

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) is the Town's Planning Board, under M.G.L. Chapter 41 § 81. There are five members of the board. Four are appointed by the Town Manager and the fifth is a gubernatorial designee appointed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

The board serves as the Town's special permit granting authority for projects which require an Environmental Design Review (EDR); eight applications were reviewed and approved by the board in 2017. Applicants showed a strong interest in using the Town's new mixed-use zoning bylaw, adopted at 2016 Annual Town Meeting. Three mixed-use buildings were proposed and approved along Arlington's commercial corridors, including on Broadway, Massachusetts Avenue, and Summer Street, which will add a total of 4,257 square feet of commercial and office space and 14 one- to three-bedroom residential units, one (1) unit will be affordable.

The ARB is also the Town's Urban Renewal Authority under M.G.L. Chapter 121; with Town Meeting approval, the Board may hold land or buildings to improve and rehabilitate them to meet community development goals. The ARB currently manages three properties: the Central School at 20 Academy Street, 23 Maple Street, and the Jefferson Cutter House at 611 Massachusetts Avenue, which includes Whittemore Park. Building tenants include the Senior Center, Town departments, and nonprofit organizations.

Lastly, the ARB serves as 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. There were no Board of Survey applications for consideration in 2017.

2017 Highlights

The ARB signed a long-term lease with the Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA). ACA secured a matching \$187,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help transform office suites on the third and fourth floors of the Central School building into their new home for ACA. The ARB commends ACA on their fundraising efforts and the community demonstrating support of the organization as Arlington's signature cultural hub.

Vertex was hired as our Project Manager for the Senior Center renovation project. They will help oversee the design and construction process for the ground and first floor renovations. The project is projected to begin during Fiscal Year 2020.

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is committed to improving the quality of life in Arlington by advancing housing and economic development opportunities, ensuring access to transportation, neighborhood improvement and stabilization, and protection and promotion of natural, historic, and cultural resources. DPCD administers programs that serve low- and moderate-income households through the Community Development Block Grant program. The Menotomy Weatherization Program makes homes more energy efficient for income-eligible households across a seven-town service area, including Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Lexington, Somerville, Waltham, and Watertown.

DPCD has 13 full-time and two part-time staff members. Staff support and participate in a range of 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; Conservation Commission, 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 Implementation Committee; Arlington Tourism and Economic Development; 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 also represents the Town regionally at the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Executive Committee, the Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee, the North Suburban HOME Consortium and the Somerville/Arlington Continuum of Care.



Master planning activity at the Department of Planning and Community Development booth at Town Day.

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The Department also reviews a range of permits and applications: reviewed and approved 20 sign permits; reviewed and provided memos to the Zoning Board of Appeals on 22 dockets; and reviewed and commented on 24 license applications. The Economic Development Coordinator assisted 161 businesses through office visits, site visits, merchants' meetings, and in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce.

2017 Highlights

The Master Plan Implementation Committee formed four subgroups in 2016 to address four key issues identified in the Master Plan: zoning recodification, new residential development in existing residential neighborhoods, the Mill Brook Corridor, and protecting historic resources.

Recodifying Arlington's Zoning Bylaw

The Master Plan, adopted in 2015, set a vision for land use, housing, economic development, transportation, and public facilities and recommends policies to realize that vision. Recodifying the Town's Zoning Bylaw is one of the first recommended steps in implementing the Plan, laying the foundation for future policy changes aligned with Master Plan goals. Our current Zoning Bylaw was written in 1975. The bylaw has been amended many times over the past 40 years, making it more challenging to navigate and out-of-sync with various local, state, and even federal rules and requirements.

The **Zoning Recodification Working Group** formed in 2016 and has been working with DPCD staff to advance this effort. After much public input, the recodified Zoning Bylaw was passed by Special Town Meeting in early 2018.



Community Leaders discuss recodification of the Town's zoning.

The **Residential Study Group** continued working on addressing neighborhood concerns about new residential development in existing residential neighborhoods. The group has representation from Town officials, residents, Town Meeting Members, and the real estate and development community. Zoning Bylaw amendments successfully passed at 2017 Annual Town Meeting to encourage surface parking and discourage steeply-sloped driveways. Town Meeting also suc-

cessfully passed Town Bylaw amendments to require a "Good Neighbor Agreement" governing demolitions, new construction, and large additions and address noise, dust, refuse, and other issues that can occur during construction.

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 create transformative change. As a multi-faceted resource for the town, the working group is seeking actions to create opportunities for conserving and protecting this resource while leveraging recreational, economic development, and historic preservation opportunities. During this past year the group coordinated a community-wide brook cleanup event at Wellington Park and has been closely collaborating with the Mystic River Watershed Association to develop a new design for the portion of the brook adjacent to the park.



Volunteers from First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Arlington worked alongside Town officials and members of the Mill Brook Working Group to clean up Mill Brook in Spring 2017.



The **Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group** includes representatives from the Town's Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission, the Arlington Historical Society, and DPCD. The group is primarily focused on updating the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington*. With funding from both the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Survey and Planning Grant Program, the group is working with a consultant

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and MHC to add properties to the Inventory which were not previously documented.

New Arts and Culture Action Plan and Cultural District Designation

In 2016, 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 Arts and Culture Action Plan was completed in 2017 and aims to strengthen and grow arts and cultural opportunities in Arlington, leading to a thriving arts and cultural life for all. The plan also bolsters the Arlington Cultural District which spans from Arlington Center to East Arlington designated by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.



