Bus lanes on Duke Street?

Vice mayor, former DASH director raise concerns as proposal nears council
BY AMY WILL

A potentially $100-million-dollar project intended to increase bus ridership, build bike lanes and improve pedestrian safety on Duke Street is working its way through the public comment process – but is also running into opposition from both residents and community leaders.

Duke Street In Motion is a concept built around transit improvements in the Duke Street corridor from the former Landmark Mall site to the King Street Metro station. The road’s redesign would, in the plans being proposed by city staff, reduce automobile travel lanes along the city’s most heavily traveled and most congested road in favor of dedicated bus lanes and bike lanes.

“This project will provide an efficient and desirable bus rapid transit option along Duke Street by improving the transit bus experience for current and potential riders,” according to a statement on the

ACHS student dies

Official cause of death not yet determined
BY TIMES STAFF

Alexandria Police Department spokesman Marcel Bassett confirmed that a 16-year-old male city resident died on Tuesday, with the official time of death reported as 7:45 a.m. The medical examiner has not yet determined the official cause of death and Bassett could not confirm whether this male was Mendez.

At 7:30:48 a.m. a dispatch call went out to Engine 210, Medics 208, Truck 208 and EMS 231 for a reported cardiac arrest incident on South Whiting Street, with cross streets of the Alexandria Station parking lot and Lane Drive. According to the dispatch call on OpenMHz, a 16-year-old male was in cardiac arrest and was bleeding from his nose. This report did not state the name of the person being treated.

Balas in his communication to parents paid tribute to Mendez.

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Balas in his communication to parents paid tribute to Mendez.

Take a seat

Old Town residents question 1799’s increase in outdoor dining capacity
BY KAITLIN MURPHY

Residential neighbors and property owners adjacent to Old Town restaurant 1799 Prime Steak & Seafood have reservations, just not for dinner.

The historic property, which once housed the famed Restaurant Eve located at 110 S. Pitt St., was a controversial topic at the April 15 City Council meeting.

1799 owner Jahmond Quander’s application for a special use permit was unanimously approved, which will allow Quander to increase the outdoor dining capacity at his establishment from 40 seats to 104 seats. The area under consideration, a rear courtyard space, had been used as a garden during Restaurant Eve’s heyday.

Those opposed to the

INSIDE

Pets
Avoiding injuries and accidents when walking your dog.
Page 13

Out of the Attic
Celebrating Preservation Month in Alexandria.
Page 20
Christine Roland Garner
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ACHS student receives Narcan

At approximately 9:45 a.m. on Wednesday, the Alexandria Police Department responded to Alexandria City High School following reports of a female student found unconscious in the school’s gym. ACHS Principal Peter Balas released the following statement to school families after the incident.

“At approximately 9:45 a.m. today, administrators at the Alexandria City High School (ACHS) King Street campus called emergency medical services for a student who experienced a medical emergency at school. Emergency medical services responded quickly and transported the student to the hospital. Several students were present during this medical emergency, in which life-saving measures had to be administered.”

According to an APD dispatch call that was publicly available on openmhz.com, the student was believed to be “turning blue,” “seizing and barely breathing.”

APD could not confirm, but school officials on the dispatch call said an officer administered Narcan.

APD and ACPS have released no further information.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

Crash conviction and sentence

Carlos McKethan, the Fairfax County man who was involved in a high speed, multi-car crash in Alexandria in 2022, was sentenced to 10 years in prison last week. In Alexandria Circuit Court on April 27, McKethan pled guilty to aggravated involuntary manslaughter and driving under the influence and was sentenced shortly thereafter.

On the evening of Feb. 22, 2022, McKethan was driving at approximately 110 miles per hour when he collided with a vehicle near Duke Street and N. Quaker Lane. The driver of the vehicle, Bizuayehu Bulti of Fairfax County, died as a result of the crash.

