

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) is a five-member Board with the following powers:

1. It is the Planning Board, under MGL Chapter 41 Section 81 A; it is the special permit granting authority for projects which require an Environmental Design Review (EDR);
2. It is the Urban Renewal Authority for the Town under MGL Chapter 121 where it may, with Town Meeting approval, hold land or buildings to improve and rehabilitate them to meet community development goals;
3. It is the Board of Survey with authority to approve the design of roads for the purposes of ensuring that new building lots can meet zoning frontage and access requirements. (In 2016 there were no applications for Board of Survey consideration.)

As the Town's Planning Board, the ARB met twenty-one (21) times during this year and held hearings on ten (10) EDR special permits. All were approved.

As the Town's urban renewal authority, the ARB manages three properties: the Central School at 20 Academy Street, 23 Maple Street, and the Jefferson Cutter House at 611 Massachusetts Avenue. Building tenants range from Town departments to nonprofit organizations. Significant turnover occurred at the Central School with the Housing Corporation of Arlington and two state agencies ending long-term leases. The ARB oversaw a Request for Proposals process to fill available spaces. The Mystic River Watershed Association, an existing tenant, added space to and extended their lease, the Arlington Public Schools' Millbrook Program took a short-term lease, and the Arlington Retirement Board secured a three-year lease. The ARB entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA) with the goal of ACA raising funds to move into the remaining available space by July 2017 and enter into a long-term lease with the ARB.

The Town received a \$82,000 grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to preserve the exterior of the Jefferson Cutter House.



*Dallin Museum trustees with Town staff.
Photo by Heather Leavell.*

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is responsible for a wide range of activities and duties, including economic development, land use planning, housing policy, transportation projects, open space conservation, and neighborhood improvement efforts. DPCD administers programs to promote stable neighborhoods and economic development, including the Home Improvement Loan Program, Menotomy Weatherization Program, and Storefront Enhancement Program. The Department conducts studies of important issues and long-range planning opportunities in the Town, and prepares plans and strategies for solving those problems. In addition, the Department assists in the preparation of the Town's long-term capital improvement plans.

DPCD coordinates the Town's efforts with state and regional planning agencies and it oversees the operation of the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) and the Conservation Commission. The Department also administers the Town's federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Programs. The ARB is the Town's Planning Board and is also the redevelopment authority. The ARB manages three town buildings: Jefferson Cutter House, Central School, and 23 Maple Street.

DPCD has nine full-time and four part-time staff members who support and participate on numerous Town committees, commissions and boards, and work with other departments in support of Town initiatives. The groups and projects with DPCD involvement include: Arlington Redevelopment Board; Master Plan Implementation Committee and four sub-groups (Zoning Recodification Working Group, Residential Study Group, Mill Brook Study Group, Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group); Vision 2020 and its Task Groups; Open Space Committee; Bicycle Advisory Committee; Transportation Advisory Committee; Housing Plan Advisory Committee/ Housing Plan Implementation Committee; Arlington Tourism and Econ. Development (ATED); Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee; Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture; Parking Implementation and Governance Committee; Disability Commission; Arlington Center Merchants Association; Arlington Heights Merchants Association; Support Arlington Heights; Support Arlington Center; and the Arlington Chamber of Commerce.

The Department reviewed ten (10) sign permit requests; reviewed and reported on nineteen (19) ZBA cases; and reviewed and commented on twenty-six (26) license applications, including six (6) restaurants that obtained sidewalk dining permits with assistance from the Department.

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Walkshop, 2016.

Mass Ave Phase II Streetscape

DPCD worked with the Department of Public Works and VHB, a consultant, to develop a conceptual design for improving Arlington Center. This is the first planning phase, which will result in a scope of work for the reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center from Pond Lane to Mill Street. The project will eventually involve reconstruction of the roadway and improvements to curbs, sidewalks, lighting, street trees, street furniture, and more in the project area. Broadway Plaza will get special attention, as the Town looks for new ways to make the area more inviting and vibrant. This project will be designed in keeping with the Town's Complete Streets policy, adopted by the Selectmen on April 11, 2016. DPCD hosted a series of public meetings to encourage public input, including three public forums and a walkshop.

Arlington Center Safe Travel Project

DPCD facilitated the MassDOT Arlington Center Safe Travel Project which was completed in 2016. The project area is around the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street Intersection. The primary goal of the project is to provide a safe connection for the Minuteman Bikeway through Arlington Center, improve roadway safety and mobility for all users, plus upgrade infrastructure (roads, signals, and curb ramps) in the project area.

Cultural Plan

DPCD launched a Town-wide cultural planning process working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC), and others. The project deliverable is an Arts and Culture Action Plan that aims to strengthen and grow arts and cultural opportunities in Arlington, leading to a thriving arts and cultural life for all. This project will also help the Town implement the historic and cultural resource area goals outlined in the Master Plan and bolster efforts to create a Cultural District from Arlington Center to East Arlington.

Economic Development

Arlington's Economic Development Coordinator managed the Department's Storefront Enhancement Program (SEP), in its third year, and initiated much needed façade improvements in East Arlington Center. Up to four additional grants are being planned with local business and property owners. The Department also worked with citizen groups in the neighborhood business districts to address the issue of business district improvements, particularly regarding the commercial vacancies in Arlington Center. In October, Special Town Meeting approved a bylaw that calls for the registration of vacant commercial and industrial property. In November the Department hired a new Economic Development Coordinator, who has commenced updating the Town's business inventory and reassessing the needs of the business community and each business district.

Affordable Housing

The Town of Arlington continued its strong support of affordable housing during 2016. The Master Plan recommended that the Town update its 2004 Housing Plan. Working with the MAPC and JM Goldson, the Housing Plan Advisory Committee, and the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Department of Planning and Community Development developed a Housing Production Plan (HPP) for the next five years. The HPP documents the Town's changing demographics and housing trends, and developed goals and strategies for meeting the Town's current and future housing needs. The plan was adopted by the Redevelopment Board and the Board of Selectmen, and approved by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Implementation of the Housing Production Plan will begin in 2017.

The Housing Production Plan goals are as follows: encourage mixed-income housing through mixed use development in business districts, commercial corridors and other smart growth locations; Produce more, diverse housing for low and middle income households to address local needs; Foster an aging supportive community via housing choices that enable older adults to thrive in Arlington as they age; Ensure that zoning



Housing Production Plan forum, 2016.

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allows flexible approaches to achieve housing affordability and livability; Increase capacity for housing production by allocating resources and educating the community about housing needs.

Additionally, multiple developments that include affordable housing units, moved forward:

- Kimball-Farmer House. The Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) completed renovation of this historic structure, which now houses three low or moderate income households.
- 20 Westminster Avenue. HCA received a Comprehensive Permit for 9 units of affordable housing in this former church.
- Downing Square. HCA received a Special Permit to develop 34 units of affordable housing.
- 117 Broadway. HCA received a special permit for 14 units of affordable housing and 5,000 square feet of retail space in this prominent location.
- DPCD oversaw a lottery for resale of a two-bedroom affordable condominium to a moderate income first time homebuyer.

SALE PRICES ROSE FASTER THAN INCOME.



Buying a house is too expensive for current residents.²

sale price affordable to a median income household in Arlington is about \$310,000, but the median sale price of homes in Arlington was \$580,000 in 2015.

The Warren Group, *Town Stats 2014. Infographic for Housing Production Plan, 2016.*

Community Development Block Grant program

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, a federal program under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), received and distributed \$1,042,348 for 2015-2016. Non-profits, Town departments, and local agencies apply for funding to improve the lives of low- and moderate-income residents. These funds are used to support the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing, non-profit programs and services, public facility projects, local businesses, and for housing and planning activities that

benefit income-eligible residents and neighborhoods. A portion of the funds were used to support compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements with the installation of sidewalk ramps. The Weatherization and Rehabilitation loan program continues to make low interest loans available for low-income homeowners to make energy improvements and other code improvements. These programs are also supported by Eversource and National Grid. This year's funds also supported student athletic scholarships, scholarships to attend the Boys and Girls Club throughout the summer, food rescue and distribution to local Arlington programs and agencies, summer meals to students who may depend on school meals during the school year, rehabilitation of local homes, a summer jobs program through the Boys and Girls Club and Fidelity House, youth counseling services, senior transportation and volunteer coordinator, and the Life and Skills Building to be constructed at Menotomy Manor.

