

The Virginia Hills Echo

Volume 30, No. 1

Fall 2020

VHCA Announcements

- The board has decided to conduct all meetings for the upcoming year virtually. In light of this, we have also moved our traditional meeting dates to accommodate board members' schedules. Meetings will be held via Zoom, and links will be posted on our Facebook page, as well as on Nextdoor. Mark your calendars! VHCA Virtual Meetings will be held at 7:30pm on the second THURSDAYS of the following months: **December 10, February 11, April 8, and June 10.**
- Halloween is right around the corner. Obviously things will be a bit different this year. Please see page 5 for details on what the VHCA and CDC are recommending.
- Thanks to everyone who has continued to support VHCA in these strange times. We are working on ways to keep our community strong. We are now in the 2020-2021 membership year, and we can assume that much of this year's membership will be registered online.

- Just a reminder that our website is www.virginiahills.online. If you find old, out-of-date information on the VHCA website, please send that information to our Secretary, Juliana Sharp.

VHCA Officer Contact Information:

Warren Suyderhoud: president@virginiahills.online
Ralph Zecca: vp@virginiahills.online
Robin Jones: treasurer@virginiahills.online
Juliana Sharp: secretary@virginiahills.online
Ranna Armstrong: membership@virginiahills.online
Kate Anderson: echo@virginiahills.online
Leah Buckley: webmaster@virginiahills.online

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VHCA Meeting Summaries

- Abridged minutes for our meeting in February were adopted, in consideration of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding cancelled 2020 meetings. Importantly, these minutes noted that thanks to online membership payments, we had held steady in our membership for the year.
- We welcomed our new Membership Chair, Ranna Armstrong, who replaces Akiko Ueda-Zecca. Thank you, Akiko, for your service!
- Vice President Ralph Zecca discussed the maintenance of the Ronson Island and Neighborhood Watch concerns. See the following section for details.
- Our Treasurer balance is currently \$1,997.30, and we have a Dominion Power Credit of \$13.27. A budget heavily based on the previous year was submitted and tabled for a vote in December.
- We talked about options for a COVID-safe and fun Halloween. See Page 5.
- Possible synchronous caroling from individual doorways at a specific time in December was proposed. Think Italians singing on their balconies! Details will be hashed out at the December meeting.
- Land Use notes for the interim months were to be consolidated and submitted for reporting by Secretary Juliana Sharpe, designated representative Rachel Dexter Whitener, and member Jim McCracken,

who have been splitting the responsibility of attending meetings. We appreciate their continued diligence!

Specific questions were fielded regarding the Bell Haven properties being rebuilt after the large fire early this year, which was visible from Virginia Hills. A proposal for a combination of shopping and more apartments (residential multiuse) was opposed by local residents. The developments in North Hill near Lockheed Blvd and near the Krispy Kreme on Rt. 1 are also designated as residential multiuse.

- We will be editing our membership drive materials over the next couple of weeks. Look for a delivery in the future!

What the VHCA Is Doing in the Pandemic

Your membership is still working for you!

- The VHCA has worked with neighbors and the VHCA Pool to host or promote several successful food truck events over the spring and summer. We are so glad we were able to keep bringing



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people together!



- We are setting up a **Neighbor to Neighbor initiative** to support community members in Virginia Hills during this pandemic (and beyond). There are a wide variety of tasks you could help with - grocery shopping, mowing, raking, calling an isolated person to prevent loneliness, playing music, and much more! We also need block captains to hand-deliver flyers about this initiative and other community events. We know that not everyone is on social media and we want to ensure that folks know how to request help. All volunteer tasks are done at your convenience. **To volunteer, please fill out this form:**

<https://bit.ly/virginiahillsvolunteer>

Contact Ranna Armstrong via membership@virginiahills.online with questions!

- **Traffic:** Pursuant to Telegraph Road closures, the VHCA has been in contact with VDOT about possible detour routes through Virginia Hills (Parkway and Dorset). The details are currently being revised.
- **Community Maintenance:** We have recently tidied up the sign and Ronson

Island areas. They are looking much better!

Before:



After:



- **Public Safety:** The VHCA provides a contact point for Neighborhood Watch and can coordinate concerns, tips, and crime reports with our Fairfax County Community Police Officer. Currently, we are working with FCPD to resolve complaints about late night ‘racing’ in the Virginia Hills School Administrative Building parking lot.