The drug PCP was found in McKethan’s system shortly following the accident.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

Minor arrested for carjacking

According to an Alexandria Police Department release, a 14-year-old was arrested over the weekend following a carjacking attempt in the 2700 block of Duke Street. Minor injuries during the incident were reported.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

ACPS announcing new superintendent

The Alexandria City School Board will announce the new superintendent for Alexandria City Public Schools tonight at 6:30 p.m. The Board selected the candidate after working with consultant firm McPherson & Jacobson, L.L.C. ACPS serves more than 15,000 students across 18 schools. For more information on ACPS and the announcement, visit acps.k12.va.us.

-lgolden@alextimes.com

ADOPTABLE PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Jax!

Alexandria Royalty

The coronation this week will find Jax interested; he’s a prince of a pup and ready to take the throne in your home. Just 13-pounds, Jax he has a youthful attitude and personality. He’s very social and friendly. He does very well on his leash and enjoys a leisurely walk. Jax is an affectionate companion and awaits his new palace.

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Record breaking fundraiser

On April 26, Spring2ACTion’s 13th annual day of giving raised $2.8 million for nonprofits in Alexandria. More than 7,000 donors contributed on the giving day to various organizations ranging from animal shelters to food banks. To date, more than $20 million has been raised through Spring2ACTion. For more information, visit Spring2ACTion.org.

After school registration for 2023-2024

The city announced pre-registration for the 2023-2024 after school and out of school programs will begin on June 12. Eligible children in kindergarten through sixth grade are able to participate. Registration and financial assistance forms are available online and printed forms are available for pick up and drop off. Following a computerized lottery, randomly selected eligible applicants will be notified and must complete the enrollment process by June 26. The programs will begin on August 21. Fees apply and reduced rates are available with proper documentation. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/news-rpca/2022-05-02/city-of-alexandria-announces-registration-for-recreations-2023-24-school-year

More young people are back on a positive track in life, thanks to you!

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— Apprentice Madeline

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The Alexandria Seaport Foundation provides career, education, and life skills to young people who need direction and support. Using social-emotional supports, the crafts of traditional boat building, and a workforce curriculum, we give youth a safe haven where they heal, learn, and grow into healthy adults.

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Pamela Weeks
Melynda Wilcox
Justin Wilson
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Michelle Woods
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The event featured games, food trucks and more.

The event featured games, food trucks and more.
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Heather Corey
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hcorey@ttrsir.com
Alexandria Brokerage
400 S Washington Street
Alexandria, VA
“Yonatan has been part of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) family since he was in middle school, and his passing is a sad and tragic loss for his family, friends and our school community. He was always respectful and was well liked by his peers. On behalf of the entire Titan community, we send our thoughts and prayers to his family and loved ones,” Balas said in the communication.

A Go Fund Me page has been established for the Mendez family. The page reads:

“Yonathan was a son, brother, cousin, nephew, friend, and most importantly a child of God. He dedicated his time and life to Jesus Christ alongside his family and played the guitar in his congregation. During his free time he loved spending time with his family watching movies, play video games, while eating pizza and drinking his Starbucks. We ask during this difficult time that you pray for our family and we appreciate whatever amount God places in your heart, we thank you very much. God bless you!”

Balas also said that ACHS staff was available to assist students in need of immediate emotional support as they grieve Mendez’ death.

“Students and families can also reach CrisisText and Crisis Link at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, through the contacts below:

• Text: CONNECT to 85511
• Call CrisisLink: 703-527-4077

Families may also wish to review resources on addressing grief from the National Association of School Psychologists. Please reach out for help and do not suffer in silence as you mourn or experience grief.

Please know that ACPS and ACHS are here to support you, especially in this time of sadness,” Balas wrote.

The Times will provide updates as more information becomes available.
DUKE STREET

FROM | 1

project’s website. “With multimodal enhancements to the corridor, Duke Street will become a safe, efficient and desirable community connector for people riding the bus, walking, biking and driving,” according to the statement.

Transit Programs Manager Jennifer Monaco said Duke Street in Motion would provide a variety of options for getting around to the thousands of people who use the corridor daily.

“The plan aims to make the bus a better option of transportation, but also make Duke Street safer and more pleasant to be on,” Monaco said.