CDBG Accomplishments

- Installed 71 ADA-compliant ramps to make our streets and sidewalks more accessible to people with mobility impairments.
- Assisted twelve public service agencies with efforts ranging from assisting low-income older people with daily transportation needs to addressing food insecurity afterschool and during summer months.
- Arlington Home Improvement Loan Program issued five new loans to income eligible homeowners and completed all five projects by June 30th. Three additional loans (IDIS#'s 1134, 1135, and 1158) from the previous year were also completed during the program year. Of the eight completed loans, two were issued to extremely low-income households and six were issued to low-income households. A total of 8 units were rehabbed: seven single-family homes and one, two-family home. 20 people were served. No displacement of occupants occurred as a result of the rehab work.
- Assisted Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) in completing acquisition and predevelopment for 20 Westminster Avenue into nine affordable rental housing units. The total number of affordable rental units owned by the HCA is now 93, with an additional 50 in the pipeline.
- Two loans were made under the Storefront Enhancement program.
- One affordable condominium was resold this year through a lottery.

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Master Plan

Town Meeting in 2015 voted to endorse the Arlington Master Plan, “Your Town Your Future” with approximately 75% of its members voting in favor of the Master Plan. In 2016 the Department of Community Development and Planning undertook a number of initiatives to implement portions of the Master Plan. The Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) worked closely with the ARB, supporting their efforts to advance zoning warrant articles that promote growth along commercial corridors and to add some controls on the size of new housing development in residential neighborhoods.

A number of near-term and mid-term recommendations of the Master Plan have already been implemented or are in process.

- A Housing Production Plan was completed and adopted by the Redevelopment Board (6/2016) and Board of Selectmen (7/2016), and approved by the State (10/2016), with specific recommendations for increasing the town’s deed-restricted affordable housing, and specific sites recommended for future housing development.
- A parking study was conducted for multi-family residential and mixed use development, to determine actual parking usage, and project parking need. (March, 2016)
- A Complete Streets policy was adopted by the Selectmen (April, 2016), and MassDOT (May, 2016). MassDOT funding for pedestrian improvements on Gray Street was granted in the amount of \$400,000.
- Many of the recommendations in the Arlington Center Parking Management Plan have been implemented. Multi-space meters in parking lots have been replaced and single space meters installed in Arlington Center.

In the fall of 2016 four new groups were formed to advance implementation of the Master Plan:

The Zoning Recodification Working Group is overseeing the rewriting of the Zoning Bylaw, also known as “recodification.” Our current Zoning Bylaw was written in 1975. While it has been amended many times over the past 40 years, many of the definitions and uses are outdated or not in compliance with state regulations, and the Bylaw does not reflect best practices in national, state, and regional zoning and planning. A consulting firm, RKG, was selected to help the Town with this process. A new zoning bylaw is anticipated before the end of 2017.

The Residential Study Group is working on addressing neighborhood concerns about new residential development in existing residential neighborhoods.

This committee has representation from Town officials, residents, Town Meeting members, and the real estate and development community. Proposed town and zoning bylaw amendments are aiming to address driveway slopes, and implementing a “Good Neighbor Agreement” to govern demolitions, new construction, and large additions.

The Mill Brook Working Group was formed to increase awareness and guide changes in the Mill Brook corridor. The Mill Brook was recognized by the Master Plan as a “hidden gem [with the] potential to spawn transformative change.” It has the potential to be a multi-faceted resource for the Town, by providing opportunities for open space, economic development, housing, and historic preservation. During this past year the committee sponsored a clean-up day in the area around the Reservoir, and started a planning process for the area around Wellington Park, in concert with the Mystic River Watershed Association.

The Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group includes representatives from the Town’s Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission, the Arlington Historical Society, and the Department of Planning and community Development. It is focused on updating the Town’s Historic Resources Inventory, including identifying and documenting properties not now on the Inventory. Additionally it is looking at creating an historic structures report for the Arlington High School building. The Group has applied for funding to pay for a consultant from the Community Preservation Committee and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

DPCD’s Goals for 2017

Over the next year, DPCD plans to:

- Implement the Arlington Master Plan with particular focus on advancing Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, and Historic and Cultural Resource Areas strategies.
- Implement year two of the five-year Housing Production Plan, including adding units to the Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- Implement year two of the five-year Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Improve sections of the Mill Brook Corridor, including increasing connections to the brook and organizing clean-ups to improve access and water quality.
- Secure design and engineering funding for Massachusetts Avenue Streetscape Phase II Plan.
- Work with property owners and developers of properties along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway to encourage mixed-use, including

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- residential and commercial development.
- Secure state funding to update and improve local and state historic property inventories.
- Amend entire Zoning Bylaw for review and approval at a fall Special Town Meeting
- Update administrative, permitting, and coordination across boards and commissions to ensure clear protocols and procedures are followed.
- Work with all business districts to understand challenges and opportunities in each and direct resources and assistance to each to assist with business development, recruitment and retention.
- Implement Vacancy Commercial and Industrial Property Registry Bylaw, including assisting property owners with marketing of available spaces, installing public art in vacant spaces, and enforcing maintenance of properties.
- Complete an Arts and Culture Action Plan.
- Work with the CDBG Subcommittee to improve the Town's Community Development Block Grant Program.
- Assess ARB property portfolio and determine need for renewal of Arlington Center Urban Renewal Plan.
- Continue to work on numerous capital plan projects at five properties.
- Work with stakeholders to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Minuteman Bikeway and consider improvements along the corridor, including lighting and bikeway hours.
- Have a Minuteman Cultural District designated by the Massachusetts Cultural Council that will connect the Center to East Arlington.
- Secure grants and other capital for the Senior Center at the Central School to begin a major renovation to begin in 2019.
- Continue to provide reviews of ZBA cases, licenses, and permits.
- Propose and develop priorities for Parking Benefits District.

PERMANENT TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Permanent Town Building Committee (PTBC) was established by Town Meeting to oversee the design and construction of new buildings and major renovations for Town of Arlington properties. The Committee is comprised of five citizen members, appointed jointly by the chairs of the Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee, a representative of the School Committee and in addition the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, and Director of Public Works or their designees.

Activities in 2016

Community Safety Building Phase 3 (interior renovation): Scope of work includes functional improvements to police department operations and systems upgrades to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver. Substantial Completion achieved in early October. Project close out in process. Project budget \$8,130,500.

Stratton School (partial renovation): Scope of work includes new roof, windows and HVAC on east side of the building to match prior work on west side; a new Media Center and expanded Food Service and Administration areas; technology, fire protection, lighting, and accessibility upgrades throughout. Modular classrooms erected on site to house students during the construction period. Construction contract awarded in March and completion expected for fall 2017 occupancy. Project budget \$15,793,000.

Thompson School addition: Modular classrooms leased to accommodate growing school population while construction of a six class room expansion is undertaken. Construction contract awarded in October and completion expected for fall 2017 occupancy. Project budget \$4,000,000.

Gibbs School renovation: Gibbs Junior High, currently leased to private tenants, is being renovated to accommodate sixth grade students from the overcrowded Ottoson Middle School. Scope of work includes some reconfiguration of interior space, building envelope improvements and upgraded building systems. A construction manager at risk has been hired to expedite the design and construction process. Construction starts July 2017 and project completion expected fall 2018. Project budget \$25,000,000.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Arlington began implementing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in late 2015. The CPA allows cities and towns to reserve dedicated funds to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA projects are financed by local revenues collected from a property tax surcharge (in Arlington, 1.5% of the net tax levy minus exemptions), plus annual distributions from the state CPA trust fund.

The Community Preservation Committee studies local community preservation needs, recommends CPA appropriations to Town Meeting, and oversees projects funded by CPA. In 2016, the committee held public informational meetings, drafted a Community Preservation Plan, received and reviewed nine project applications for FY2017 CPA funding, hosted public applicant presentations, and ultimately recommended seven community preservation projects to Town Meeting for

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funding. The Committee consulted with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, and other Town leaders in reaching our funding recommendations.

