

The Council Connection

your connection to City Council by:

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Alexandria, Virginia

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Events/Updates

ENews Re-Launched

[The City's ENews system was relaunched and is now available for new users to sign up.](#)

The system provides regular e-mail updates on City events and occurrences across a variety of categories that you select.

Anyone who was previously registered on the old system is required to again sign up for the new system.

Art on the Avenue Returns

Last month, we passed a very sad chapter in our City, as an Alexandria Grand Jury [handed down indictments in the murders of Nancy Dunning, Ron Kirby and Ruthanne Lodato.](#)

This is only the first step in what assuredly will be a long legal process. I know justice will be served, but the families and the larger Alexandria family will continue to experience the void of their tragic losses.

I had the pleasure of knowing Nancy, Ron and Ruthanne. They were the best we as a City have to offer.

The action of the Grand Jury is the beginning of the legal process. Yet it only happened as a result of more than a decade of tireless work by the men and women (both current and past) of Alexandria's public safety agencies, as well as Federal and State partners.

I know as a fact that this was no ordinary case for the folks who worked on it. They lived and breathed this case for years.

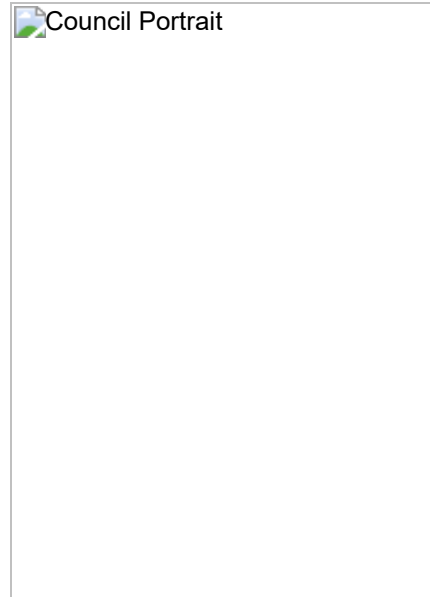
I am personally so thankful for their steadfast and persistent commitment to justice.

Please let me know how I can be of assistance. [Contact me anytime.](#)

Council Initiatives

Green Buildings

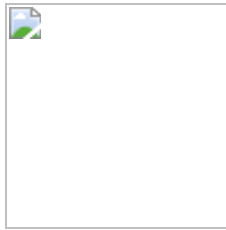
[Buildings account for 39% of total energy use, 68% of electricity consumption and 38% of all carbon dioxide emissions.](#) When buildings are built efficiently, redevelopment can be a powerful force to reduce our energy demands and improve our environment.



This Saturday, for the 19th year, [Art on the Avenue](#) returns to Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray.

The regional arts and music festival draws thousands from across the region. The festival runs from 10 AM until 6 PM.

It is certainly the "cannot miss" event of the year. I will see on the Avenue!



Personal Property Tax Due Oct 6

Both vehicle and business personal property tax payments are due on Monday.

Payments can be made [online or in person](#).

Tell Us About Your Park

The City is currently planning our existing [neighborhood parks](#).

In order to solicit the vision of our users, we are asking that residents [complete a survey about the parks they use](#).

Thanks for your opinions!

VDOT Community Meeting

[The Virginia Department of Transportation \(VDOT\) is hosting a community information session at City Hall.](#)

The session, to be held from 6:30 - 8:30 PM on Thursday October 16th, will provide community updates on a [variety of VDOT projects, including:](#)

I-95 Express Lanes Project

I-395 Auxiliary Lane

In 2009, the [City Council adopted Alexandria's first Green Building Policy](#). The policy laid out a series of expectations of the development community, including [LEED Silver for non-residential development and LEED Certified for residential development](#). The policy included flexibility so that developers could utilize other standards to ensure environmental sustainability of their development.

Meeting the standard requires a myriad of different techniques. Simply put, green building reduces the energy and water usage of buildings, while creating more livable homes and better spaces for work.

While these efficiency improvements are certainly positive for the environment and livability of these spaces, they are also extremely important to the affordability of residency. For those reasons, they were included as components of our [recently adopted Housing Master Plan](#).

Since the adoption of the policy, 58 projects have been reviewed, with 42 of them complying and obtaining some third-party certification. In total, 91% of the approved new development floor area met the new policy.

Yet a lot has changed in the five years since the approval of this policy. Green building strategies have gone from being a novelty and luxury to being a market standard.

It may be time for Alexandria to look at our policy and decide how to improve it for the future. Fortunately, our Environmental Policy Commission is looking at this very issue and will be shortly bringing recommendations to the Council.

I'm hopeful that we can continue to strengthen our development community expectation to ensure sustainable development that lessens the impact on our City's air and water.