Problems with the corridor were highlighted back in 2008, when a Transportation Master Plan identified Duke Street as one of three high-capacity areas in Alexandria. Fast forward to 2016, when the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority awarded $12 million to the project for environmental work and design and an additional $75 million in 2020 to help construct the first phase of improvements.

In 2021, staff launched a feedback effort for the proposed $87 million project that included a public survey and the establishment of The Advisory Group, a mix of representatives from various city commissions, the Federation of Civic Associations and other members of the community.

According to a detailed overview of the project presented at an April 20 open house, the vision was based on the Bus Rapid Transit model, which operates similar to a rail system. The goal would be to provide faster and more reliable bus service, encouraging commuters to ride the bus and leave their cars at home.

There are two primary models for the plan: Corridor Concept A and Corridor Concept B.

Concept A would include a mostly center-running bus lane, a design that city staff contend would avoid residential service roads and lessen Telegraph Road congestion while adding more pedestrian refuge areas.

Concept B would be mostly curb-running. Buses would share a lane with right-turning vehicles. Additionally, significant impacts to Alexandria Commons—a popular shopping destination for many—would be avoided.

“We’re just getting to about 10% of concept design. We’re still in the very preliminary stages; it’s technically in the planning stage. We’re hoping to begin the design, the formal

OPPO NTS OF THE DUKE STREET IN MOTION PROPOSAL SAY IT WOULD MAKE TRAFFIC CONGESTION WORSE ON THE MOST TRAVELED ROAD IN ALEXANDRIA.

See DUKE STREET | 9
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design in 2024. And, that process can take about a year and a half or so and then looking to begin construction soon after that," Monaco explained.

There has been considerable communication and engagement with the public during the project’s development, but some say the focus is on the wrong problem.

Former DASH director Sandy Modell, who helped develop the bus system and then ran it for almost 30 years, said the primary issues the city should be addressing are safety and congestion. Modell, who now owns Wholistic Hound Academy just off Duke Street, said there have been concerns with these issues on Duke Street for years.

“I think we can all agree that Duke Street, especially in the peak period, is a nightmare,” Modell said. “And, the question is, ‘What is the city going to do about it?’ This project, although it’s very noble, what’s not being addressed is the congestion and safety issues that are caused by the backups forming at Telegraph Road. And, by not dealing with that first, by not making some pretty important improvements that the city’s been talking about for 20 years now, I think that’s my biggest concern.”

The Duke Street In Motion presentation collected data from the city’s Vision Zero viewer to determine the number of left turn crashes on Duke Street between 2016 and 2020. Monaco said those crashes made up 1 out of 3 fatalities and 4 out of 10 severe injury crashes in Alexandria during that time. Monaco could not confirm, however, how those numbers were calculated.

In a Duke Street In Motion concept overview report, Concept A is projected to reduce left turn crashes by 70%. The informational one-pager states data was “based on community feedback and technical analysis.”

When addressing the city’s current and future development, Monaco said West Taylor Run, Landmark redevelopment and West End Transitway are expected to increase the daily volume of traffic by 10% and rush hour delays on Duke Street by 20 to 30%.

Modell questioned the statistics and said although some information reflects new developments, much of the data that has been used is outdated.

“Some of the data they’re basing this whole project on is pre-COVID data. Now, they’ve done some additional ridership studies. But I haven’t seen it where they’re claiming [what] that ridership is,” Modell said.

The public input period for the Duke Street In Motion proposal is ongoing.
Modell explained. Vice Mayor Amy Jackson expressed views similar to those of Modell and said she will need a lot more information before signing off on the project.

“The transitway is not going to be a complete idea, vision and mission in the next month. The planning for it has been hit or miss,” Jackson said.

Jackson said that while she believes Duke Street will be redone, she’s not sold on the current proposals.

“Do I see it at the level that everyone thinks it’s going to be redone at? No. And, I do believe that it should be done in sections,” Jackson said.

Monaco said predicting the future of congestion can be hard, but when you make the situation more appealing for drivers, you get more cars.

“We’re just trying to see how we can move more people more efficiently to the corridor with moving more people on buses and making intersections work better,” she said.