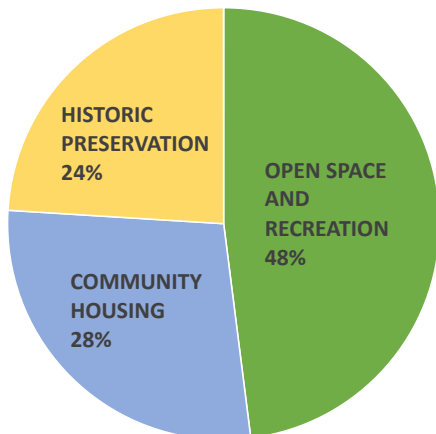
Local projects funded by CPA in FY2017

Following the recommendation of the Committee, Town Meeting appropriated a total \$1,430,509 in CPA funds for FY2017 for local community housing, historic preservation, and open space/recreation projects:

- \$636,749 for playing field rehabilitation and upgrades and ADA access renovation of Robbins Farm Park.
- \$49,760 to study options for shoreline preservation and erosion mitigation along public portions of Spy Pond
- \$289,000 to rehabilitate and preserve the Whittemore-Robbins Carriage House, an original part of the historic estate.
- \$200,000 to the Arlington Housing Authority to help replace leaking windows at Drake Village.
- \$200,000 to the Housing Corporation of Arlington to help create three units of affordable housing at the renovated historic Kimball Farmer House.
- \$35,000 to the Jason Russell House for preservation work and an engineering assessment of this important Revolutionary War site.
- \$20,000 to the Old Schwamb Mill for a new roof to protect the historically important barn outbuilding on the complex.

FY2017 CPA Project Appropriations by Category

In 2016 the Kimball-Farmer House project was completed and is now occupied. The Spy Pond and Jason Russell studies are underway and will be available to the public in 2017. Also in 2017 we look forward to



the completion of the Robbins Farm Park, Whittemore-Robbins Carriage House, Drake Village, and Schwamb Mill Barn projects.

For more information, please visit arlingtonma.gov/communitypreservation.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

In 2016 the Zoning Board of Appeals as prescribed in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, The Zoning Act, and, also, as further clarified by the Town's Zoning Bylaw, heard and rendered decisions on eleven petitions. Since its inception in 1946 the Zoning Board of Appeals has heard and rendered decisions on over 3,300 appeals. Petitions heard by the Board include Variances, Special Permits, Appeals from the Decision of the Building Inspector, and comprehensive permits (Chapter 40B).

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of five regular members: the Chair and four appointees and two associate members. For any decision to be granted, the vote of the five-member board must carry a super majority. All hearings are open to the public and are generally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, as needed. The meetings are usually held in the conference room located on the second floor of the Town Hall Annex. All hearings are advertised in The Arlington Advocate for two consecutive weeks and posted on the Town Clerk's Bulletin Board at least three weeks prior to the hearing date. Hearings are also posted on the Town website and abutters to the property are notified by mail. To receive ZBA Agendas by email, subscribe online atarlingtonma.gov/subscribe. The Rules and Regulations of the Zoning Board of Appeals are on file in the Office of the Town Clerk and in the Zoning Board of Appeals' Office at 51 Grove Street.

2016 Petitions Heard By ZBA	
Petitions for Variance	2
Applications for Special Permits	6
Appeal of Decision of Inspector of Buildings	2
Amendments to SP/Variances	0
Comprehensive Permits	1
Total	
Total Petitions filed with Town Clerk	17
Total Hearing Continued by the board	10
Total Petitions withdrawn	1
Total Petitions sent to ARB	6

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Arlington Conservation Commission (ACC) is required by state and local laws to protect and preserve wetlands and waterways and their surrounding areas. The ACC is comprised of seven (7) volunteer Members and one (1) or more volunteer Associate Members, who are appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, and a part-time, paid administrator. Through bimonthly meetings and on-site visits, ACC members work to ensure that all construction and development projects, residential and commercial, that may alter any wetlands, floodplains, rivers, streams, ponds, and/or lakes are in compliance with state and local regulations. ACC also protects and manages the Town's Conservation Lands and natural resources.

ACC is mandated to protect wetlands, waterways, water supplies, fisheries, wildlife and wildlife habitat as well as regulate activities in a floodplain through its administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Arlington General Bylaw for Wetlands Protection. ACC members regularly seek continuing education to keep abreast of frequently changing regulations and to assist applicants through the regulatory process.

In 2016, ACC held twenty-seven (27) public meetings, and provided coordination, monitoring, permit review, and consultation on numerous residential and municipal developments around Town. ACC issued sixteen (16) Permits/Orders of Conditions, four (4) Certificates of Compliance, and one (1) Determinations of Applicability. The ACC initiated seven (7) Enforcement actions and conducted over twenty site (20) visits.

ACC provided detailed comments on the comprehensive permit application filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals for the proposed Thorndike Place multi-unit residential development in east Arlington on land known as the Mugar parcel. Under the comprehensive permit law, General Laws chapter 40B, the ZBA administers the Arlington Wetlands Protection Bylaw, but the developer still must apply to the ACC for a permit under the Wetlands Protection Act. Thorndike Place has not yet filed any application with the ACC.

Mystic Riverfront Restoration Grant Awarded

In the fall the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awarded the ACC and the Town of Arlington the Natural Resource Damages Assessment and Restoration Program Grant (Doc. No. BWSC- NRD-2015-02 COMMBUYS Bid#: BD-15-1045-BWSC0-BWSC1-00000005835). The grant is in the amount of \$ 47,325.

The Restoration project will create a native riverbank (riparian) habitat and improve stormwater quality. It is located along the Mystic River at the end of Park Street in the area that was directly impacted by oil released from a tanker truck that overturned nearby on

Route 60 in May 2013. The Restoration project will provide slope stabilization along the riverbank, enhance the natural ecosystem, and help to improve water quality of the river. The Restoration project will include direct involvement from the surrounding environmental justice community during creation of additional riparian habitat and will include the placement of educational signage along the existing adjacent footpath.

The DEP grant provides the funds for the restoration and enhancement of the riverbank habitat and the drain pipe outfall improvements. The Town has agreed to fully fund the installation and maintenance of a new pretreatment system for the storm drain pipe. This related project, managed by DPW, will capture oils, sediment, and litter to reduce contamination and sedimentation in the Mystic River. The combination of these two projects will provide for the sustainable restoration of the Upper Mystic River Bank and the improvement of local water quality. Planning for the project began in November 2016 in cooperation with the Planning Department and DPW. The project is expected to break ground late spring 2017.

Spy Pond Shoreline Protection Project

Following passage of the Community Preservation Act, ACC applied for funding in the FY2017 funding cycle and was awarded \$49,760 for a feasibility study and detailed survey of four Town-owned parcels along Spy Pond (Spy Pond Park, Scannell Field, land adjacent to the Boys and Girls Club, and Spring Valley Street). The work undertaken during 2016 found that the Spy Pond Park shoreline is marginally stable with scattered instances of loss of vegetation, compacted soils, and uncontrolled access. The other three areas, however, present unstable conditions for similar reasons.

The goals of the project are to preserve, stabilize, and strengthen the pond's banks to control erosion; protect and enhance wildlife habitat; prevent unauthorized paths; broaden and strengthen constituency groups; increase water quality and recreational opportunities; and improve stormwater infiltration. ACC is submitting a phase two CPA grant application for FY2018 to implement the project's recommendations.

Land Stewards

ACC's volunteer citizen organization, Arlington Land Stewards (ALS) has assisted in managing twenty-four (24) Town-owned conservation lands comprising approximately thirty (30) acres. Land stewards monitor, coordinate, and maintain (with permission from the ACC) conservation land of their choice, often in their immediate neighborhood or sometimes elsewhere in Town. Each land steward is provided with a stewardship handbook listing the location of conservation lands, conservation land regulations as well as problem/solution management information. The handbook is avail-

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able online at arlingtonma.gov/conservation.