Cultural District designation ceremony in North Adams. Photo courtesy of MA Cultural Council

New Housing and Visioning Initiatives

The Town was awarded a \$24,380 Planning Technical Assistance Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Executive and Environmental Affairs. Funds will be used to hire a consultant to analyze and amend Arlington's Zoning Bylaw to encourage and incentivize appropriate multi-family residential development. The effort will help advance Master Plan and Housing Production Plan goals to create and preserve housing that is affordable.

DPCD also received \$40,000 in technical assistance from MAPC to develop an action plan for Arlington Heights and complete several Master Plan implementation actions relevant to the Heights, such as exploring options for spurring revitalization efforts along Massachusetts Avenue to attain its potential for affordable and market-rate housing, and commercial development. The project will also examine potential barriers to development and recommend future zoning or regulatory amendments.

Vacancy Registry Bylaw

Beginning in 2014, a number of businesses closed in Arlington Center; DPCD conducted a survey in 2015 that identified 17 available properties and 23,000 square feet of available commercial space in Arlington Center.

While some of these vacancies were filled in a timely manner, many remained vacant for a year or more. Concerned citizens organized to support local business owners, and Town officials met with key property owners to address their concerns with the long-term vacancies.

These discussions led to creation of the Registration and Maintenance of Vacant Commercial and Industrial Buildings bylaw, adopted at 2016 Special Town Meeting. The bylaw requires property owners to state their efforts to fill the vacancy and to maintain a code-compliant property. An annual registration fee of \$400 is required. Property owners who do not meet the bylaw's requirements face a fine of \$100 per day. What differentiates Arlington's bylaw from similar vacant property bylaws and ordinances in Massachusetts is its focus on commercial properties and economic vitality. Additionally, the bylaw allows DPCD and Inspectional Services to waive the annual registration fee for property owners who can either demonstrate financial hardship or choose to display public art in their vacant storefront. Experienced in curating storefront exhibitions, Arlington Public Art volunteers started referring artists to property owners who will allow art exhibitions in their vacant storefronts in lieu of paying the registration fee.

Since the bylaw went into effect, vacancies are now at 1.2% townwide. The 17 vacancies identified in Arlington Center in June of 2015 have been reduced to 5 as of September 2017. As a result of the bylaw's effectiveness and transferability to other municipalities, the Massachusetts Municipal Association gave the Town a *Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award*.

Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Preparedness

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Core Group was formed in the spring of 2017 to coordinate a community resilience planning process to address the local impacts of climate change. This initiative is the result of a \$23,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant, which was awarded to Arlington by the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. At the core of the planning process is a Community Resilience Building Workshop, which will involve community members in the development of a climate change vulnerability assessment and action plan. Overall, successful completion of this process will enable Arlington to be eligible for future State funding for resilience planning. In addition to advancing aims of the Master Plan, this process will fulfill key objectives of Arlington's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015-2022).

Parking Benefits District

Town Meeting voted to establish a Parking Benefits District to separate parking revenue for expenditure in Arlington Center in association with the newly-installed parking meters. The first of its kind district in the

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state, the revenue can fund a wide range of purposes including parking meter maintenance, increased street sweeping or snow removal, beautification, or larger street and infrastructure improvements such as lighting improvements or roadway improvements. Members of the Parking Implementation and Governance Committee worked with DPCD to identify the first suite of expenditures from the district and to be approved at 2018 Special Town Meeting.

New Transportation Initiatives

DPCD helped introduce new transportation initiatives in 2017, including continued discussions about bikesharing, self-driving cars, and bus rapid transit (BRT). The Town received a \$100,000 grant through the Barr Foundation to pilot BRT. Arlington was one of four municipalities in Greater Boston to receive the funding. Working in cooperation with the City of Cambridge and the MBTA, a month-long pilot will include the temporary installation of BRT elements along the #77 bus route on Massachusetts Avenue, between the Arlington Heights Busway (in Arlington Heights) and Harvard Square Station (in Cambridge). The pilot aims to improve travel conditions for existing bus users as well as increase the number residents using public transit for their morning commute.

The Bikeshare Working Group continued exploring opportunities for bringing bikeshare to Arlington. The goal is to ensure that bikeshare in Arlington is safe, affordable, sustainable, accessible, and dependable. The group, which includes members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, and East Arlington Livable Streets, as well as DPCD staff and other Town departments, was formed after the DPCD was approached by a bikeshare vendor about operating in Arlington. The group began investigating options for expanding Hubway into Arlington. However, because there is not a clear path for municipalities that are not part of the existing Hubway system to join and benefit from Hubway, the group began examining options for bringing dockless bikeshare to the community. Dockless bicycles include a built-in locking mechanism that obviates the need for expensive fixed docking stations. Currently, in collaboration with MAPC and 12 neighboring municipalities, the group is working to establish a regional dockless bikeshare system that would potentially include Arlington.

Lastly, in the fall of 2017, MAPC and DPCD hosted a special forum on autonomous vehicles (AV) and the future of this technology in the region. Presenters included: Scott Smith from the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and member of ABAC, who offered an overview of what autonomous vehicles are and the expected timing and availability of this technology, as well as the role of the federal government in rolling them out; Eric Bourassa, Director of Transportation at MAPC,

who outlined the potential impacts of autonomous vehicles on public infrastructure and land use; and Rafael Mares from the Conservation Law Foundation, who presented on the ways autonomous vehicles may influence public revenue sources, including impacts to the state budget, municipal finances, the future of the gas tax, and roadway usage fees. AV discussions will continue as the Town enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with MAPC to continue to study and pilot AVs.

