



**ARLINGTON RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
2604 SOUTH GRANT STREET  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202**

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

13 March 2010

Dear Members of the Arlington County Board,

The Arlington Ridge Civic Association (ARCA) objects to the lack of equity in the County budget proposal to eliminate the last active program housed at our neighborhood community center – the Aurora Hills Senior Program. While other communities in the County have a wide range of activities, this would eliminate all Community Center activity at a time that Aurora Highlands and Arlington Ridge residents, with the full support of the Aurora Hills Senior Advisory Council, seek a wider range of programs to serve all ages – similar to what we had when the Board's own Hope Halleck managed an active Aurora Hills Community Center. This support is documented in enclosures (1) and (2)

The concept of creating a multi-use facility in Aurora Hills to include a community center, library and fire station was developed as part of the Pentagon City Phased Development Site Plan (PDSP). The PDSP also included a senior apartment housing complex, a nursing home, and the Southampton townhouses – a carefully planned group of assets within walking distance of one another, and designed as a buffer between the single family neighborhood and the new urban development. The land on which the complex stands today was transferred from the developer to the county specifically for its current use and as a condition of the board's 2/25/76 approval of the PDSP. To close the Senior Center, thus "mothballing" our Community Center, voids both the site plan vision as well as a condition of the board's PDSP approval.

ARCA strongly supports the continuation of the Aurora Hills senior program, and wishes to see the \$31,000 potential savings taken from other neighborhood's facilities that have a fuller range of activities in order to show some equity to our neighborhood. The Aurora Hills seniors recognize that their program keeps them connected to life and keeps them vital participants in the community. The Aurora Hills center is "home" to the 75-100 seniors who participate in the 3 days per week, 10-3PM, full-capacity program.

Sincerely,

Charles Walter  
President, Arlington Ridge Civic Association

Enclosures: (1) Ltr from AHCA to Chris Zimmerman dtd 3/1/10  
(2) Ltr from Aurora Hills Senior Center Advisory Council to ARCA/AHCA dtd 3/8/10



**ARLINGTON RIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
2604 SOUTH GRANT STREET  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202**

cc: Barbara Donnellan, Acting County Manager  
Dinesh Tiwari, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources  
Mike Dowell, President, AHCA  
Laura Lazour, Sports and Recreation Division Chief, Department of Parks, Recreation &  
Cultural Resources  
Kathryn Hunter, President, Aurora Hills Senior Center Advisory Council



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.

Enclosure (1)

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 cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Dowell".

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

AURORA HILLS SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY COUNCIL

735 South 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22202  
March 8, 2010

Michael Dowell, President  
Aurora Highlands Civic Association  
P.O. Box 25201  
Arlington, VA 22202

Mr. Charles Walter  
Arlington Ridge Civic Association  
2604 S Grant St  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Dowell and Mr. Walter:

I am writing on behalf of the Aurora Hills Senior Center Advisory Council. We met on Monday, March 1, 2010 and affirm Aurora Highlands' Civic Association's comments in its letter to Vice Chairman Chris Zimmerman of the Arlington County Board dated March 1, 2010.

We know the importance of Aurora Hills Center and its programs to the seniors in this community that we all share. The Senior Program is also an important and integral part of community life here in Aurora Hills. While we seniors need the continuity of having our own time and space for our programs, we certainly support having the Center include activities for children, young adults, teens and adults (our future seniors) when the Center would otherwise be vacant. Without this building and the Senior Program none of our programs or future programs for all ages would be possible.

We offer our support to you in your efforts to expand the use of the center and welcome your support and input in our efforts to save our senior programs and the Aurora Hills Community Center. We would like to do some joint events with AHCA and ARCA. A weekend movie day/night might be good or even a picnic in conjunction with the Aurora Hills Senior Program's Trash & Treasure sale on June 5, 2010. We concur that a public/private partnership is the key to the long term survival of our Center.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Hunter  
President  
Aurora Hills Senior Center Advisory Council