Trust, But Verify

Regardless of your politics, this has not been a good year for those committed to good government in Virginia.

A former senior appropriator in the House of Delegates now sits in Federal prison. He is [fighting to reduce his sentence for trading his office for a part-time job](#).

[The Department of Justice is investigating possible criminal wrongdoing in the resignation of a State Senator](#), who allegedly traded his resignation for a job for himself and a judgeship for his daughter.

Perhaps the greatest humiliation of all, [our former Governor and First Lady now await sentencing for a myriad of felony convictions related to improper dealings with a corporate CEO](#).

Last week, our [current Governor issued an Executive Order creating a Commission](#) to make recommendations to improve public confidence in our government.

I've been around politics and politicians since I was in elementary school, and the vast majority of politicians are good people who

HOV Ramp at Seminary Road

Del Ray Halloween Parade

For the young, and the young at heart, grab your costume and march down Mount Vernon Avenue.

[Sponsored by the great folks at the Del Ray Business Association, the Del Ray Halloween Parade returns.](#)

There will be awards for the best decorated strollers, businesses and homes.

The parade runs from 2 PM - 4 PM on Sunday October 26th on Mount Vernon Avenue. See you there!

Run for a Good Cause

[This Sunday, the third annual Family Fun Day and 5K race will be held at Cameron Run Regional Park.](#)

The event, sponsored by [RunningBrooke](#) and [Alexandria Rotary](#), will raise money for great work in our community.

Sign up today. Online registration ends on Thursday.

Bloodmobile Comes to City

Next Wednesday, the Inova Blood Donor Services Bloodmobile will be at John Adams Elementary School (5651 Rayburn Avenue) from 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

You [can make an appointment online](#), or call 703-824-6970. Please use sponsor code 7890.

Thanks for helping to save a life!

Election Day

Election Day is nearing, with Alexandria voters heading to the polls on Tuesday November 4th to [choose our US Senator, our](#)

honestly serve the public trust. But some aren't.

The Code of Virginia is fairly permissive when it comes to regulations on elected officials. However, it relies on timely and accurate public disclosure.

At the local level, we largely have to live by the rules from Richmond, but we do sometimes have the ability to go farther to ensure the integrity of our government.

About 11 years ago, [Alexandria became one of the earliest jurisdictions in Virginia to post local campaign finance reports online](#). Anyone can easily review who finances the campaigns of Alexandria's elected officials.

In 2009, I along with Councilman Smedberg and then-Councilman Krupicka, [successfully sought approval from Richmond](#) to impose new restrictions on land-use applicants. Specifically, the new laws we adopted [require land-use applicants to reveal any financial interests that they might have with policymakers](#).

All elected officials in the state are required to submit an annual [Statement of Economic Interests](#), which is available for review at any time at our Clerk's office in City Hall. These reports are [frequently covered in the media](#).

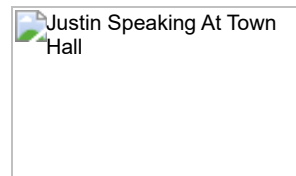
What else? What do you recommend to help sustain trust that the policymakers for Alexandria are always serving in the public trust. Your suggestions are always welcome!

Host a Town Hall in Your Living Room!

My regular series of Town Hall Meetings continue!

You supply the living room and a bunch of your friends and neighbors. I will supply a member of the Alexandria City Council (me) with the answers to any of your questions about our City.

Just [drop us a line](#) and we'll get a Town Hall on the calendar! Thanks for the interest!



Upcoming Issues

Passing the Buck

For a variety of reasons, our local judges stay out of most City Council issues. During the Spring budget process, the Council received rather extraordinary testimony from the judges of our Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and our General District Court.

The judges that appeared before the Council came to urge us to supplement the salaries of the clerks that work in the courthouse and handle the very important paperwork documenting a variety of legal actions.

They spoke of the high turnover and inexperience in their workforce in justifying the need for a local supplement for their employees.

In the end, the Council chose to phase in a limited supplement of the salaries for these clerks to ensure the efficient and accurate administration of justice.

In doing so, these two courts joined our Commonwealth's Attorney's office, our Sheriff's Department, our Public Defender's office, our

[US Representative, and consider one proposed amendment to Virginia's Constitution.](#)

[Absentee voting has already begun in person from 8 AM - 5 PM at the Registrar's office at 132 N. Royal Street.](#)

Beginning Saturday October 25th, voting will also be available at Beatley Library (5005 Duke Street) on the City's West End.

[Absentee ballot applications may also be submitted by mail to in order to receive a postal ballot.](#)

This November will be the first election in which Virginia voters will be required to present a photo ID.