We are also aware of a pair of unleashed dogs who have injured cats and a faun in our neighborhood, and both police and

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animal control have been notified. The animals are pitbull mixes, one white with tan markings and the other white with dark gray/black markings. They have collars.

Elections November 3rd

VHCA encourages its members to make a plan to vote! You may look up more information on Ballotpedia.org or Vote411.org.

Of course, at the highest level, the Presidential race features President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence facing off against former Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris. Also on the ballot in Virginia, the Libertarian candidate is Jo Jorgenson.

Incumbent Senator Mark Warner (D) is running for reelection against Republican Daniel Gade. Al Mina, a conservative leaning Independent and graduate of Liberty University is running a write-in campaign.

Incumbent Representative Don Beyer (D) is also facing a Republican challenger in Army veteran Jeff Jordan.

There are two ballot questions. The first addresses a proposed change to the state constitution to transfer the drawing of district boundaries from the General Assembly to a

bipartisan commission of politicians and citizens. Redistricting is a complex issue, and an absolutely crucial one, given the new lines that will be drawn after the 2020 decennial census. Important considerations to the proposed plan include:

- The commission would consist of 16 members. 8 would be members of the General Assembly, divided evenly between Republicans and Democrats from the Virginia House and Senate. The other 8 would be citizens selected from a list recommended by the legislative leadership of the two parties. The selection would be made by a panel of five retired Circuit Court judges, two Republican, two Democratic, and a fifth judge agreed upon by those four.
- Maps would need to be approved by 6 of the 8 legislators and 6 of the 8 citizens.
- If the commission's maps were then rejected by the General Assembly, they would redraw the maps. If they were rejected a second time, the Virginia Supreme Court would be tasked with establishing districts.

The second ballot measure proposes that one automobile or pickup truck owned by a

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service-disabled veteran should be exempt from local and state property taxes.

Halloween Guidelines

As we enter October, many of our thoughts have turned to Halloween. Each household should evaluate their own level of vulnerability, risk tolerance, and pandemic bubble before deciding on Halloween activities.



The VHCA is encouraging socially distanced sidewalk Trick-or-Treat setups with commercially sealed goodies on tables set up at the end of the driveway or at the edge of your lawn starting at 5:30 p.m.. Residents who wish to see the kids can set up a chair at least 6 feet back. If you provide a candy basket or bowl that kids will be reaching into, please consider providing hand sanitizer.

As usual, if you'll have candy out, please leave your lights on. If you will **not** have candy out, please leave your lights **off**.

We kindly request that families who choose to go out do not go up driveways or knock on doors. If you see a family at the house ahead of you, please wait until they have moved on to allow social distancing.

Please see this information from the CDC about masks:

- A costume mask is NOT a substitute for a cloth mask. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face.
- Do NOT wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.

More Neighborhood Fun!

We have provided albums on our [Facebook page](#) for virtual costume and outdoor decorating contests. To enter, simply post a photo in the appropriate album. Winners will be determined by the number of reactions ("likes") the photo receives by Nov. 2 at noon.

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Also, a Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt form is posted for kids to enjoy on neighborhood walks throughout the month.

Our annual Halloween Kickoff and Neighborhood Photo is typically one of our best attended events, and we will miss seeing everyone this year. Please share your holiday fun with us on Facebook!

There are a ton of ways to keep things fun for kids. Below, you'll find guidelines from the CDC. More information is available at the following website.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

AVOID these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door
- Trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots
- Crowded costume parties held indoors
- Indoor haunted houses where people may be crowded together and screaming
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.

- Traveling to a [rural](#) fall festival that is not in your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19

INSTEAD, consider some of the following low to moderate risk activities.

- One-way sidewalk trick-or-treating where individually wrapped goodie bags or candies are lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard). When preparing goodie bags, [wash your hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing the bags.
- Halloween movie night with people in your bubble. You may also want to consider a Netflix party viewing with friends you've been distancing from.
- A scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house
- Small group outdoor costume parties where protective masks are used and people can remain more than 6 feet apart
- Open-air, one-way, walk-through or drive-through haunted forest where appropriate mask use is enforced, and people can remain more than 6 feet apart
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is encouraged or

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enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing

- Having an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 feet apart
 - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised.

