months ago. Through the initiative, they explain that all critters - and even plants! - thrive best in large, connected areas where they can move around freely, finding shelter, mates, nesting areas, food, and water, and where they are safe from chemicals. Neighbors working together can grow a pollinator pathway, connecting their yards to each other and to nearby natural areas.



Why are pollinators important? Approximately 90% of plants are pollinated by insects or other animals. Without pollinators, the world as we know it cannot subsist. Pollinator numbers are falling precipitously. The **two biggest reasons are insecticides and loss of habitat.**

Why a pollinator pathway? By creating pockets of safe zones, we are giving pollinators a better chance to survive and thrive. When we place a sign, we help spread the word.

Continued on page 5

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— A. Scott

Pollinator Pathway – continued from page 4

What do we need to do?

1. **Plant natives:** Give pollinators a place to reproduce by planting plants that are native to our area. Pollinators only grow their young on very specific native plants.
2. **Do not spread insecticides:** any chemical that kills adult mosquitoes and ticks - including products that call themselves “natural” or “safe” - are far from safe for pollinators.
3. **Place a sign (provided when you sign up):** I am certain many people do not know that with their gardening practices they are affecting negatively something they really care for. By getting a sign, we are raising awareness and helping spread the word.

Who can sign? Households that comply with the two requirements of planting natives and not spreading outdoor insecticides would place Ashton Heights in the map as a pollinator pathway!

How many households do we need? To register, 5 households or more that are close to each other are required. Signs will be provided free of charge to the first 15 households that sign.

To read more about the pollinator pathways initiative: please go to: <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/pp>

To register our neighborhood: please contact me at melaniaflores@gmail.com. Please include your name, address and email address.

Ashton Heights Listserv Guidelines

By Glynis Lough, Listserv Moderator



The Ashton Heights Civic Association operates a neighborhood email list to share news and information about our neighborhood and Arlington. We welcome Ashton Heights and Lyon Park residents, age 18 and older, to join by emailing main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io with their full name and street address.

The list is most valuable to neighbors when many participate and contribute. We encourage cordial conversation, giveaways, one-off sales, and recommendations for products and services. As expected for a community resource, all notes should be professional, collegial, cordial, and consistent with the values of a welcoming and diverse community. Naturally, differing opinions and disagreements will arise, and we trust that neighbors will discuss respectfully.

The list does not allow partisan politics, so please avoid topics that will spark partisan discussions. Neither does the list allow marketing for businesses, but ads can be purchased in the civic association newsletter by emailing newsletterads@ashtonheights.org.

The most important thing to know about the list is that **“Reply all” sends your message to 750+ inboxes**. Only reply-all to a post when you are sending information that is relevant to many of your neighbors. Double check before you hit send: Does everyone need this note? If the email address “main@ashtonheights.groups.io” is in your recipient list, your note will go to everyone. If you’d like to reply just to the sender, use “Reply”.

Finally, volunteer list administrators do their best to avoid problems and keep out spammers. If you see a problem, please contact us using the “Contact Group Owner” link or emailing main+owner@ashtonheights.groups.io, and we will do our best to help.

 The Friday Morning Music Club

St. George's Chamber Music Series

First and second Fridays at 12pm

2025-26 Season

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December 5 & 12	April 10
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Blowing Up the Chemical Safety Board

Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

A little known agency that investigates industrial chemical accidents is the next federal office set to be eliminated. The Trump administration has proposed shutting down the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (also known as the Chemical Safety Board – CSB). The White House claims that the CSB “duplicates substantial capabilities” of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and lacks authority to enforce its recommendations. It wants the CSB’s annual \$14 million budget eliminated by October 2025, leaving only enough funds to wind down operations. Officials in the Administration report that shutting the CSB aligns with their broader goals of reducing federal spending and redefining government roles.

What is the Chemical Safety Board?

The CSB is an independent, non-regulatory federal agency that investigates the root causes of major chemical incidents at fixed industrial facilities. The agency was created under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and became operational in January 1998. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the agency’s five board members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Its public safety mission is “to drive chemical safety excellence through independent investigations to protect communities, workers, and the environment.” Because it has no enforcement authority, it cannot impose fines or charge anyone with wrongdoing, based on its findings. The agency is recognized for its in-depth, technically detailed post-mortem analysis of incidents and its very transparent public communications. Its reports, which are often presented in high-quality video form, include thorough reconstructions, root cause investigation, and recommended actions. The CSB has developed a devoted online following by publishing these videos on its YouTube channel, which, as of May 2025, had over 375,000 subscribers.

What has the CSB accomplished?