Both Modell and Jackson added that a plan centered around attracting new transit riders is alarming.

“We’re gonna go around the congestion. We’re not gonna deal with the congestion – because that’s the big elephant in the room,” Modell said.

Jackson noted that although the idea of improving Duke Street sounds promising, it may not be worth a project of such magnitude.

“If we’re talking about the quality of life of everybody, then everybody needs to be taken into consideration,” Jackson said. “I don’t see this happening and coming to fruition in the near future.”

Monaco concluded that the final Advisory Group meeting is being held on May 25, and project leaders hope to go to City Council with a preferred concept at the end of June.

The estimated cost for Corridor Concept A is $100 million and $80 million for Corridor Concept B.

-Draill@alextimes.com

DUKE STREET

Duke Street is one of the city’s most heavily traveled and most congested roads.

OBITUARY

David Kraftt Yancey

He was the youngest of two born to Thomas VanDervurse and Grace Katherine (Bender) Yancey and grew up in Alexandria.

David leaves behind his daughter, Nadine and son-in-law Peter Grinnell; his grandson, Merlin Jason Yancey; along with numerous family, friends and loved ones. He was recently preceded in death by his beloved wife of 50 years, Nelda (Wood) Yancey.

Celebration of Life Services will begin May 4, 2023, from 6 to 8 p.m. and at 11 a.m. on May 5, 2023, at Cunningham Turch Funeral Home, located at 811 Cameron St., Alexandria, 22314. Graveside Service will be at 2 p.m. at Tom’s Brook Cemetery in Tom’s Brook, Virginia 22660.

His full obituary can be read on Cunningham’s website.
permit complained about the lack of transparency in the permitting process. Some cited issues such as increased noise from music and patrons and increased traffic and parking demands as cause for concern. The lack of egress from the courtyard in the event of emergencies was another issue raised at the meeting.

A major challenge identified by neighbors and zoning is relative to the increase in patrons and the physical space, which does not have street access. In case of emergencies, there should be proper means of egress (International Building Code 1004.5). For an occupancy of 50 or more, two points of egress are required (IBC 1007.1.1).

Representatives from the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning fielded questions and concerns about the application and addressed issues of safety related to the egress.

Residents, such as property owner and neighbor Isin Ludlow, raised concerns about the location of the outdoor seating in the center of a square block. “This is a completely land-locked property about 50 feet by 60 feet. It is enclosed and it is meant to be a garden. To increase this from 40 plus with no proper exit or entry from this to any street is an invitation to disaster,” Ludlow said. “There will be noise, fire and safety issues for the apartments located behind [the restaurant]. The Alexandrian Hotel’s guest rooms are basically within a couple of feet of this property. This would be a dangerous request and proposal for all parties involved.”

Quander said he is working on resolving the egress issue. “I understand the concerns coming from everyone and I appreciate the concerns. With increased seating we definitely want to abide by all the guidelines set forth by the fire department to ensure our guests can have proper access to egress. Currently we have a general contractor working on second egress,” Quander said.

The hearing focused mostly on egress and compliance with the building codes for the outdoor space related to the application, and there was little discussion of the other areas of concern from neighbors.

Some residential neighbors of the restaurant were upset that changes to 1799’s courtyard had already taken place without public input prior to council’s approval of the DSUP. They expressed frustration at having to follow up on issues on their own without prior notice from the city and at the lack of notice of the work being done or information about plans for the future from 1799.

Examples they cited of the prior work included setting up of a furnished temporary closed-sided tent on the patio, propane heaters and propane storage sharing the space with the tent, the installation of exterior speakers and the lack of what they said was proper fire safety signage.

The existing outdoor dining capacity at 1799 is 40 seats.
Ashley Wilson, a preservation architect, said in an interview following the meeting that process issues are her biggest complaint.

“It is the process that has made this issue contentious,” Wilson said. “There were no other public forums to present our concerns except at zoning and planning hearings. Because the courtyard space can’t be seen by the public or in the public way, there was no board of architectural purview. There were no building drawings that needed to be submitted either. This was a weird anomaly of a project and the permit snuck through.”