Make sure you are prepared to [meet the requirements](#), so that you are able to participate.

If you do not have identification, [Alexandria's Registrar will be issuing voting identification cards.](#)

Pedestrian & Bike Master Plan

The City is currently working to adopt a new [Pedestrian & Bike Master Plan.](#)

In order to adopt a plan that is reflective of our community, we're looking for your opinion.

[Please complete a survey with your views on the future of pedestrian and bike safety.](#)

New Crime Reports System

[The City now has a new system for reporting information on crime that occurs in our neighborhoods.](#)

Residents may use [raidsonline.com](#) to find out about crime in our City.

Health Department, our Circuit Court, our Court Service Unit, our Registrar's office, and others in receiving supplements from the City.

What makes these agencies unique? They are all State agencies.

In each of these situations, the Commonwealth is providing inadequate funding for these agencies that provide service to our residents. In order to fill the gap, the agencies come to the City for supplemental funding. The City has a choice between asking our taxpayers to make up for the Commonwealth's neglect, or allow these important services on which our residents rely to fail.

While we may complain a bit, in local government we typically take the responsible course, and ensure that our residents receive the services that they deserve. That's what makes it all the more frustrating when other levels of government try a different approach.

Due to many of the same factors challenging the City's finances, the Commonwealth was faced with a \$2.4 billion budget shortfall. [While the Governor and the General Assembly did make some difficult cuts, they unfortunately employed a tiresome tactic which has become altogether common.](#) They passed the buck to us.

The [mechanics of the arrangement](#) just approved by the General Assembly and Governor are that local governments around the Commonwealth will be forced to return a portion of funding that we adopted our budget on.

A bipartisan collection of leaders in Richmond are quoted extolling the virtues of a deal that they claim avoids tax increases and protects K-12 education funding. However the effect of this deal is simply to force local governments around Virginia to raise taxes and cut K-12 education funding instead.

Governments of every level are dealing with challenging budget situations. It doesn't serve the public very well when only one level is making difficult choices.

A Shocking Proposal?

A few months ago, I wrote about [Dominion Virginia Power's proposal to construct a new 230 KV transmission line through the northeast corner of our City.](#)

In June, the [City formed a community group to begin reviewing Dominion Virginia Power's proposal](#) and offering feedback to the Council and directly to Dominion Virginia Power on their proposed routes.

The group has already held one meeting, [which you can watch on the City's website.](#)

This evening at Mount Vernon Recreation Center from 5-8 PM, Dominion Virginia Power will be hosting a public information meeting.

The most important occurrence at the first meeting was the release of Dominion Virginia Power's [proposed routes](#). Each of these routes have positives and negatives for our community.

Ultimately, the decision about the necessity of this transmission line and its routing will be made by the State Corporation Commission. Yet the City, and its residents will have some opportunity to help shape that decision.

Our work group will continue to meet in advance of [Dominion Virginia Power's State Corporation Commission filing.](#)

Let There Be Light?

Quarterly to Monthly

Starting this fall, bills from [Virginia American Water Company](#) for running water and from [Alexandria Renew Enterprises](#) for sanitary sewer services, will arrive monthly instead of quarterly.

The [new frequency](#) will not affect rates.

The long-simmering controversy about whether the football field at our City's only high school should be lighted will return to the forefront this fall.

In the 1960s when T. C. Williams High School [was originally constructed, there was a deal with the neighboring community to not have lighting for the football stadium.](#)

When the new T. C. Williams High School was approved by the City Council, the Council [codified that condition](#) and stated that permanent lighting was not allowed on athletic facilities on the property.

Thus, T. C. Williams is the only high school in Northern Virginia without lighting at the football stadium.

At the end of last year, the School Board requested an amendment



to the existing permit that allowed construction of the school. That amendment, [which was approved by the City Council](#), allowed the construction of new lighted tennis courts on the property.

That amendment however, retained the prohibition on athletic lighting throughout the remainder of the property.

Since that time, there has been increased interest in bringing lights to the football stadium, and [the School Board chose to pursue this issue](#). The School Board [performed a feasibility study, which concluded that lighting at the stadium would be feasible](#).

Tomorrow evening, the School Board will vote to decide whether to request that the City amend the original condition and allow lighting at the football stadium.

If the School Board votes to proceed with this request, it will be reviewed by the City's Planning and Zoning staff and eventually docketed for review by our Planning Commission and later the City Council

This issue certainly presents the delicate balance of protecting neighbors' quality of life with the need to have usable recreation spaces for our students and community. In a City as small as ours, it is difficult to justify open space that cannot be appropriately utilized due to a lack of lighting, as is the case at T. C. Williams.

Let me know your thoughts as this issue proceeds.

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