Since its inception in 1998, the agency has deployed to about 180 chemical incidents involving more than 200 fatalities,

over 1,300 injuries, and billions of dollars in damage to property and the environment. As a result of its investigations, the CSB has issued more than 1,000 recommendations that have led to numerous safety improvements that better protect communities, workers, and the environment and safeguard the nation’s critical chemical and petrochemical infrastructure. Experts commonly use the video reports to create awareness on process safety fundamentals. Two recent examples of the agency’s work include investigations into a fatal explosion at a molten salt nitriding plant in Tennessee in 2024 and a series of hydrogen fluoride leaks at a Honeywell plant in Louisiana. The CSB identified various safety and policy failings at these sites that could have prevented these incidents and serve as lessons for future mitigation measures.



How does CSB’s work differ from other agencies?

The CSB’s work differs from other agencies like the EPA and OSHA in several key ways. Unlike those agencies, the CSB operates independently of rulemaking, enforcement, and inspection functions. Congress intentionally created this framework so the CSB could focus solely on investigating chemical incidents without regulatory bias. The EPA and OSHA do not conduct deep root cause analyses; the CSB specializes in examining the underlying, often complex and systemic issues behind chemical accidents. Its investigations go beyond surface-level violations to uncover broader safety failures that other agencies may overlook. This work provides critical insights for improving safety not just in individual facilities but across entire industries. Additionally, the CSB’s powerful educational materials, including detailed reports and high-quality video reenactments, help businesses, first responders, and even other agencies learn how to prevent future incidents. As the Trump administration seeks to bring manufacturing back domestically, the CSB’s role is especially important in ensuring those jobs are safe. Without its independent oversight, both workers and surrounding communities may face greater risks from industrial chemical hazards.

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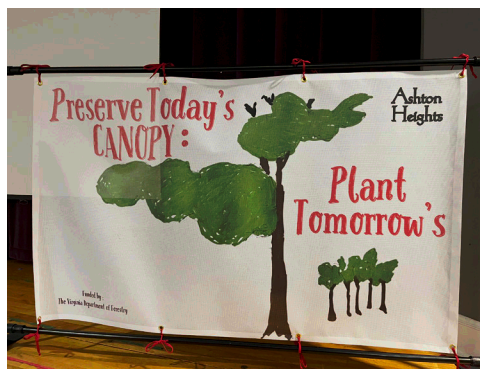


Update: AHCA Tree Canopy Campaign

By Ann Felker, Steering Committee Member

AHCA Mission Statement Banner

Our banner was introduced at the Sept 17th AHCA meeting. It looks great in black and white, but wait till you see it in color! The banner was designed by some 'kids' who grew up under the oaks, elms and gums of our neighborhood. While you are encouraged to come to monthly meetings, you will soon be able to see the colorful banner converted to a yard sign, standing as a reminder and a challenge everywhere you walk or drive. Whatever else is happening, this very local effort to preserve and plant the canopy trees that support civilization is an ongoing activity in our neighborhood.



AHCA Petition to the County Board

As of our newsletter deadline, 347 residents have signed the AH petition to preserve our tree canopy. Nice, but we are hoping for an overwhelming response – 1,000! Residents, 16 and over (both renters and owners), are welcome to sign, no later than October 15. Here is a link to sign the petition: <https://forms.gle/ryM2bhNkame9tcCNA>. If you would rather sign in person, you have two options. 1. Come to the October 15, AHCA meeting or 2. Call Ann Felker: 703-919-9216.

Bring an outrageous number of signatures to the County Board

Join us to present the AHCA petitions to the County Board during the next County Board meeting on Saturday, October 18, during the public comment period from 9:30 to 10 a.m. The meeting takes place in the County Board meeting room, 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 307.

It is more impressive to bring a crew of silent supporters to stand while the presentation is made – friendly persuasion. Wear an autumnal, tree colored shirt and smile as we present AHCA petitions and urge the County Board to "Protect Our Tree Canopy". Let Brooke Alexander know you are coming – brooke.alexander52@gmail.com.

Sign Up for a Free Tree Consultation

As of newsletter deadline, we have 57 more free trees to give away! Sign up for a free consultation at TreeCanopy@AshtonHeights.org. Ron Rosenberg or Brooke Alexander will arrange a time to look at your present landscaping and advise you on where a new canopy tree might fit your long term plan. Planting is expected to take place the first two weeks of December. Tree whips may take 50-100 years to develop a towering canopy, but they clean air, cast shade, support caterpillars and shelter song birds while they are still getting settled.



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



Mail collection

Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

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