Wilson said the reaction of the neighbors has illuminated the breakdown of communication between the neighborhood and the city.

“This shows a lack of public process,” she said. “There was a lack of forums to discuss these things and disagree with the planning commission because there is no precedent of a restaurant embedded in a residential block in Old Town. This is an unusual condition because the outdoor dining space in question didn’t have a builders’ permit.”

Wilson said the site’s overall usage was not the issue.

“The concern was and is not about a restaurant or use of an outdoor space. … We, as concerned citizens, want to make sure everything happening is safe and regulated,” she said.

Principal Planner Ann Horowitz walked the council and public through the special use permit process for further clarification.

“A special use permit is a land use application for review to identify its compliance and support of not causing any neighborhood impacts. Planning commission has come forward with a recommendation on supporting the land use application with conditions,” Horowitz said. “Then if the City Council approves, the applicant will check with code officials – that can be fire health as well as code administration. They all work together to establish the code compliance and that is independent of the land use review.”

Horowitz said the egress issues would be addressed at the next stage, which is the code compliance stage.

The Times repeatedly attempted to contact Quander for comment via phone and email and did not receive a response. For now, the next steps for the restaurant include work on the second egress in compliance with the fire and health department.

After that issue is resolved, Planning and Zoning will determine the final number of patrons that can be safely allowed in the space. Until then, neighbors and Quander will continue to wait.

Quander hopes to increase the outdoor dining capacity to 104 seats.

I. Meade Hufford of Weems, Virginia, passed away on April 15, 2023. He was born in Washington, D.C. in 1940, son of Irvin and Frances Hufford, grandson of Aubra Shuman of Shuman’s Bakery.

Meade was a graduate of Francis C. Hammond High School in 1958 and The University of Mississippi in 1962. He spent his entire career in the oil business, eventually advancing to Senior Vice President of Callon Petroleum. Meade was a loving husband to his wife Dianne, who predeceased him in 2001. He is survived by three sons, Ross, Trice (Lauren) and Lance, and grandchildren Conner and Ellie. A celebration of life will be at a later date in Weems, Virginia. The Interment of Ashes will be in Natchez, Mississippi.
Avoid injuries and accidents by following these steps

BY KIM GILLIAM

Dogs need to be walked. For mental stimulation, to expend some of their boundless energy and to avail themselves of the “potty.” And walks can be enjoyable and fun, with health and social benefits to boot, for their owners.

Unfortunately, dog walking sends tens of thousands of owners to the emergency room each year. More than 30,000 injuries were reported in 2020 alone.

In a dog-friendly town like Alexandria, we’ve all heard the stories or seen it happen. An over-excited pup pulls hard on their leash to chase a squirrel or greet another dog and their human gets tripped up and hits the ground. Ouch!

New research shines a light on the increasing frequency of this occurrence and the most common resulting injuries.

In a study released last month, Johns Hopkins University researchers found that between 2001 and 2020, more than 422,000 U.S. adults were treated in ERs for injuries suffered while walking leashed dogs. The annual incidence more than quadrupled during this period where 75% of those affected were women. Almost half were people between the ages of 40 to 64.

The study concluded that “dog walking is associated with a considerable and rising injury burden and dog owners should be informed of this in-

SEE DOG WALKING
jury potential and advised on risk-reduction strategies.

Per the study, finger fractures, traumatic brain injuries and shoulder sprains and strains were the three most-diagnosed injuries caused by walking dogs from 2001 to 2020. These injuries happen when dog walkers have the leash wrapped around their fingers or wrist. If the dog lunges, injuries to tendons and bones in the hands, arms or hips can result. In adults 65 and older, about 60% suffered traumatic brain injuries during a fall while walking their dog.

So, what can you do? Here are seven ways to help lessen your risk of injury on leashed walks:

**Train your dog**
If they are listening to you despite the distractions, then you have eliminated leash pulling at the source.

**Stay alert**
Put your phone away and watch for wildlife or other triggers that might cause your dog to pull.

**Hand hold**
Don’t wrap the leash around your hand. Don’t intertwine your fingers in the leash or under the collar where they can get easily twisted if your dog is excited.