Community Development Block Grant program celebrates successes

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, a federal program under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), received \$1,033,162 for 2016-2017. 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. The weatherization program is also supported by MADHCD, Eversource, and National Grid. This year's funds also supported student athletic scholarships, scholarships to attend the Boys and Girls Club and Fidelity House 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, a homework help program, senior transportation and volunteer coordinator, and the Life and Skills Building to be constructed at Menotomy Manor.



Representatives from CDBG-funded programs and Town officials joined federal and state officials in celebrating CDBG Week in April 2017. Photo by Julie Wayman.

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Farewell to long-time staffer, welcome to new staff

At the close of 2017, Laura Wiener, Assistant Planning Director/ Director of Housing, announced her departure. Laura provided 17 years of excellent service to the Town. She worked closely with the Housing Corporation of Arlington and to advance initiatives designed to increase housing affordability, implementation of the Master Plan, and transportation planning initiatives. We thank her for her years of service.

The Department welcomed Lela Shepherd as the Town's first Environmental Planner/ Conservation Agent. In 2017 Town Meeting approved a new full-time position in the Department, which combines the responsibilities of the Arlington Conservation Commission's (ACC) Agent with broader environmental planning concerns around Arlington. The Environmental Planner assists with coordination of a range of sustainability and environmental efforts, provides grant support, tracks local and state environmental policies, and serves as a liaison to Town committees and community groups while supporting the ACC's work.



L to R: Laura Wiener, former Assistant Director; Lela Shepherd, Environmental Planner/ Conservation Agent; Jennifer Raitt, Director; Julie Wayman, CDBG Administrator; Pam Hallett, Executive Director, Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) at HCA's 2017 Annual Meeting.

On the Horizon in 2018

- The Department will continue to advance those efforts outlined above and also the following:
 - Implementation of the Arlington Master Plan with particular focus on advancing Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, and Historic and Cultural Resource Areas strategies;
 - Implementation of the Housing Production Plan, including adding units to the Subsidized Housing Inventory;
 - Implementation of the 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 continue encouraging mixed-use, including residential and commercial development;
- 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;
- Work with the CDBG Subcommittee to improve the Town's Community Development Block Grant Program.
- Assess Arlington Redevelopment Board 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.
- Secure grants and other capital for the Senior Center at the Central School to begin a major renovation to begin in 2020;
- Continue to provide reviews of ZBA cases, licenses, and permits.

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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 Facilities Director or their designees.

Activities in 2017

Community Safety Building Phase 3 (interior renovations): This multi-phase project was completed in 2017, and achieved a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) v3 Silver designation. Project cost \$7.0M.



Stratton School – Media Center

Stratton School (partial renovation): The scope of work included a new roof, windows and HVAC on the east side of the building to match prior work on the west side; a new Media Center and expanded Food Service and Administration areas; cafetorium and gym renovations; technology, fire protection, lighting, and accessibility upgrades throughout. Modular classrooms were erected on-site to house students during the construction period. Repairs were made to the adjacent playground, which was used as a parking lot during the construction phase. The building was open for the start of the fall 2017 school term, and marked the completion of the voter-approved program to rebuild all seven elementary schools in the Town. Project cost \$15.5M.

Thompson School (addition): Modular classrooms were leased to accommodate the growing school population while construction of a six classroom addition was undertaken. Construction issues delayed the opening of the addition by about two months. As of late December 2017 the project has been completed and is being closed out. Project cost \$3.8M.

Gibbs School (renovation): The scope of work includes reconfiguration of interior space, building envelope improvements, the complete rebuilding of internal spaces, and upgraded building systems in order to reopen this building as a dedicated sixth grade school. Construction started in July 2017 following the depar-

ture of former tenants of the building. Significant additional renovation needs were uncovered early in the construction phase, and were addressed by expansions in the scope of the project. As of early 2018 construction is on schedule for the opening of the school for the fall 2018 school term. The Committee anticipates achieving a LEED v4 Silver designation for this project. Project budget \$27M.



Hardy School (addition): A six classroom addition to the Hardy School was approved for the initial phases. This project is expected to be similar in scope to the Thompson School addition, plus renovations to the cafeteria to accommodate the increase in students. An Owners Project Manager and an Architect were selected, and by early 2018, construction documents have been developed and prepared for contractor bidding. Project budget \$4.8M.

Public Works Yard (renovation): An Owners Project Manager and Architect were selected to produce a feasibility study for improvements to this important, historic, and challenging site.

Central School (renovation): A feasibility study is underway to define the scope of a renovation project for the ground and first floors of this building, which is under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Redevelopment Authority. As of early 2018 the project timeline and cost estimate had not been developed.

On September 19, 2017, John Cole announced his resignation as Chair of the Committee, and Allen Reedy was elected as the new Chair. The Committee members expressed their deep gratitude to Mr. Cole for his many years of wise leadership of the Committee and dedication to the Town. On October 3, 2017, Brett Lambert was elected as the new Vice-Chair of the Committee.



Hardy School - Addition

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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Arlington began implementing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2015. The CPA allows cities and towns to reserve dedicated funds to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable community 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 2017, the committee reviewed project applications for CPA funding in fiscal year 2018, hosted public applicant presentations, and ultimately recommended nine projects to Town Meeting for funding. The Committee consulted with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, and other Town leaders in reaching our recommendations.