This year steps for easier access were installed by an Eagle Scout at Mt. Gilboa. More information about the Town's conservation land and other open spaces may be viewed on the Town's new "Open Space and Recreation Areas" application, which can be accessed at arlingtonma.gov/openspace. Volunteer Guidelines can be found on the Commission's website on the Conservation Land Stewards page.

Water Bodies Oversight

In 2016 ACC, through its Water Bodies working group, assumed leadership in coordinating the Water Bodies line item in the Town Budget process. In the past, the Vision 2020 Spy Pond Group had taken the lead. Since a number of other water bodies are also managed by the Town, ACC would be more appropriate to assess the needs of all water bodies and prioritize funding requests. The first step was a survey and assessment of all the water bodies, including streams, in Arlington. The ACC then determined priority locations for active management. The five top locations were determined to be: Arlington Reservoir, Hills Pond, Mill Brook, McClennen Park Detention Ponds (on Reeds Brook) and Spy Pond.

New to the efforts for last year was an assessment of the McClennen Park Detention Ponds which might be affected from seepage from the landfill there. Using approved budget from the Water Bodies Fund, the ACC has provided oversight to assessment of these ponds by Brown & Caldwell. Sampling of the surface water and sediment in the ponds was performed on December 8, 2016. These results are expected in early 2017 and will inform further investigations of the ponds towards the broader goal of improving the site's aesthetic, recreational, and wildlife functions.

Arlington's Great Meadows (AGM)

This was the second year since the ACROSS Lexington paths were extended into East Lexington and included parts of AGM. The C loop connects AGM with the Arlington Reservoir, and the D loop connects north to the Whipple Hill Conservation area. The new signage makes navigation much easier and more people are discovering these open space areas. <http://www.lexingtonma.gov/selectmen/committee/acrosslexington.cfm>

To introduce people to Arlington's Great Meadows, the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) group sponsors seasonal "Walk All Around AGM" events led by Arlington resident and ACC member David White. FoAGM has also continued with regular trail and kiosk maintenance including replacing broken and rotting boardwalk treads.

FoAGM, with the help of volunteers, continued to work to control invasives and the re-growth of woody

vegetation in the recently restored upland "entry meadow" at the northwest corner of AGM by hand trimming. FoAGM also continued their efforts started in 2005 to clear and maintain an approximately 100-yard stretch of AGM along the Minutemen Bikeway that had become densely overgrown with the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed. This area is now mostly knotweed-free, preserving a stunning view of the Meadows from the bikeway.

Acknowledgments

ACC would like to express its sincere gratitude and best wishes to retired Conservation Administrator Cori Beckwith for her 16 years of unwavering dedication and service to ACC and the Town of Arlington.

ACC also sincerely thanks all individuals and organizations that contributed directly or indirectly to the activities of its fifty-first (51st) year. Many special thanks go to the scores of volunteers who came out for clean-up projects, assisted as land stewards, or participated in the many Friends groups that work to preserve the Town's natural resources and conservation lands.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Arlington's Open Space Committee (OSC) was established by Town Meeting in 1996. Members are appointed by the Town Manager and include concerned citizens and representatives of key Town departments and commissions. The Committee meets monthly to exchange ideas and discuss ways to protect, maintain, and promote the Town's open space and recreation resources. The Committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties. It seeks to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have ownership and management authority. In addition, the OSC works to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the protection, stewardship, and appropriate uses of the Town's open spaces.

The Committee's primary responsibility is to prepare the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), monitor its provisions and goals, and document accomplishments. The current Plan covering the years 2015 to 2022 was approved and adopted as Town policy in the fall of 2015. Printed copies of the complete Plan and Appendices were distributed in early 2016 to the Robbins and Fox libraries, Department of Planning and Community Development, Board of Selectmen's and Town Manager's offices, and certain other Town departments.

Working with Information Technology (IT) staff in the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Committee developed "Experiencing Arlington's Open Spaces," a web-based application that makes much of the Plan's site information available for

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viewing on a computer, smart phone or tablet. For each of the nineteen open space sites featured there are multiple photographs and a brief description of the property, as well as a map showing access points and internal walking trails.

Another project that continued through 2016 also builds on the OSRP by promoting safe and interesting walking routes that connect open spaces and other significant sites around Arlington. The project, called Take-A-Walk, focused first on routes in East Arlington. Many ideas were generated at a community meeting held in January, and subsequent revisions to the map were compiled by Committee members with IT staff support. The final map features highlighted walking routes around East Arlington neighborhoods, with photos of selected sites. It is available in both printed form and online on the Town's OSC website. Arlington Heights, including both sides of Mass. Avenue, is the focus of another set of maps to be developed in 2017.

A third project, developed by OSC member John Pickle, encourages residents with digital cameras and smart phones to take documentary photos at designated locations at Menotomy Rocks Park and the Reservoir, with other sites to be added later. This Picture Post initiative is linked to a national database that archives photos documenting the same locations over time so the visual data can be analyzed for future scientific, maintenance and planning purposes.

Committee members also continued to monitor and contribute to a wide range of open space projects and activities that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life, including the Community Preservation Act, which was adopted in late 2014 and offers a new source of funds for open space and recreation resources; the Water Bodies Fund, which funds control of invasive plants and water quality issues at Spy Pond, the Reservoir and other sites; and expansion of the ACROSS Lexington trail system into Arlington's Great Meadows and the Reservoir area, in coordination with the Conservation Commission. As part of its community education goals, OSC participated in Town Day in September, as it does each year.

An ongoing open space concern is the proposed development of the Mugar property in East Arlington under the state's Chapter 40B provision. Protection of this sensitive wetland has been a goal of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan since the 1990s. OSC joined many Town entities, the Arlington Land Trust, and other environmental organizations to advocate for conservation of the Mugar land due to potential flooding and related ecological problems.

The Committee's previous work on researching and raising awareness about Mill Brook and the possibility of enhancing that natural resource corridor was adopted as a priority in the 2015 Master Plan, and a new Mill Brook Working Group is part of the Master Plan

Implementation Committee, with OSC involvement.

During 2016 several new members joined the Committee: Wendy Richter as the liaison for the Arlington Redevelopment Board, Nat Strosberg for the Department of Planning and Community Development, and citizens Kelsey Cowan and Brian Kelder.

The Committee will concentrate on monitoring the many goals and objectives outlined in the 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan and develop an online process for documenting accomplishments, in preparation for the next version of the Plan. It will continue work on the Take-A-Walk and Picture Post projects and the expanded use of the Town website to disseminate maps and other information about local open spaces and recreational facilities. Members will continue their collaborations with other Town departments, committees, and community groups to advocate for the proper maintenance and management of the Town's valuable open space and recreation resources. In particular, members will work with the Master Plan Implementation Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Vision 2020, and Town departments of Planning and Community Development and Public Works to ensure that open space and recreation recommendations are fully incorporated into all future Town-wide planning.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The goal of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is to improve the quality of life in Arlington by improving safety, mobility, and access for people using all modes of transportation, and contribute to improving the environment and public health. In this effort, TAC works closely with the Arlington Police Department's Traffic Division, Public Works and the Planning Departments, Arlington Schools, and the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The Traffic Authority for Arlington is the Board of Selectmen. The TAC was established by the Board of Selectmen in 2001 to advise the Board on transportation matters. Resident and business members of the Committee at the end of 2016 were: Seth Federspiel, Michael Gordon, John Hurd (Chamber of Commerce), Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis (Co-Vice Chair), Marjorie Moores (Co-Vice Chair), Howard Muise (Chair), Victor Rivas, Scott Smith, and Town Staff members Officer Corey Rateau (Police), Wayne Chouinard (Public Works), and Laura Wiener (Planning, Committee Secretary).

Highlights

Lake Street Corridor Recommendations: TAC completed a comprehensive analysis of the Lake Street Corridor in late 2014 and presented its findings to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) in February 2015. The TAC report recommended the installation of a new traffic/pedestrian/bicycle signal at the intersection of Lake Street

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and the Minuteman Bikeway to improve operations and safety; signal improvements at Brooks Avenue; signage and pavement marking changes; handicap access improvements; and vegetation maintenance. The BoS was cautiously supportive of the TAC recommendation for a signal and requested that TAC conduct a field test simulating a traffic signal using police officer control at the Lake Street/Bikeway intersection.