**Keep it simple**
Avoid retractable and bungee leashes at all costs. Only use flat cotton, BioThane or leather leashes. Use a shorter one if you need more control.

**Lace up**
Slippers, sandals and high heels are a definite no-no for dog walks. Wear comfortable shoes that minimize your potential for tripping, slipping or falling.

**Stay lit**
Stick to well-lit areas with sturdy surfaces. Steer clear of potential trip hazards. Consider investing in a headlamp to aid in visibility on your walk.

**Outsource**
Make sure your abilities match the size and temperament of your dog. If you feel ill-equipped to safely walk your dog, consider hiring a dog walker to keep yourself and your furry friend safe.

---

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**Choose proper footwear and stick to well-lit areas with sturdy surfaces when dog walking.**
MAY 6

**DOG DAYS** The Del Ray Artisans welcome furry friends and their humans to Dog Days in Del Ray. Outdoor activities for dogs and their owners. All are encouraged to bring donations of dry and wet food for dogs and cats for the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. Free.

**Time:** 6 to 8 p.m.
**Location:** 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave.
**Information:** delrayartisans.org/event/first-thursday-may-2023

**PRINT DAY** All are invited to come and learn about the art of printmaking. Watch demonstrations. Meet printmakers. Enjoy printmaking activities. Family-friendly. Free.

**Time:** 1 to 3 p.m.
**Location:** 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave.
**Information:** alexlibrarya.org/calendar/#event=print-day;instance=20230506130000?popup=1

**SOUTHERN TOWERS** All are welcome to attend an expansion extravaganza. Gift card raffles, beverages, DJ and live music, a moon bounce, face painting and more. Free to all.

**Time:** 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
**Location:** 5201 Seminary Road
**Information:** alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=51808

**SPRING CRAFT FAIR** More than 100 artisans, crafters and small businesses will be on hand for an art and craft fair. Jewelry, baked goods, handmade items and art available. Free. Pet friendly. Rain or shine.

**Time:** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
**Location:** 300 John Carlyle St.
**Information:** visitalexandria.com/events/old-town-alexandria-art-show-craft-spring-fair/

**BORED? GAMES!** Kids ages 8 to 18 are invited to play tabletop games. Learn new board games. Practice old favorites. Free.

**Time:** 2 to 4 p.m.
**Location:** 5005 Duke St.
**Information:** alexlibrarya.org/event/8411956

MAY 7

**FREE CHORAL CONCERT** The Alexandria Choral Society invites you to the last performance of the season. A free community matinee. “On the Other Side of Change” features a diverse set of women composers from all over the world.

**Time:** 4 p.m.
**Location:** 4653 Taney Ave.
**Information:** alexandriachoralsociety.org/on-the-other-side-of-change

MAY 8

**ALEXANDRIA WEST** All are invited to attend the community meeting. Planning process discussion of topics such as equity, culture, housing, getting around, land use, parks and safety. Food, childcare and language interpretation services will be available.

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.
**Location:** 1701 N. Beauregard St.
**Information:** alexandriava.gov/AlexandriaWest

**LINE DANCING** Seniors are invited to join this free event. Learn basic steps. Friends and beginners are welcome to attend. Please wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

**Time:** 11 a.m. to noon
**Location:** 4701 Seminary Road
**Information:** alexlibrarya.org/event/7930896

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Four project ideas to bring new life to your home

BY BRANDPOINT

More homeowners are taking on the challenge of renovating their homes. According to consumer data research company Statista, homeowners have spent more time and money on improvement projects over the last two years than ever before.

While you can hire someone else to renovate your home, you can do many DIY projects without any advanced home improvement skills and knowledge. Check out these four simple DIY home renovation projects that can quickly spruce up your home's interior.

Update fixtures
Small but purposeful changes can make a big impact on your home’s decor. An easy and cost-effective DIY project to refresh your spaces is to replace the knobs, handles and pulls on your cabinets, drawers and doors.