CPA Projects Funded for FY2018

Following the recommendation of the Committee, Town Meeting appropriated a total of \$2,197,816 in CPA funds for FY2018 projects supporting local community housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation:

- \$64,920 for a comprehensive preservation plan for the Old Burying Ground and Mt Pleasant Cemetery.
- \$643,213 to restore and reconstruct the water features in the Robbins Town Garden.
- \$115,000 to comprehensively update the record of Arlington's historic resources.
- \$500,000 toward the construction of 9 units of community housing at 20 Westminster Street.
- \$100,000 to help create 34 units of community housing at Downing Square.
- \$56,783 for a pilot study of a Mill Brook linear pathway between Brattle and Grove Streets.
- \$65,000 for a planning and design study for the revitalization of Whittemore Park.
- \$100,000 for a master plan and survey of the Arlington Reservoir.
- \$552,900 for Phase 2 (construction) of the Spy Pond Erosion Control project.

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

FY2018 CPA Projects



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

In 2017 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).

2017 Petitions Heard By ZBA

Petitions for Variance	2
Applications for Special Permits	19
Appeal of Decision of Inspector of Buildings	1
Amendments to SP/Variances	1
Comprehensive Permits	0
Total	
Total Petitions filed with Town Clerk	22
Total Hearing Continued by the board	23
Total Petitions withdrawn	4
Total Petitions sent to ARB	5

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

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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 at arlingtonma.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.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The ACC is required by state and local laws to protect and preserve wetlands, waterways, and their surrounding areas. The ACC is comprised of seven volunteer Members and one volunteer Associate Member, who are appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, and supported by the Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent at bi-monthly meetings and on-site visits. The ACC works 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. The ACC also protects and manages the Town's Conservation Lands and natural resources.

The 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 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 2017, the ACC held twenty-seven (23) public meetings, and provided coordination, monitoring, permit review, and consultation on numerous residential and municipal developments around Town. The ACC issued nine (9) Permits/Orders of Conditions, four (4) Certificates of Compliance, and five (5) Determinations of Applicability. The ACC initiated five (5) Enforcement actions and conducted over fourteen (14) site visits/inspections.

Mystic Riverfront Restoration Project

In the fall of 2016, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awarded \$47,325 through the Natural Resource Damages Assessment and Restoration Program to the Town. The grant funds will create a native riverbank (riparian) habitat and improve stormwater quality. The project 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. Work began in October of 2017 to stabilize the slope along the riverbank, remove the broken concrete headwall, and repair the drainage pipe. Enhancements to the

riparian habitat, including native plantings and educational signage, will begin in Spring of 2018. The final phase of the restoration will include direct involvement from the community.



Mystic River Restoration Project in progress photos. By Lela Shepherd.



Spy Pond Shoreline Protection Project

Following passage of the CPA in Arlington, the ACC applied for 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). This Phase 1 work was completed in December 2016. A Phase 2 CPA grant was awarded for FY2018 in the amount of \$552,900. Additionally, Land and Water Conservation funds were sought and granted from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in the amount of \$40,040 to be used for trails.

Phase 2 of the project began in June of 2017. The work undertaken during this phase included a stakeholder and public site walk, botanical surveying, wetlands delineation, soil sampling, and completion of a 30% design concept. A survey with the National Heritage and Endangered Species Program confirmed that Spy Pond's shoreline is home to a rare plant, the Engelmann's Umbrella Sedge. Tree species were also identified, bringing to light the lack of diversity in genus and

species type in both Spy Pond Park and Scannell Field. These discoveries will have implications for both the design and implementation components of the project.

As the project moves forward into the 60% design concept, the goals remain 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.



Spy Pond shoreline project. Photo by Lela Shepherd.

Conservation Land Stewards

The ACC's volunteer citizen organization, Arlington Land Stewards (ALS) has assisted in managing twenty-eight (28) Town-owned conservation lands comprising approximately fifty-three (53) acres, thirty-three (33) acres fall under the jurisdiction of ACC, and the balance under P&R. 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.

Additional outreach was conducted this year to increase stewardship and identify opportunities for clean-up events. A volunteer will be responsible for the administrative and educational aspects of the Stewardship Program, in coordination with the Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent.

Water Bodies Oversight

The ACC, through its Water Bodies committee, continued investigation of the iron flocculation at the McClennen Park Detention Ponds to improve the site's aesthetic, recreational, and wildlife values and functions. The results of the sampling and analysis performed in 2016-2017 by the contractor Brown & Caldwell were received and evaluated. The report of this initial assessment indicated that 1) the concentration of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and metals that are present in the surface water and sediments do

not pose a risk to human health and 2) recommended further investigation of the potential ecological risk from high iron and manganese content in the surface water and sediments.

Woods Hole Group (WHG) was chosen as the contractor to assist the Commission with the recommended ecological investigations. WHG performed a site visit in June 2017 and from that prepared a Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) for visual and chemical measurements of surface water and sediments in the ponds, in the wetlands, and in Reeds Brook. The SAP was approved by the Commission in Fall 2017 and will be implemented in Spring and Summer 2018. Results from this sampling and analysis will be used to conduct an Ecological Risk Characterization and to determine whether or not a condition of "readily apparent harm" (as defined by MassDEP) to organisms exists at the site.