President's Corner

Well, here we are at the end of the summer and I hope that everyone had a great one! Amid the COVID -19 concerns, I sincerely hope that all of you and your families are staying healthy!

I always like to spread a little "Fall" knowledge when it comes to taking care of your property. What I normally suggest is take a look at the entire property by checking your dryer vents and your HVAC units. Make sure they are free of dust and even look into getting them professionally cleaned! If you have a fireplace flue, make sure it is clean and free of any debris and then, of course, don't forget your gutters.

Finally, it's time to pack your grill before it's covered with snow! In addition to giving your grill a thorough cleaning, remove any grease and food scraps. One more thing is the gas at the LP tank. Unfasten the burner, slip the gas tubes off the gas lines and lift out the unit. Coat the burners and other metal parts with cooking oil to repel moisture that can build up over the winter and to prevent rust. Then wrap the burner unit in a plastic bag to keep spiders and insects from nesting in the gas tubes during the winter.

The more recent turn-out with the food trucks is a great reminder to all of us here in Virginia Hills. It's that kind of turn-out that makes a neighborhood a community, along with the participation and interaction with the residents. This is something that I have seen here at Virginia Hills. As I walk through the neighborhood I see residents talking with one another, walking with one another and helping each other out. I even see parents watching over their closest neighbors' children.

We will host a virtual community meeting on December 10th, so please look out for those details via our Facebook page.

Warren Suyderhoud

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What's Open?

Venue	COVID precautions	How To Go
Fairfax County Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The library will continue to offer virtual programs, with limited in-person programs Social distancing features include plexiglas shields at customer service desks, every other public PC disabled, and other measures Returned library materials quarantined for 7 days Meeting rooms will continue to be unavailable 	<p>You may place holds online for curbside or grab and go services, or you may enter for up to thirty minutes. No appointments are required, but please wear a mask and social distance. Board books for small children are not available for checkout. See https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/express-services for more details</p>
Fairfax County Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Parking Lots are OPEN Phased reopenings have begun for Nature Centers, RECenters, Indoor Pools, and Fitness Centers Golf courses are open Amusements such as boating, carousels, and mini golf are available with ticketing. More details available at https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/coronavirus 	<p>Members, guests and class participants for indoor activities will undergo health screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entrance into the facility. Reservations will be required. There will be a specific time limit for visits and less equipment on the floor with increased separation between each piece. Everyone will be required to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth when not actively exercising.</p>
Virginia State Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virginia State Parks are open Accommodations vary from site to site. 	<p>Masks and social distancing are required. https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/covid-19-update</p>

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<p>Smithsonian National Zoo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zoo is open to 5,000 guests daily • Playgrounds and buildings, such as the Reptile House and Amazonia, remain closed. 	<p>Timed Entry Passes are now required. Visitors ages 6 and older are required to wear face coverings. More details are available at: https://nationalzoo.si.edu/</p>
<p>Smithsonian Museums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smithsonian Gardens are fully open to the public. • The Udvar-Hazy Center is open daily. It is a large hangar building with plenty of space to socially distance. • The National Museum of African American History and Culture is open Wed-Sun. • The National Museum of American History is open Fri-Tues. • The National Museum of the American Indian is open Wednesday through Sunday. • The National Portrait Gallery is open Wed-Sun. • The American Art Museum is open Wed-Sun. • The Renwick Gallery is open Wed-Sun (no pass system). 	<p>Timed Entry passes can be reserved at: https://www.si.edu/visit/passes</p> <p>Please consider the size of your party when planning your visit, as the number of passes may be limited.</p> <p>Masks/Face coverings are required in all Smithsonian buildings.</p> <p>Note that not all museums have reopened fully for visitors seven days a week, and some exhibits and areas may remain off limits.</p>
<p>National Aquarium in Baltimore</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity has been limited to 25% to allow for distancing. • Grab-and-go food is available for purchase, but there is no on site dining. 	<p>Timed Entry passes are required. Masks are required for all guests aged 2 and up. A no-contact temperature check will be performed at the entrance.</p> <p>Additional details: www.aqua.org</p>

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Cox Farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cox farms has opened their traditional hayride as a self-driven attraction. • The Fall Market is also open for drive-through business. Cider donuts and popcorn, as well as any seasonal gourds! 	<p>More information and online ordering for the marketplace is available at https://coxfarms.com/fall-festival/</p>
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