

## GOCA Update: March 7, 2024

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are looking forward to this upcoming change of seasons which promises a lot of renewed activity in Oakton. In this newsletter, you will find the following:

### Community News

- **AT&T Site Development**
- **Casino Proposal**
- **Hunter Mill Sidewalk**
- **Roundabout**
- **Signs on I-66 Identifying Oakton**
- **Birthday Celebration**

### Upcoming GOCA Events

- **Local Bus Tour with Historian Jim Lewis, March 23rd**
- **Oakton's Bird Community Gets Attention on Earth Day, April 21st**
- **Historical School Houses Open Their Doors, May 4th**
- **Pony Rides in Oakton Community Park, May 4th**
- **Oakton Day in the Park, August 25th**

### Other Items

- **Invasive Plant Removal at Difficult Run Stream Valley Park, March 9th**
- **Invasive Plant Removal at Oakton Community Park, April 6th**
- **Friends of Oakton Library Spring Book Sale, April 24th - 27th**

## Community News

**AT&T Site Development.** The proposed developer, EYA, completed its transportation analysis and submitted it to the County on January 31st for their review. There will be further discussion between the traffic engineers, FCDOT and VDOT before final acceptance. EYA says it plans to schedule another round of community meetings to go over its findings with the community in April or May. We encourage anyone wishing to get more involved to reach out to Options for Oakton (O4O) at [www.optionsforoakton.org](http://www.optionsforoakton.org) or they can be contacted at [optionsforoakton@gmail.com](mailto:optionsforoakton@gmail.com).

**Casino Proposal.** Like many of you, we have closely followed the fate of a bill in the Virginia General Assembly that called for a referendum in Fairfax County on the construction of a casino and conference center in Tysons. The initial proposal, being pushed strongly by the developers and being sold as a way to enhance revenues for the State and County, seemed intended to have the casino located in Reston; however, strong pushback from the Reston Association forced the sponsors to specify that they would push for a location in Tysons. Concerted pressure from neighboring communities led to the bill being deferred to 2025. Should the bill come back with prospects of passing, based on what we hear from our membership, GOCA may feel compelled to join other community associations in taking a stand. While we recognize the need for the County to diversify its sources of tax income, we are strongly sympathetic to a community trying to fight overdevelopment and construction it feels is incompatible with its character. We welcome hearing from others on our mailing list with any thoughts on the issue.

**Hunter Mill Road Sidewalk Update.** As we reported in December, the proposal to extend the sidewalk along Hunter Mill Road did not get approved by the County. Although it ranked highly due to input from nearby neighborhoods, it eventually was not selected, in part because the estimates of its cost continued to grow; the estimates doubled and again to over \$7 million for this 1,600 sq ft stretch of pavement. The Supervisor's office is exploring the possibility of an independent cost estimate that would hopefully show costs at a more reasonable level, and we look forward to pushing forward in the next round of funding for pedestrian improvements.

**Roundabout.** If you drive through Oakton on Hunter Mill Road, you have seen the new plant installations in the roundabout. As we reported in our last newsletter, a private citizen completed this project to honor his late son and created a GoFundMe page to help defray expenses. [More details can be found here.](#)

**Signs on I-66 Identifying Oakton.** You have likely noticed that a sign was re-installed on I-66 identifying Oakton if you are heading eastward, however, VDOT has not yet added a similar sign heading westward. The original sign was not replaced when the road was expanded because engineers found it difficult to install given the new bike path. VDOT has promised to relook at the issue and we are still waiting on their response.

**Birthday Celebration and Acknowledgement by Providence District Office.** After conferring with local historians, GOCA decided to celebrate Oakton's birthday for the first time this year, marking the date that Oakton was officially given its name: January 24, 1883, when its first post office was established. For this first year of celebration, marking Oakton's 141st year of existence, GOCA representatives and other Oakton residents joined Providence's District Supervisor Dalia Palchik and staff at the Providence District Open House for cake and a County proclamation. Celebrating with the Providence District was a lot of fun and it was great to see so many people who volunteer their time supporting Oakton in attendance.

### Upcoming GOCA Events

**Local Bus Tour with Historian Jim Lewis.** Join us on Saturday, March 23rd from 9am - 1pm for a tour of Oakton and sites along Hunter Mill Road with acclaimed historian Jim Lewis. You will hear where the old mills and roads were located and about some of the famed military figures (particularly during the Civil War era) and colorful residents who graced the area. Cost is \$40 and seating is limited to 22 participants. [Register here](#) by March 15th.

### Oakton's Birds Get Attention for Earth Day, April 21st

- **Breakfast with the Birds. 8:30 - 10am** - Fairfax Master Naturalist and experienced birder John Wilson will guide us on a walk through Oakton Community Park as we look and listen for different birds. You might be surprised to learn how many species have already been spotted in the park. After our walk, we'll enjoy coffee and breakfast treats. All ages are welcome to this free event, however registration is limited to 25 participants. [Please register here.](#)
- **Welcoming Birds to Your Yard. 2 - 4pm** - Local bird enthusiast Nick Newberry will talk about birds and their habitats and how to make your backyard more bird friendly. Afterwards, you can build your own birdhouse guided by GOCA member Michelle Fisher. Cost is \$15 and registration is limited to 20 participants. Participants

should be 8 years and older. To participate in this event, [please complete the registration here](#).

**Historical School Houses across Fairfax County Open Their Doors.** GOCA has joined with other local historic schoolhouses to found the Historical School Houses of Northern Virginia (HSNVA) and on Saturday, May 4th from 10am - 2pm, the six participating members—including the Oakton Schoolhouse and the Vale Schoolhouse—will open their schoolhouses to visitors. Each location will have activities for adults and kids alike. Addresses and other information will be made available on the GOCA website and Facebook page as the date draws nearer.

**Pony Rides in Oakton Community Park.** Also on May 4th, back by popular demand, we will again host pony rides for kids in the Park. Thank you to Board Member Linda Byrne for making this available to our community. Cost is \$5 per rider and registration is limited. If you are interested, [please register here](#).

**Oakton Day in the Park.** Mark your calendars for the annual Oakton Day in the Park which this year will be Sunday, August 25th. Stay tuned for more information as our plans develop.

#### Other Events

**Invasive Plant Removal at Difficult Run Stream Valley Park.** Saturday, March 9th at 10am - 12pm. [Sign up here](#).

**Invasive Plant Removal at Oakton Community Park.** Saturday, April 6th at 9am and 1pm. If you would like to register for one of these sessions or be notified directly about upcoming opportunities, [please email Karin Lehnigk](#).

**Friends of Oakton Library Spring Book Sale.** April 24 -27th; for more information, please visit [Friends of Oakton Library](#). [For other upcoming activities and events at the Oakton Library, click here](#).

Warmly,

The GOCA Board

Lauren Crum and Shelley Deutch, Co-Chairs

Jody Bennett, Linda Byrne, Jackie Davey, Mark Deaton, Michelle Fisher, Janet Kerr-Tener (Founding Co-Chair), Kris Olsen, Robin Thurman, and Gary Wong

[www.greateroakton.com](http://www.greateroakton.com)

*GOCA is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, and 100% of your donations go to our community efforts. To donate, please visit our [Paypal link](#). If you would like to become more actively involved, email us at [contact@greateroakton.com](mailto:contact@greateroakton.com) and we can match you with the right opportunity.*