The test was conducted in June 2015 and the results were presented to the BoS in February 2016. The TAC concluded that the proposed signal would provide a modest decrease in traffic delay and vehicle travel time during weekday peak hours without any significant adverse effect on pedestrians and bicyclists. Due to the complexity and issues involved in constructing a new signal at this location, TAC recommended forming a design review committee which would evaluate issues and identify constraints, design details, types and hours of operations, and costs. The BoS approved the TAC recommendation and the Signal Design Review Committee will begin meeting in January 2017.

Parking Implementation and Governance Committee: This committee was formed to implement improvements to parking in Arlington Center as described in "Arlington Center Parking Study approved by the BoS in 2014. The study of Arlington Center parking was initiated by the TAC. During the past year, the multi-space parking meters in municipal parking lots were replaced, and on-street single space parking meters were installed throughout Arlington Center. This was done to increase on-street parking availability in Arlington Center by encouraging long term parking in the municipal lots to increase parking turnover on the streets near restaurants, businesses, and services. Initial feedback has been good. In 2017 monitoring and adjustments to the program are anticipated, and discussion with Town Meeting is expected about forming a Parking Benefits District, so that excess parking revenue can be returned to Arlington Center to provide improved access to Russell Common Parking Lot, lighting, sidewalks and signing. Several members of TAC serve on the parking committee: Howard Muise (TAC Chair) is TAC representative to the parking committee; Laura Wiener (TAC Secretary) is the Planning Department representative; Corey Rateau is Police Department representative; John Hurd (TAC Chamber of Commerce representative) is Arlington Center business representative; Mike Gordon is a resident representative.

Safe Pedestrian Access at Bus Stops: TAC initiated a study to evaluate pedestrian access at

stops on all bus routes in town, except the 77 which was analyzed by TAC as part of the MBTA Key Bus Routes Study and the reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington. A working group is considering issues of pedestrian access to bus stops, including sidewalk conditions, signage, visibility for cars and pedestrians, boarding, and traffic volume.

Crosswalk Flag Program: TAC continued to maintain the pedestrian crossing flag program near elementary schools, to provide more visibility for students crossing busy streets on the way to school. The program expanded to a total of eight locations around Town. The program is now being funded by the Arlington Schools. TAC previously adopted Flag Program Guidelines, which it uses for evaluating potential new locations requested by residents. TAC members currently maintain the flags and canisters at each location.

Lowell Street Improvements: Following implementation of safety improvements (signing) on Lowell Street adjacent to the Town Reservoir, TAC continued working with the neighborhood to evaluate additional infrastructure improvements to reduce traffic speed and improve safety in this area. A plan for infrastructure changes was developed by the Town Engineer and approved by TAC. The recommended Lowell Street infrastructure improvements include new concrete sidewalk, LED warning blinker signs, smart driver feedback sign, solar powered pedestrian activated warning beacon, and ADA compliant handicap access ramps.

Complete Streets Policy and Funding: A Complete Street is one that serves all users—pedestrians, drivers, bicycle riders, transit riders and freight carriers. TAC and its partners developed a policy that was adopted by the Board of Selectmen for the Town's road construction projects, to encourage healthy transportation and reduce car travel. The Town was awarded \$400,000 in Complete Streets funding from MassDOT for sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements on Gray Street. The goal of the project is to encourage more Ottoson Middle School students to walk to school rather than being driven.

Local Speed Limits and Speed Safety Zones: The Legislature approved changes to the motor vehicle laws that allow local governments to adopt a reduction in the default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph and establish speed safety zones with speed limits of 20 mph. Town Meeting opted into the program in the fall and the BoS requested the TAC

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to study the issue and make recommendations. A working group has been established and hopes to make initial recommendations early in 2017.

Speed Table at Magnolia and Herbert Streets:

The Parks and Recreation Department has undertaken construction of improvements at Magnolia Park and has asked the TAC (via the BoS) to evaluate installing a raised intersection at the entrance to the park at the intersection of Herbert and Magnolia Streets. A TAC working initiated that effort in the late fall.

Reports: TAC studied and adopted recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on the following:

- Crosswalks at Warren and Beacon Streets
- Lowell Street Pedestrian Improvements
- Review of Thorndike Place (Mugar Property) Traffic Study
- Review of Downing Square Development Traffic Study

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) has continued to work on making Arlington a better place to bicycle within and through, and has maintained its annual events to support that goal.

Highlights

ABAC's Winter Social was a great success; ABAC invited the bicycle committees from neighboring municipalities to come and share their recent experiences and perspectives. In particular, committee representatives discussed both successful and failing strategies for advocating for better bicycle facilities in their respective communities. The consistent message was that it is important to develop a good working relationship with a committee's municipality. One other item of note is that several of the committees' communities had developed bicycle plans.

ABAC's annual tour of Arlington was again blessed with good weather, and it highlighted the newly rebuilt Central Fire Station with a full tour of the facility by the Fire Department. The tour also went through East Arlington, making good use of the new bike lanes on Mass. Ave. The tour ended with a reception at the Regent Theater to honor and further celebrate an anniversary year of the Fire Department. Members of the Arlington Police Department (APD) escorted the ABAC tour.

Committee members again manned the ABAC booth at Town Day and distributed more than 60 youth helmets that were generously supplied by the law firm of Breakstone, White & Gluck PC. In addition, the law firm generously supplied ABAC with a case of high visibility vests, which proved very popular. The booth also featured, in coordination with the Transportation Advisory

Committee (TAC), a presentation on how the HAWK (high-intensity activated crosswalk beacon) lights, that will soon to be installed at Swan Place, will work. ABAC members talked with many citizens about a number of concerns and ideas, including bringing a Bike Share Program to Arlington the importance of following all local rules covering bicycling, and the importance of safety and visibility regarding sharing the road with other types of users. ABAC also had a sign-up sheet to add people to its email distribution list.

ABAC continued its semiannual meetings with the bicycle advisory groups in Lexington and Bedford to discuss such matters as unified way finding signage, Minuteman Bikeway counts, and ways of effectively communicating Bikeway issues among users in all three towns.

ABAC members and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) put in significant time and energy reapplying for the Bicycle Friendly Community designation with the League of American Bicyclists. ABAC is pleased to report that Arlington has been recertified at the Bronze Level. ABAC's aim is for Arlington to be certified at the Silver Level at the next certification round.

Bikeway counts were conducted at Swan Place on two days (i.e., one in May and the other in October) to gather data on the volumes of different types of Bikeway users. Like counts in past years, the data shows that the Bikeway is extremely popular. ABAC and the DPCD have started investigating the use of automatic bike counters. These counters would significantly increase the amount and accuracy of data collected in future Bikeway counts.

Arlington's COBWEB (Cops on Bicycles with Education for Bicyclists) officers regularly attended ABAC's meetings, which led to useful exchanges of ideas, including supplying the APD with information on HAWK lights.

ABAC again discussed changes in the Bikeway's hours to make it more compatible with current usage, especially near Alewife. This is a topic that will be on ABAC's agenda throughout the coming year.

Other ABAC Activities and Initiatives

- Examined and deliberated on the issues and concerns regarding the intersection of the Bikeway and Lake Street, and provided input to TAC on the matter. TAC will be sending representatives to upcoming community working groups regarding the intersection.
- Presented to the Board of Selectmen to initiate a campaign for writing letters of support to the Massachusetts House of Representatives regarding two bills involving bike safety.
- Worked with the local branch of Whole Foods to install a bike pump and repair sta-

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tion at no cost to the Town.

- Participated in the meetings about the Mass. Ave. Phase II conceptual design process.
- Participated in the recent Mass. Ave. and Arlington Heights walkshops.
- Worked with the Chamber of Commerce on a positive citation awards program.
- Worked with Cecily Miller on arts projects for the Bikeway.
- Participated in a Somerville Bicycle Committee event at the Aeronaut Brewery.
- Instigated the effort to form a committee celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Bikeway; the 25th Anniversary Committee was officially voted into existence by the Board of Selectmen on January 9, 2017.
- Worked with the Disability Commission on relocating bike parking to accommodate handicapped parking needs.