Arlington Reservoir Master Plan

CPA funding was obtained for developing a Master Plan for the Arlington Reservoir; this is the first step of a major capital improvement project. The goal is to assess all aspects of the Reservoir, considering both terrestrial and aquatic issues from both environmental and recreational perspectives. This project is being led by the Park and Recreation Commission with participation of the Conservation Commission and the Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee. Weston & Sampson, the firm that managed the dam restoration work in 2006, was chosen as the consultant to lead the planning process. In the summer/fall of this year, Weston & Sampson carried out a number of assessments of the Reservoir area including a full land survey. Some preliminary findings and recommendations were presented at public meetings in the late fall.

An application for the next phase of CPA funding for FY 2019 was submitted in December, 2017. Most of the funding request is for phase 1 implementation, which will include a new water treatment and pump system for the beach, as the current infrastructure is old and close to failure. Future phases will address some of the broader environmental issues. A full report will be released by Weston & Sampson in early 2018. Public documents related to this master planning process can be found at the Reservoir committee [website](#) at Arlingtonreservoir.org.

Arlington's Great Meadows

Arlington's Great Meadows (AGM) are comprised of 193 acres, making it Arlington's largest open space parcel. Located adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway, the AGM are mostly wetlands, but contain many upland trails through the Across Trail System, which makes connections to the Arlington Reservoir and the Whipple Hill conservation area. The Friends of Arlington's Great

Meadows (FoAGM) are active in increasing Arlington's awareness of this wonderful area. In 2017, FoAGM organized multiple walks at AGM, organized a booth for Town Day, and produced a brochure which was distributed out of Robbins Library.

FoAGM volunteers maintain the trails and boardwalks at the Meadows. This includes removing invasive plants, consisting primarily of Japanese Knotweed, along the Minuteman Bikeway. More information on FoAGM can be found at: www.FoAGM.org.

2018 Goals and Beyond

The ACC will continue to encourage, support, and assist the various volunteer and environmental advocacy groups that are dedicated to preserving the Town's valued conservation lands and other open spaces within its immediate borders as well as those directly adjacent to it. These groups include, among others: Arlington Land Stewards, Arlington Land Trust, Open Space Committee, Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows, Friends of Spy Pond Park, Mystic River Watershed Association, and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions. Additional specific goals include the following:

- Spy Pond Shoreline Project contract document finalization, bidding contract, and project construction;
- Mystic Riverfront Restoration project completion;
- McClennen Park Detention Ponds continuing sampling and analysis to evaluate potential ecological impairment; and
- Revision of Conservation Land Stewards program materials and incorporation of educational trainings.

Acknowledgments

The ACC would like to express its sincere gratitude and best wishes to Conservation Commissioner Janine White for over three years of service on the ACC providing valuable stormwater management evaluations and review of conservation projects. The ACC also thanks Eileen Coleman who served as an interim, consulting Conservation Agent for nine months.

The ACC sincerely thanks all individuals and organizations that contributed directly or indirectly to the activities of its fifty-second (52nd) year. Many special thanks go to the scores of volunteers who came out for cleanup 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 as required by the state and adopted as Town policy in the fall of 2015. Printed copies of the complete Plan and Appendices are available at the Robbins and Fox libraries, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), Board of Selectmen's and Town Manager's offices, and on the Committee's website.

The OSC website also features several other ongoing initiatives. Working with DPCD staff, the Committee developed "Experiencing Arlington's Open Spaces," a web-based application that makes much of the Plan's site information available for viewing on a computer, smart phone or tablet. For each of the 19 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 2017, Take A Walk, also builds on the OSRP by promoting safe and interesting walking routes that connect open spaces and other significant sites around Arlington. The first phase focused on routes in East Arlington, and additional routes are being drafted throughout the Town. The website currently hosts a map of East Arlington routes, and other routes will be added in 2018.

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

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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 those funded by the Community Preservation Act; 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 always.

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 has 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 Town's 2015 Master Plan. OSC members continue to be involved with the Mill Brook Working Group, part of the Master Plan Implementation Committee, and with the Mystic River Watershed Association, which received a CPA grant to explore improvements at Wellington Park and adjacent sections of the brook between Grove and Brattle Streets.

The Committee is monitoring the many goals and objectives outlined in the 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan and has established a process for documenting accomplishments, in preparation for the next version of the Plan. In 2018 it will continue work on the Take A Walk and Picture Post projects, and expand use of the Town website to disseminate maps and other information about local open spaces and recreational facilities. Members will continue their collaborations with both Town departments and community organizations 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 enhance 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,

the TAC works closely with the Arlington Police Department's Traffic Division, the Public Works Department, and Department of Community Development Department (DPCD), along with 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 2017 were: Seth Federspiel, Charles Giroux, Michael Gordon (Co-Secretary), Pamela Heidell, Brian Kmetz, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Marjorie Moores (Vice Chair), Howard Muise (Chair), Victor Rivas, Scott Smith, and Town Staff members -- Officer Corey Rateau (Arlington Police Department (APD)), Wayne Chouinard (Department of Public Works (DPW)), and Laura Wiener (DPCD, Co-Secretary).