Picking fixtures with different metals or finishes, such as switching out silver kitchen cabinet hardware for brass or gold hues. Opt for more colorful and interesting knobs and handles. If your rooms have standard white switch plate covers, consider replacing them with decorative ones.

Paint cabinets
Paint can do a lot to change the look of your home. Instead of taking on a large project like repainting every room or the exterior of your home, paint smaller furnishings like kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

Why not wallpaper?
Wallpaper is a fun alternative to repainting a room. Whether you wallpaper a whole room or just one wall as an accent, you can refresh the look of your bedroom, living room, office or kitchen. There are many wallpaper options to choose from, but if you want something unique that truly expresses your personal style, consider ordering custom wallpaper.

Install shelving
Many houses don’t have...
DIY

enough space for all your possessions. You can add more space and visual interest to your home by installing shelving. Though this may seem a bit intimidating, it’s easier than you may think.

You can install a simple, rustic wood plank on metal or wood brackets. Arrange books, trinkets or other small objects on the shelves. If you need a more robust storage system, look for fixed-bracket or adjustable shelving to organize heavier objects like kitchen appliances, electronics and lamps.

Changing the ambiance and design of your home doesn’t have to be an expensive or time-consuming endeavor. Let these ideas inspire your future renovations so you can create a space that you can truly call home.

HOME OF THE WEEK

If these walls could talk

This is the longtime home of the personal private secretary to John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy. The First Lady and her children spent endless hours at the home of Mrs. Mary Barelli Gallagher, often on Wednesdays to enjoy normalcy away from the White House.

The house is loaded with love and is a tribute to a gracious lifestyle. The mechanics of the house and roof are in good shape and we believe the structure to be sound. Updating this historical gem could be a labor of love.

Gallagher recorded her time with the Kennedys in her best-selling book “My Life with Jacqueline Kennedy” in which she chronicles the happy times with the family and that fateful day in November 1963.

This house has been in the family for almost 70 years. Originally purchased in 1954 for $21,000, it is surprisingly large with a 1970 addition. The home features four bedrooms on the upper level and large living spaces on the main level.

A once in a lifetime opportunity to personalize this historic gem. One mile south of Old Town Alexandria and nestled in the acclaimed Belle Haven neighborhood.

AT A GLANCE

Address:
1909 Belfield Road,
Alexandria, 22307

Neighborhood: Belle Haven

Price: $925,000

Square feet: 2,546

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 2.5

Year built: 1926

Contact:
Janet Caterson Price
McEnerney Associates
703-622-5984
janet@janetpricehomes.com
janetpricehomes.com

PHOTOS/HOMES VISIONS MEDIA/GALLAGHER FAMILY

Left: Updating this historical gem could be a labor of love. Middle: Caroline Kennedy with the Gallagher boys in the kitchen in an undated photo. Right: The home is nestled in the acclaimed Belle Haven neighborhood.
**Our View**

**Not ‘Poetry in Motion’**

Few things are more soul-crushing than spending long stretches of time sitting in traffic, day after day after day. Some people make good use of time spent idling by listening to books on tape, podcasts or music. Many others, however, sit and seethe.

Frustrated drivers often attempt to lower their blood pressure by taking chances, such as neighborhood cut-throughs, racing through traffic lights or driving at high speeds the second the traffic jam eases. Traffic frustration can fuel traffic safety issues.

So we agree with Sandy Modell, who ran Alexandria’s DASH bus transit system for almost 50 years, that the intent behind the Duke Street in Motion proposal is “noble” – but misdirected. As Modell points out in today’s Times page one story, “Bus lanes on Duke Street?” the long-standing problems with Duke street center on traffic congestion and safety. There’s not a pressing need for bus and bike lanes, however much we might like them.

City staff seem to be operating under dual, erroneous assumptions. The first is that “if you build it they will come.” This line was made famous in the movie “Field of Dreams,” but it’s come to stand for ambitious projects of all kinds. Sometimes, as in the case of the iPhone, people do flock to something they didn’t realize they didn’t need until once it’s built.