Paul "HAPPY" Frederick enjoying the Annual Tenants Party!

ARLINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY



The Arlington Housing Authority is proud of its distinction of being the largest single provider of affordable housing in the community.

Our mission is to provide adequate, affordable, and safe housing to low, very-low, and extremely low-income families from the Town of Arlington and surrounding communities through collaborative partnerships with community agencies, and to manage Housing Authority finances in a fiscally responsible manner. This year marks the Authority's sixty-ninth year offering housing to low- and moderate-income persons either through direct housing in government owned developments or subsidized housing in privately owned dwellings.

The Arlington Housing Authority manages 1,156 housing units: 520 units for the elderly and disabled at Winslow Towers, Chesnut Manor, Cusack Terrace, Drake Village, Decatur Gardens, and the Hauser Building; 179 units of family housing at Menotomy Manor, with ten handicapped accessible wheel chair units; the Donnelly House for 13 developmentally challenged residents; and 422 Housing Choice Vouchers that help participants live in privately-owned dwellings throughout the community.

The Authority is a quasi-governmental agency created by Arlington's Town Meeting in 1948 that administers these programs sponsored by the State or Federal government. Properties owned by the Authority are exempt from local property taxes, yet the Authority annually pays the maximum "in lieu of" taxes as allowed by state statute.

Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners of the Authority is the policy making body of the agency. The five members of the Arlington Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners are: *Chairman*, Richard B. Murray, *Vice-Chairman*, Daniel Brosnan, *Treasurer*, Joseph Daly and *Members*, Brian Connor and Nicholas Mitropoulos.

The Executive Director, John J. Griffin, is appointed by the Board of Commissioners and manages the day-to-day operations of the Authority.

In August of 2016 Brian Connor received the Governors appointment on the AHA Board of Commissioners replacing Gaar Talanian. The AHA Board would like to thank Gaar Talanian for his five years of exemplary service on the Arlington Housing Authority Board.



AHA Board Members Gaar Talanian, Richard Murray, and Dan Brosnan present the Tenant of the Year

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2016 in Review

In 2016 the AHA continued modernization work to all of its buildings, as well as the continued expansion of its tenant services support programs, and worked on creative partnerships with many housing groups and service providers in the community.

Below are a few highlights of successful projects at each building.

Cusack Terrace, 67 Units 8 Summer Street

Modernization projects that were completed during 2016 include the installation of new solar corridor windows, a new electric ADA compliant community room door which has improved accessibility for tenants and a new energy efficient generator. Upcoming projects include an elevator replacement.

Winslow Towers, 132 Units 4 Winslow Street

Winslow Towers modernization projects that were completed include replacing a 45 year old roof, installing two new ADA compliant electric doors at the main entrance and replacing the generator to a more energy efficient system. Current projects include installing two new elevators as well as building a new fire pump room. Future projects planned are the replacement of the windows that have been leaking and causing damage to the units.

Chestnut Manor, 100 Units 54 Medford Street

Modernization projects that were completed in 2016 include building a new handicap accessible ramp at the front of the building, which includes a new patio with sitting areas for residents. Balconies and railings were also repaired for tenants' safety. Upcoming projects include replacing the sewerage ejector pump.

Drake Village, 72 Units and the Hauser Building, 144 Units 37 Drake Road

Modernization projects that were completed in 2016 included complete renovation of two apartments. Current projects include replacing 41-year-old original windows with new energy efficient windows. Additional projects include installing a new ADA compliant electric sliding door, upgrading the old fob system for better security and replacing heat detectors in all apartments.

Monotony Manor, 179 Units Freemont Court

Upcoming modernization projects include the groundbreaking of the new Life and Skills Center. This exciting new project will create a larger space for programs including Operation Success, Fidelity House,

and the food pantry. Additional projects include replacing outdated hot water heaters.

Community Partnerships

2016 was a great year in expanding our partnerships with a number of community service program providers. The Authority continued to take advantage of the Community Work Program (CWP) sponsored by the Middlesex Sheriff's Office. Under the supervision of correctional personnel, inmates assisted the AHA maintenance staff in its spring and fall cleanup efforts.

Minuteman Senior Services has been very successful at our Drake Village location by providing services to our seniors and a meals program. The quality of life for our residents has improved with the helpful resources that Minuteman Senior Services provides.

In 2016 the Fidelity House continued afternoon programs in our Menotomy Manor Development that provides transportation to children, free memberships and financial assistance to make summer programs more attainable for families and their children. This program has been extremely successful, with a large number of residents participating.

The award winning evening program, Operation Success, continues to be a major factor in improving grades by providing homework help and guidance for the residents of Menotomy Manor. Janet Maguire and Peggy Regan run this program with a large group of young volunteers.

The continued partnership between the AHA and the Arlington Police Department has had a positive effect on the residents and neighbors of Menotomy Manor. The AHA continues to see a large decrease in crime and expanded services to the area. The AHA and Arlington Police Department held their annual National Night Out Cookout during the summer, which continues to draw great crowds and good times.

The annual cookouts for the elderly and disabled residents were held in each of our four elderly/handicapped developments. Residents continue to enjoy the good food, music, and great company.

The Arlington Housing Authority Board would like to thank all our partners for their hard work and we look forward to many new and exciting ideas being put into action in the coming year.

Challenges Ahead

The State Public Housing Reform Bill presented by the Department of Housing and Community Development and passed in 2014 by the State Legislators will have many negative effects on the Arlington Housing Authority and its operation, beginning with the loss of the ability of the voters in Arlington to elect their representative board member in the general election in 2017. The residents living in public housing will now elect one of the board members to the board. In 2016 we also

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received over 40 DHCD public housing notices of regulation changes that directly affect the operation of the AHA.

The average rent in our 520 units of elderly/disabled housing is \$416 per month and includes heat, hot water, and electricity. The average rent in our family units at Menotomy Manor is \$596 per month with the resident paying their own utilities. Over 95% of the residents living in the Arlington Housing Authority's public housing units would not be able to afford the new affordable housing units being built in Arlington. As the AHA continues to house the lowest income and disabled residents of our community the lack of support and lack of funding for the Town of Arlington's public housing program is a major concern. While the AHA applies for all funding opportunities available, and utilizes 100% of the funds received, there is still a great deficit in the funding needed to ensure optimal quality of life for our residents.

Administrative Services

The Authority continues to be a member of the MassNAHRO Centralized Section 8 Wait List program. The list is now open to all daily. Arlington residents are given a preference.

The AHA's website, arlingtonhousing.org, provides valuable information to those wishing to learn more about the AHA and its programs. Applications for housing can be downloaded from our website.

Wait Lists

Stated-Aided Elderly/Handicap One Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	92
Non-Arlington Applicants:	<u>260</u>
Total	352

State-Aided Family 2-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	60
Non-Arlington Applicants:	<u>485</u>
Total	545

State-Aided Family 3-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	24
Non-Arlington Applicants:	<u>177</u>
Total	201

Section 8 Wait List

Arlington Applicants:	*648
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* Because Arlington is on a centralized wait list, the Section 8 wait list is extremely long; therefore, only Arlington residents and those employed in Arlington are listed for this program.

State Program Rents

Average Elderly/Handicap Monthly Rent:
\$416/month (includes all utilities)

Average Family Monthly Rent: \$596/
month (tenant pays utilities)

Acknowledgments

The Arlington Housing Authority would like to thank all its employees for their dedication throughout the year.

VISION 2020

Vision 2020, established by Town Meeting in June 1992, is a collection of committees that brings together residents, Town employees and Town leaders to study ideas for creating the community envisioned in the Town Goals enacted by Town Meeting in 1993. The Standing Committee is charged to "create, implement, monitor, and review methods for town-wide participation in the Vision 2020 process."