Major TAC Activities in 2017

Lake Street Corridor Recommendations: TAC completed a comprehensive analysis of the Lake Street Corridor and recommended the installation of a traffic/pedestrian/bicycle signal at the intersection of Lake Street and the Minuteman Bikeway that would be coordinated with the signal at Brooks Avenue and Lake Street. The Board of Selectmen approved the recommendation and a Design Review Committee was established in early 2017 to develop a construction plan for the recommended improvements. Jeff Maxtutis serves as the TAC representative on the committee, which also includes TAC members Wayne Chouinard representing the DPW and Corey Rateau representing the APD. The Design Review Committee worked through 2017 to develop a 100 percent design plan for the improvements, which include installation of the new signal to improve operations and safety; signal improvements at Brooks Avenue; signage and pavement marking changes; handicap access improvements; and vegetation maintenance. The Town has applied to the MassDOT for Complete Streets funding for the proposed improvements

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, which conducted an analysis of existing parking conditions in 2013. The committee was established by the Board of Selectmen following their approval of the Parking Study's recommendation. The committee oversaw the replacement of the multi-space parking meters in the municipal parking lots and the installation of on-street single-space parking meters on Massachusetts Avenue, Medford Street and Court Street in Arlington Center. In 2017 monitoring of current

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utilization was conducted and showed the effectiveness of the parking changes. Town Meeting approved formation of a Parking Benefits District, so that excess parking revenue (revenue minus operating costs) can be returned to Arlington Center to provide improvements to the Russell Common Parking Lot, and pedestrian improvements to parking lot access, lighting, sidewalks and signing. The Parking Committee will make recommendations to the Selectmen regarding improvements to be funded with excess revenue. Several members of TAC served on the parking committee in 2017: Howard Muise, TAC Chair, was the TAC representative, Laura Wiener was the Planning Department representative; Corey Rateau was the Police Department representative; and Michael Gordon was the resident representative.

Safe Pedestrian Access at Bus Stops: TAC continued a study to evaluate pedestrian access at stops on all bus routes in town, except Route 77 which was upgraded as part of the MBTA Key Bus Routes Study and the reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington. A working group has completed documentation of existing pedestrian access to bus stops, including sidewalk conditions, crosswalks, signage, visibility for cars and pedestrians, boardings, and traffic volume. The full TAC is expected to adopt final recommendations in 2018. The working group also reviewed and commented on draft plans by the MBTA for upgrading access at five stops in Arlington.

Crosswalk Flag Program: TAC continued to maintain the pedestrian crossing flag program principally near elementary schools, to provide more visibility for students crossing busy streets on the way to school. The program was expanded by the addition of the crosswalk across Massachusetts Avenue at Varnum Street to a total of nine 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, the 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, recommended to the Board of Selectmen by TAC, and approved by the Board. 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: 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 to encourage safety for all modes of transportation, reduce car travel and encourage alternative modes of transportation. The Town was awarded \$400,000 in Complete Streets funding from MassDOT for sidewalks and other pedestrian improvements on Gray Street to encourage more Ottonson Middle School students to walk to school rather than being driven. The project was completed in 2017. As noted above the Town has applied for complete streets funding for the proposed improvements at the intersection of the Minuteman Bikeway and Lake Street.

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. The TAC recommended adoption of the 25 mph default speed limit in February 2017 and the Board of Selectmen approved the change effective May 1.

Speed Table at Magnolia and Herbert Streets: The Parks and Recreation Department completed construction of improvements at Magnolia Park in 2017. As part of its plans, the Department 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. The TAC recommended against a raised intersection because of the high cost of utility and drainage work required to accommodate the raised intersection. The TAC committed to investigate the possibility of establishing a speed safety zone along Herbert Street at the entrance to Magnolia Park.

Other Projects: Gibbs School, Townwide Bike Share Program, and school zones.

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

- Lesley Ellis School
- Local Speed Limits and Local Speed Safety Zones
- Magnolia Street and Herbert Street Intersection

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BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

ABAC's Winter Social was a great success: Alan McClennen, a former director of the Department of Planning and Community Development and leading proponent of the Minuteman Bikeway's creation, presented on the history of the Bikeway. The event, which was filmed by ACMi, was well attended, and the presen-



Members of ABAC and the Minuteman Bikeway 25th Anniversary Committee with guest speaker, Alan McLennan, at anniversary celebration event. Photo by Jennifer Raitt

tation and accompanying video were well received. Mr. McClennen's presentation kicked off the Town's year-long celebration of the Minuteman Bikeway's 25th anniversary. ABAC's Executive Board and at-large members were instrumental in the creation of Arlington's Minuteman Bikeway 25th Anniversary Committee, and the coordination of the Committee's activities.

ABAC's annual tour of Arlington was again privileged by agreeable weather, and it highlighted the Minuteman Bikeway and local open spaces. The tour concluded with a reception at the Old Schwamb Mill.

Committee members participated in Town Day, distributing over 50 youth helmets and a case of high visibility vests generously supplied by the law firm of Breakstone, White & Gluck PC. The committee also sold Minuteman Bikeway 25th anniversary t-shirts to raise funds for future bikeway efforts. ABAC members spoke with many residents about several relevant topics, such as establishing a local bikeshare program, the importance of following local bicycling rules and regulations, and the importance of safety and visibility regarding sharing the road with other types of users. Another significant topic that was discussed is the initiative to redesign the Lake Street crossing. An ABAC member has been an active participant on the Lake Street/Bike Path Intersection Design Review Committee.

ABAC continued attending semiannual meet-

ings with the bicycle advisory groups in Lexington and Bedford to discuss common issues, such as unified wayfinding signage, Minuteman Bikeway counts, and plans for the Bikeway's 25th anniversary.

