



March 1, 2010

Vice-Chairman Chris Zimmerman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Vice-Chairman Zimmerman,

It was a pleasure to speak with you at the discussion hosted by the Arlington County Civic Federation on January 28. If you recall, we discussed the changes in the Aurora Highlands neighborhood demographics and the pent-up demand for more neighborhood-based programs. Thanks for offering to work with me to find ways to increase our access to the Aurora Hills Community Center, thereby improving the utilization of the center and improving the quality of life for folks of all ages in our neighborhood. I'd like to take you up on your offer.

This matter has taken on urgency as the county has proposed to close the Aurora Hills Senior Center in FY 2011. Closing this center will not only disrupt the lives of the 75-100 seniors who use the facility three days a week year round, but will do so for very little cost savings. The proposed savings is \$30,760, less than 2.5% of the overall senior program budget. This works out to less than \$2.75 per senior per day, far less than the \$5.00 a day the county has proposed that our seniors pay for transport to Senior Centers in other neighborhoods. We recognize the economic realities and certainly support our share of equitable budget reductions and real estate tax increases, but this cut will have enormous impact and simply increase the costs to our community. I think we can find a better way to save the \$30,760.

Furthermore, closing the Senior Center effectively mothballs the community center since the youth programming was defunded several years ago and the visitor center relocated to commercial space. Add to that the proposal to close the library one more day a week and it paints another page from the playbook that we have all been dreading – a plan, widely rumored and never convincingly allayed by the county, to slowly defund the Aurora Hills facility, through library hours curtailment, maintenance deferment and program cancellation, to the point where closing the facility becomes the only logical conclusion.

I understand that you think such a plan does not exist, but one must acknowledge that matters don't look good for our community center.

I would appreciate the opportunity to sit down with you and several stakeholders from our community to discuss this situation. We'd like to get a commitment from you that the Aurora Hills Facility will remain open, we'd like to propose alternative ways to save the Senior Center, and we'd like to discuss our proposal for reinstating the community center program at the facility.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience. You may reach me at my cell, 703.627.0308 or by email at [ahcapresident@gmail.com](mailto:ahcapresident@gmail.com) .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Dowell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Dowell" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Dowell, AHCA President, on behalf of the AHCA Board

Nick Giacobbe, 1st Vice President  
Cara Tenuta, 2nd Vice President  
Gail Fleming, Treasurer  
Jenny Lawhorn Sammis, Correspondence Secretary  
Cory Giacobbe, Business Secretary