Vision 2020's Task Groups support goals related to: Business, Communication, Community and Citizen Service, Culture and Recreation, Diversity, Education, Environment, Fiscal Resources, and Governance. Task Groups may include multiple committees focused on specific missions. Task Group information can be found at arlingtonma.gov/vision2020.

A modest budget from the Town allows Vision 2020 to print materials for meetings and events, pay fees for Town Hall use, reimburse Task Groups leaders for out-of-pocket expenses, maintain survey software, purchase equipment for public events, and enable Task Groups to explore new programming ideas in response to events in the community.

Vision 2020 volunteers work with Town departments and organizations to create an annual survey to obtain data Town entities can use for planning. Results of the survey are provided to Town Meeting and to the groups who helped compose the survey; results are also posted at www.arlingtonma.gov/vision2020.

The 2016 Vision 2020 Survey was mailed to 19,317 households as an insert to the Town's Annual Census mailing in January of 2016. Thirty-eight percent of households responded, resulting in the processing of 7,386 surveys. As the response rate has increased, Vision 2020 volunteers have focused on procedures to make question development a collaborative, interactive process with the Town organizations involved to ensure well-defined goals and efficient reporting of the results.

Household responses received by March 18, 2016 were summarized and reported to Town Meeting, Town officials, and the groups that created questions for the survey.

Vision 2020 is among the Arlington committees

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and commissions participating in a project partially funded by a National Endowment for the Arts [NEA] grant awarded to Arlington-based True Story Theater. The grant helps fund the Arlington's Living Brochure project that began in October, 2015 and will conclude in September, 2017. Workshops and performances involving several Vision 2020 Task Groups provided important opportunities for public engagement throughout the year.

Notable Activities

- With the Arlington League of Women Voters, co-sponsored the annual Candidates' Night program.
- Sponsored Warrant Article 47 (Water Bodies Fund) for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting to appropriate \$50,000 to the Town's Water Body Fund for the maintenance, treatment, and oversight of the Town's water bodies.
- At Town Day, used demonstrations, art and craft projects, and interactive activities to inform and educate the public about Arlington matters and the work of our Task Groups. Diversity, Fiscal Resources, Education, and all Environmental Task Groups were represented.
- The Standing Committee began the process of creating a new Education Task Group by sponsoring two events during 2016 as part of a series that will continue into 2017. New volunteers joined the effort and a successful collaboration with the Superintendent and School Committee began a process of public engagement to formulate a set of community principles for education that will guide decisions in the next few years and allow more public insight into how curriculum and teaching practices develop from broader goals.
- In January of 2016, Vision 2020 presented information about volunteer opportunities and task group efforts at the community table in the lobby of Robbins Library. It was an opportunity for residents to share thoughts in a suggestion box and volunteers created a colorful visual display to capture the unique nature of the Vision 2020 mission.

Task Group Notable Activities

Diversity: The Diversity Task Group (DTG) meets regularly during the year to engage residents on a wide range of issues and provides ongoing leadership to the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee, advocating for recruiting, employing, and retaining staff of color in the Arlington Public Schools.

In 2016 the Arlington DTG focused its activities around the theme of Stigma and Stereotypes, rein-

forced its partnerships with local organizations to advance its mission of fostering awareness, community, and action on diversity, and transformed its website into a powerful information-sharing and storytelling platform.

In January DTG and True Story Theater, an Arlington-based improv playback troupe organized two workshops: Stories of Stigma and Being an Active Upstander. Stories of Stigma, served fifty participants and invited the audience to share personal stories about feeling stigmatized or realizing one had stigmatized others. Being an Active Upstander taught participants techniques for speaking up and intervening in incidents involving bullying, stereotyping, or abuse. By popular demand, a second edition of both events we held in May.

In March DTG launched a new partnership with the Arlington Center for Arts, which agreed to host the exhibit "Stereotypes: A Conscious Look at Race, Faith, Gender, and Sexual Identity" from March 7 to April 15 at the Gibbs Gallery. This photography exhibit by Kevin Briggs included fifteen photographs of individuals categorized by race, faith, gender, and sexual identity, with words used to stereotype each category projected onto the photos. This well-attended six-week exhibit received both rave and controversial reviews, and reached its ultimate goal to initiate conversations in town about stereotyping and racial bias. With the attendance of two classes from Leslie Ellis School and Arlington High School, DTG reached a younger audience.

In April DTG hosted "A Look at Unconscious Bias", its major event of the year at Arlington Town Hall. Attended by at least 200 people, this event featured Christopher Dial, a Harvard University researcher who presented its work on unconscious bias in an interactive fashion. During this two-hour event, the public learned that all of us have unconscious biases, explored how these biases affect lives and communities, and received tips on how to counter them. In preparation of this event, DTG received the support of twenty-six local organizations that provided publicity or logistic help.

In May DTG worked with The Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance Committee of Arlington and Robbins Library to organize "Meet Fannie Barrier Williams." This in-character presentation by activist Marian Evans Melnick narrated Williams' fight to improve women's and Blacks' rights in the early twentieth century.

In June DTG ended the first half of the year by sponsoring a book discussion on *Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People* by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald. This event co-sponsored by First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Arlington was a follow up to the event "A Look at Unconscious Bias" and allowed participants to discuss in smaller groups about unconscious bias.

In early 2016 DTG co-sponsored a series of satellite events with institutions like the Robbins Library and

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the Council on Aging and provided publicity or logistic support to other local organizations. DTG extensively used its website as a tool to reach out to a new audience and its blog as a platform to share stories by residents on topics related to diversity. As a result, the number of visitors on the website increased by twenty-five percent in 2016 versus 2015.

In the second part of the year, Arlington High School student Sorrel Galantowicz joined DTG as an Intern and contributed to reinforce DTG's presence on social media. After the summer break, DTG reassessed its resources and brain-stormed on ideas to promote diversity issues to a younger audience. While continuing its usual activities, the goal of DTG in the next few months will be to initiate and support any projects at the crossroads of diversity and education in Town. While the brainstorming process is still ongoing, DTG will relentlessly continue its efforts to foster awareness, community, and action on diversity in Arlington.

Governance: The Governance Task Group (GTG) presented an Orientation for New Town Meeting Members, led by Town Moderator John Leone. GTG also participated with Precinct Meetings in advance of Town Meeting in April, and in Candidates Night in March.

Fiscal Resources: The Fiscal Resources Task Group (FRTG) researches topics and reports out results and recommendations to the appropriate department or officials. In 2016 the Group worked with True Story Theater to develop a financially themed performance "Stories about Money" in April as part of Arlington's Living Brochure. Met separately with the Town Comptroller and Contributory Retirement Board administrator to discuss approaches to enhance and sustain visibility and transparency of their offices' activity through reports to Town Meeting, Annual Report, Financial Plan documentation and continuing to build and enhance their website presence. Members discussed Electronic Fund Transfers, Fire Department Response Routing, School Building Needs/Program, Commercial/Non-profit trash/recycling collection and Town Committee structures/turn-over. FRTG will continue to monitor.

Reviewed and discussed 2016 Annual Town Meeting Warrant and considered approaches by which FRTG could work in the future and to enhance and promote resident understanding of Town Meeting and the Town form of government.

Arlington Public Art (APA): APA is a committee under Vision 2020's Culture and Recreation Goal. Major projects of 2016 included working with public art consultant Cecily Miller (who came with a huge body of experience, including the invention of Davis Square's famous twenty-five-year-old "Artbeat Festival"). Cecily conceived two pop-up projects: "Playful" in May, co-

sponsored by the Friends of Spy Pond Park, brought a day of community sculpture and a giant chess set; and "Fox Festival" featuring kids' parading in their hand made fox masks and costumes accompanied by a marching band, part of Capitol Square's annual Feast of the East. The year culminated with the master project, "East Arlington Stories" featuring giant photos of some of the East's shop owners and the Fox Library, funded with grants from New England Foundation for the Arts, Mass Cultural Council, Arlington Cultural Council, and Friends of the Fox Library.