Minuteman Bikeway counts were conducted at Swan Place over two days (one a weekday and the other a Saturday) in May and September to gather data on the volumes of different types of Bikeway users. Like previous counts, the data indicates that the Bikeway is extremely popular and is a critical local and regional transportation artery, as well as a major recreational destination.

Arlington's COBWEB (Cops on Bicycles with Education for Bicyclists) officers have regularly attended ABAC's meetings, which has led to productive exchanges of ideas. ABAC is currently holding discussions with the Arlington Police Department regarding Minuteman Bikeway security in light of the recent bikeway tragedy in New York City.

ABAC worked with the Town's consulting public artist, Cecily Miller, to bring several well received artworks to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Other ABAC Activities and Initiatives

- Worked with Kim Downey, a film student at a local university, to produce a video entitled, *Revival: The Story of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway*.
- Provided interviews for ACMi's new video on the Minuteman Bikeway.
- Collaborated with the Lexington and Bedford bicycle advisory groups to begin preparations for a joint event to celebrate the Minuteman Bikeway's 25th anniversary.
- Worked with the Department of Planning & Community Development to produce a local bicycle parking map.
- Welcomed new Executive Committee member, Elizabeth Shea, who replaced retiring member, Stephan Miller.

VISION 2020

About 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

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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.

Annual Vision 2020 Survey

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 on the Town website

The 2017 Vision 2020 Survey was mailed to 19,350 households as an insert to the Town's Annual Census mailing in January. Thirty-three percent of households responded, resulting in the processing of 6,439 surveys. Survey results can be found arlingtonma.gov/vision2020.

After four years of response rates averaging thirty-three percent, Vision 2020 decided to move the survey online to reduce costs associated with printing and scanning paper surveys. The Standing Committee will consider additional changes over the next few years to help residents adjust to the new format.

Other Notable Activities

Hosted a table at the Civics Day event in March and presented the first draft of a diagram identifying employees, officials and volunteers in Town arranged by Town Goal. Updating this graphic and making it interactive are goals for 2018.

Sponsored Warrant Article 48 (Water Bodies Fund) for the 2017 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.

Arlington Public Art, part of the Vision 2020 Culture & Recreation Task Group, formally became a subcommittee of the Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture focusing on public art programming. This reflects a tradition of Vision 2020 supporting new committees until they become part of a larger town structure.

Task Group Highlights

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 the first part of 2017, Arlington Diversity Task Group invited organizations and residents that run town-wide operations with educational, social, cultural, and economic impact to share their stories with our members as part of a speaker series. The speakers were:

- Jeff Thielman, Executive Director of the International Institute of New England as well as a member of the Arlington School Committee
- Mel Goldsipe, Co-chair of the Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC), who discussed Arlington as sanctuary Town
- Pam Hallett, Exec. Dir. of Housing Corporation of Arlington, who spoke about affordable housing concerns in Arlington
- Cindy Sheridan-Curran, APS Homeless Liaison, who spoke about her role as liaison for the schools

In the second part of 2017, members of the Diversity Task Group engaged in a design thinking exercise to build consensus about a specific area to focus the Task Group's resources. The Task Group members decided to support the Arlington Public School commitment to work on cultural competency.

Governance: The Governance Task Group organized three large events for the public in 2017. Candidates Night in March with the League of Women Voters, Orientation for New Town Meeting Members led by Town Moderator John Leone, and the Meeting for All Precincts in early April to provide a forum for newly elected Town Meeting members and residents from their precincts to discuss issues on the warrant.

Fiscal Resources: The Fiscal Resources Task Group (FRTG) researches topics related to the town's financial situation and reports out findings and recommendations to the appropriate department or officials. In 2017 the following activities were undertaken:

Financial Transparency: FRTG met with Deputy Town Manager, Sandy Pooler to discuss the town's current financial situation and future financial challenges.

Warrant Article Review: FRTG reviewed and discussed 2017 Annual Town Meeting Warrant and considered approaches by which FRTG could work to enhance and promote resident understanding of Town Meeting and the Town form of government.

Citizens Corner: FRTG developed and published in the *Arlington Advocate* a series of articles summarizing how the Town functions; including articles on Town elections, Town Meeting, Town/school department organization and functioning. FRTG will continue this series.

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Education: The Education Task Group's primary mission is to foster community dialogue on the future of public education in Arlington. The ETG's key goal for 2018 is to co-create a vision and strategic plan for public education in Arlington, that: includes multiple viewpoints; embraces the community's values; has actionable & measurable outcomes; and builds excitement, commitment, and support for innovation in education.

In March 2017, the ETG and the Arlington Public School co-sponsored the Reimaging Education Forum at the Arlington Town Hall, which highlighted classroom innovations from across the Arlington Schools in an evening with APS teachers. In June the ETG organized a Gibbs Curriculum Planning update with the new school leadership and District leaders. During the fall of 2017 the ETG prepared materials to support the case for a district wide visioning and strategic planning process. In December 2017 and into the new year the ETG prepared a School Committee presentation to gain support for its proposal.

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 arlingtonreservoir.org.

2017 was a busy year for the Arlington Reservoir Committee. The Wildlife Habitat Garden had its seventh growing season. The committee continued activities at the "island" in the parking lot and planted, or transplanted, a number of new plants this year. The committee had help from many people on public workdays - and from many volunteers at other times as well. The committee welcomes schools, community groups, and others to participate in the committee's growth and evolution.