APA also sponsored artists who painted three transformer boxes along Mass Avenue. "Chairful Where You Sit" made its fifth annual appearance as APA's fundraiser and art installation featuring the work of many community members. A new committee, including several previous chair artists, was formed to help Adria Arch plan the fifth annual event. APA members began discussions in the fall of 2016 to address two significant needs anticipated in 2017: looking for ways to increase funding to pay for another year of public art consultancy by Cecily Miller and evaluating whether volunteers can continue to manage public art projects effectively.



Arlington Public Art members complete work on an East Arlington Stories installation.

Reservoir Committee: The Reservoir Committee is one of three committees of the Environment Task Group of Arlington Vision 2020. The Committee works with Town departments to maintain and improve the area around the Reservoir. Information about projects, a photo album, and the option to join a Committee email list can be found at arlington2020.org/reservoir.

The Wildlife Habitat Garden had its sixth growing season. Activities expanded to the "island" in the parking lot, where a number of new plants were planted and transplanted. The Committee had help from many people on public monthly workdays - and from many

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volunteers at other times as well. In spite of the summer drought, the garden came through well with the help of watering volunteers. The garden is for the entire community. Schools, community groups, and others are welcome to participate in its growth and evolution.

Water chestnut mechanical harvesting continued this summer under the management of Arlington's DPW, but was hampered because of low water levels. In addition, the Mystic River Watershed Association held corporate and public hand harvesting events in the spring and fall. The Committee hopes to increase these volunteer efforts in the future.

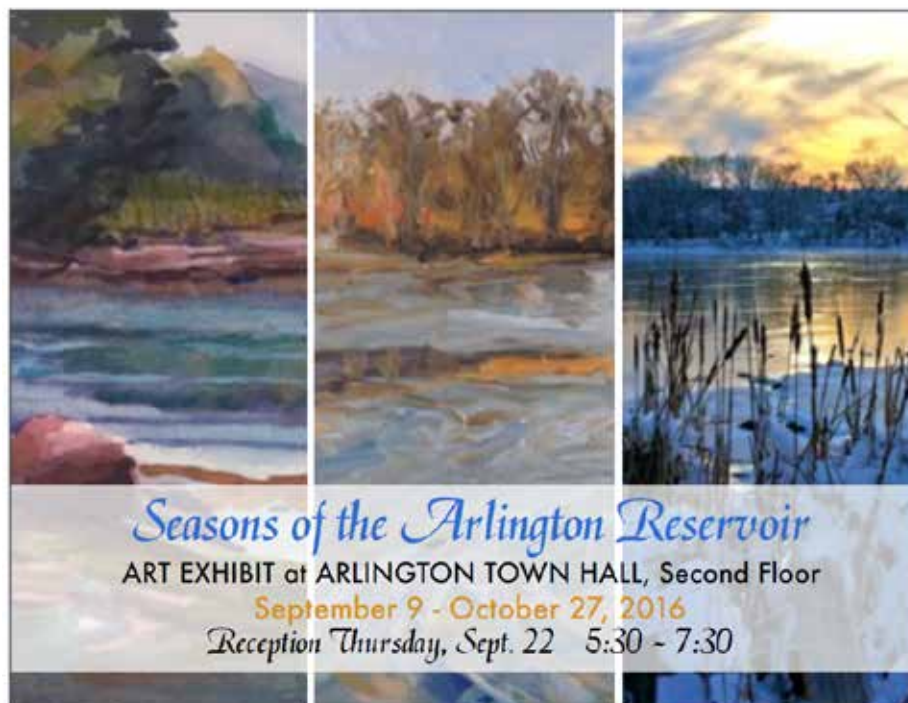
"Seasons of the Arlington Reservoir," an art show organized by the Reservoir Committee, was on display from September 9 through October 27 at the Arlington Town Hall. The show featured oil paintings, color photographs, black and white photographs, collage, mosaics, and digital imagery. Over twenty local artists from both Arlington and Lexington participated. The exhibit celebrated the Reservoir being the "park of the month" in September, and showcased many reflections of "The Res" from around the year. The show was well received and helped broadcast more widely the natural and recreational wonders of the Reservoir. Special thanks to Cristina Burwell, Cathy Garnett, and Martine Gougault for organizing the many details associated with putting on such a show.

Sustainable Arlington: Sustainable Arlington (SA) is one of three committees of the Environment Task Group of Arlington Vision 2020. The Committee encourages environmental awareness and steps to protect the local environment on the part of residents and Town government. Monthly meetings and other events are listed at sustainablearlington.org.

SA collaborated extensively with other groups in 2016 on outreach, climate change preparedness, natural gas leaks, solar power, energy efficiency, and tool sharing.

SA's sustainability work was publicized through True Story Theater's two-year project, Arlington's Living Brochure. True Story Theater also held a public performance about climate change to facilitate public discussion about its current effects on people in Arlington. EcoFest 2016, *Are You Ready for Climate Change?* featured keynote speaker Cammy Peterson, Clean Energy Manager for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. SA members joined Arlington's Town Manager and DPW Director to begin planning for a Climate Change Preparedness Working Group. SA also collaborated with Arlington Mothers Out Front to tag 177 natural gas leaks in Town to raise public awareness of the extent of this problem and its contribution to climate change.

To promote continuing growth in energy efficiency and adoption of renewables, SA helped support the successful Community Choice Aggregation campaign led by Arlington Mothers Out Front, which resulted in a vote to adopt by Town Meeting in 2016. Two members of Sustainable Arlington continued their participation



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with the Town Manager's Energy Working Group, helping to make Town buildings and operations more efficient and increase Town adoption of renewable energy.

The vision and work of two new members led SA to work on two new issues this year: (1) supporting shared use of needed tools and other desired items and (2) applying New Economy principles to Arlington.

SA brainstormed about creating local tool and toy sharing opportunities to help residents save money and storage space (and help reduce demand on natural resources). Then SA learned about the Library of Things being planned by the Arlington Public Libraries and the Friends of Robbins Library. Now SA is planning a Sustainable Tools component to be added to the Library of Things in 2017.

SA started a working group to explore opportunities for adapting New Economy concepts to connect and support Arlington's residents, businesses, and environmental goals. A public forum is being developed to inform and engage interested residents.

Spy Pond Committee: The Spy Pond Committee is part of the Environment Task Group for Arlington Vision 2020. Meetings are usually the first Tuesday September-May. Anyone is welcome to attend, 7:30 pm in the Town Hall Annex first floor conference room. The website is <http://arlingtonma.gov/spypond>.

Trails Day with the Arlington Belmont Crew and volunteers for Spy Pond left the Rt. 2 path cleaner than ever. At least sixty volunteers tackled the shoreline, removed oriental bittersweet, carefully pulled poison ivy, and picked up trash.

The Committee finished a seven year phragmites plan. In 2009 Spy Pond had massive growths of phragmites. Now, just a few stragglers remain. The dry summer led to a bonanza year for the rare, Englemann's umbrella sedge.

Elizabeth Karpati was thanked for her many years of service to the Spy Pond Committee and other Arlington organizations. And Joey Glushko was feted with a barbecue on her retirement from Arlington's Planning Department.

Four signets were raised on Spy Pond, and no Canada Geese. Sadly, a new invasive, Asian clams, is now established in Spy Pond. There was a large die-off of mature carp, probably due to natural causes.

The Committee redesigned the fertilizer flyer and distributed it to every household in the watershed, participated in EcoFest, shared the Vision 2020 booth at Town Day, and assisted the Conservation Commission with their ongoing efforts to improve Arlington's water bodies.

Vision 2020 thanks all the volunteers who help support and achieve the Town Goals. The Standing Committee is especially grateful to Josh Lobel and Joey Glushko, who both retired from the Committee in June,

for their outstanding contributions of time and talents to the Town Survey over many years. Special recognition is also due for retiring Standing Committee members Elizabeth Karpati and Mary Harrison. Elizabeth also served on the Spy Pond Committee and as the Vision 2020 member of the Open Space Committee. Mary also served on the Diversity Task Group and used her logistic talent to lead volunteer efforts and partnerships with True Story Theater and the Arlington Center for Arts. Gratitude goes out to Lorri Berenberg and Jill Manca for all of their work on Arlington Public Art this year and to Martina Tanga who is coordinating the Youth Banner Project for the Gracie James Foundation that APA is administering.