Water chestnut mechanical harvesting continued in the summer under the management of the Arlington DPW. In addition, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) held corporate and public hand harvesting events in the spring and fall. The committee hopes to increase these volunteer efforts in the future.

This year Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding was obtained for developing a Master Plan for the Arlington Reservoir—the first step of a major capital improvement project. The goal is to assess all aspects of the Reservoir, considering terrestrial and aquatic issues from both environmental and recreational perspectives. This project is being led by the Park and Recreation Commission with participation of the Conservation Commission and the Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee. Weston & Sampson, the firm that managed the dam restoration work in 2006, was chosen as the consultant for this work. In the summer/fall of this year, W&S car-

ried out a number of assessments of the Reservoir area including a full land survey. Some preliminary findings and recommendations were presented at public meetings in the late fall.

An application for the next phase of CPA funding in 2018 has been submitted. Most of this funding request for phase 1 implementation will be for the water treatment system for the beach area, which is old and close to failure. The intent for the future phases is to address some of the broader environmental issues. A full report will be released by Weston & Sampson early in 2018. Public documents related to this master planning process can be found at the Reservoir committee website. More information about the committee's activities, along with photos, can be found at the Reservoir website: www.arlingtonreservoir.org, where you can also join the Reservoir email list.

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.

Collaboration with other Town groups was a significant feature of Sustainable Arlington's work throughout 2017 and is an important outreach effort. Currently, Sustainable Arlington members serve on the Town Manager's Energy Working Group; the Arlington High School Building Committee; the Recycling Committee; the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program; and the Town Manager's Gas Leaks Task Force. Throughout 2017, a member of Sustainable Arlington also worked on the Minuteman Bikeway 25th Anniversary Celebration Committee.

Sustainable Arlington supported the Robbins Library's new Library of Things, which became available to the public in 2017, by researching and supporting the purchase of items related to home energy efficiency and food preparation.

Sustainable Arlington worked with the Arlington chapter of Mothers Out Front to publicize the start of the Town's Community Choice Aggregation electricity program. The joint efforts also focused on educating residents about the advantages of opting up 50% or 100% local renewable energy through this program.

Sustainable Arlington wrote a letter of support for the Town's successful application to the statewide Municipal Vulnerability Program and a member participates in the Town committee that was formed in response to receiving an MVP grant.

Sustainable Arlington organized an event, "The New Economy: A panel of Activists and Innovators," offered through Arlington Community Education. Central questions were: what does a just, sustainable and re-

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silient economy look like and how can we apply New Economy concepts in Arlington to create jobs and small businesses that support Arlington?

Sustainable Arlington collaborated with other Town groups to plan and host the 2018 EcoFest, a free, four-hour public event to be held at Town Hall to entertain as well as educate the public about choices for caring for our yards, gardens, and public open spaces. Sustainable Arlington also contributed questions to the 2018 Vision 2020 Survey.

During the past year, Chair Charlotte Milan stepped down after a second stint in that role. New co-chairs are Amos Meeks and Brucie Moulton.

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 online at arlingtonma.gov/spypond.



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 Housing Authority's seventieth 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



Board of Commissioners, clockwise from top left: Richard Murray, Nicholas Mitropoulos, Joseph Daly, Daniel Brosnan, and Brian Connor.

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.

Year in Review

In 2017, 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 2017 include the installation of new locks on tenant doors. Upcoming projects include an elevator replacement and parking lot upgrades.

Winslow Towers, 132 Units 4 Winslow Street

Winslow Towers modernization projects that were completed include the replacement of two elevators,

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upgrades to the parking lot, fire alarm upgrades to the building and the installation of new locks on tenant doors. Current projects include a new fire pump room and an evaluation of the building envelope, i.e. windows, concrete, etc. Future projects planned are the replacement of windows that have been leaking and causing damage to the units.

Chestnut Manor, 100 Units 54 Medford Street

Modernization projects that were completed in 2017 include adding a canopy to the handicapped ramp and the installation of new locks on tenant doors. Upcoming projects include replacing the sewerage ejector pump and upgrading building fire alarms.

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

2017 modernization projects included replacing 41 year old original windows with new energy efficient windows. AHA received a \$1.4m HILAPP Award and \$200k from Arlington CPA funds for this project. Upcoming projects include upgrading fire alarm systems.

Monotomy Manor, 179 Units Freemont Court

2017 modernization projects included 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. The AHA also received a \$2.4 million dollar grant for the installation of new energy efficient furnaces and hot water heaters in all 179 units at Menotomy Manor.

998 Mass. Ave. Special Needs Housing

Current projects include siding and porch replacements as well as interior renovations.

Community Partnerships

2017 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 2017 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 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.

Future

The average rent in our 520 units of elderly/disabled housing is \$430. per month and includes heat, hot water and electricity. The average rent in our family units at Menotomy Manor is \$655 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. 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.

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Wait Lists

Stated-Aided Elderly/Handicap One Bedroom
Units

Arlington Applicants:	98
Non-Arlington Applicants:	370
Total	468

State-Aided Family 2-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	51
Non-Arlington Applicants:	<u>638</u>
Total	689

State-Aided Family 3-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	13
Non-Arlington Applicants:	<u>255</u>
Total	268

Section 8 Wait List

Arlington Applicants:	*727
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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: \$430/
month (includes all utilities)

Average Family Monthly Rent: \$655/
month (tenant pays utilities)

Acknowledgments

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