More often, consumers are just fine with the status quo and reject the proffered “life-altering” new product. Witness the bankruptcy of several electric scooter companies, and the precarious financial status of those remaining.

Modell and Vice Mayor Amy Jackson both expressed skepticism in today’s story that Alexandrians will actually abandon their cars and ride bus rapid transit, even if it’s built, in significant enough numbers to make a difference. We think they’re right.

The second assumption is that, if the city is offered significant grant money to fund something staff deem desirable, then that project must be pursued. So the potential of up to $87 million means we must pursue a city-altering transit initiative on Duke Street.

There are multiple problems with this approach:

- It’s a case of the tail wagging the dog. Policy decisions – particularly if they have the potential to make Alexandria’s roads virtually impassable during rush hour, as Duke Street in Motion does – should never be driven by the availability of grant money.

- Grant money is not free. It’s tax money coming out of the pockets of all Virginians in the case of state grants and all Americans in the case of federal grants. Money spent on government projects is money that individual taxpayers could have been spending on their own. The public benefit needs to be extremely clear, and the probability of success really high, to justify spending tens of millions of dollars on any initiative.

- The initial price tag is never the final cost of a project of this nature. Witness the Potomac Yard Metro station, which went from a $150 million project at start to more than $350 million by ribbon cutting. Alexandria taxpayers are likely looking at a price tag that’s equal to or more than the grant amount if either of the current proposals are adopted.

Duke Street in Motion is ironically named, as are many big-government projects, as there is no doubt that automobile congestion would become even more intractable if this proposal were to be implemented.

We are blessed to have Modell, whose knowledge of bus transit in Alexandria is unmatched, weighing in on this issue. She is saying that a ramp at Telegraph Road and other congestion-mitigation and safety improvements are what’s needed on Duke Street.

Why don’t we listen to her?

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**Decongest Duke Street sensibly**

To the editor:

After years of the equivalent of water torture by the social engineers among us, we’re on the cusp of effecting a Duke Street trifecta: exacerbating automobile congestion, increasing the multi-million dollar taxpayer burden to operate more city-owned buses and re-configuring Duke Street at great expense and inconvenience to accommodate dedicated bus and bike lanes.

Crafting this as an urgent problem baffles me. Foremost, because I can’t help but wonder if the number of people using Duke Street today are less than the number traversing it during the days when shoppers were making their way to the long gone, once massive Landmark shopping mall at all hours of the day and night.

Regardless, if the issue now is demand exceeding supply for seats on buses traveling up and down Duke Street, then the quickest, simplest and less expensive solution is for the city to assign more buses to service Duke Street – perhaps with smaller, less expensive buses that can navigate traffic jams that the bigger buses cannot.

It’s so obvious a solution that I can’t help wondering if this costly, disruptive project was prompted by public servants anxious to justify their purpose. Or maybe it’s being surreptitiously driven by the secret Bike Lane cabal. These few, unnamed people are incredibly powerful. At hefty taxpayer expense, they almost single handedly created bike lanes on Seminary and on King Street for seldom-seen bike riders and for the never seen ghost riders.

To whomever is driving the notion that Duke Street must be remade at great expense and inconvenience to accommodate dedicated bus lanes and another lane for bikes, both of which will instantly exacerbate automobile congestion, I urge you simply to add more, ideally smaller buses to Duke Street.

If that doesn’t sate demand for bus seats and reduce automobile traffic, then emulate the Virginia Highway Department by charging a fee to use Duke Street. Just as drivers are discouraged from using Virginia highways assessing fees, so too will a fee decongest Duke Street making it evermore enticing to take the bus and less hectic for those drivers opting to pay the fee.

-Jimm Roberts, Alexandria

The opinions expressed in letters and columns are those of the writers only and do not reflect the views, nor receive the endorsement, of the Alexandria Times.
We needed a Metro bond referendum

To the editor:

The Alexandria Times should be commended for devoting so much print to getting to the bottom of the Potomac Yard Metro station opening-delay fiasco. This exemplifies what newspapers have always done well and why they continue to be important, even as younger generations abandon them for algorithmically curated, superficial, bias-confirming, on-line infotainment masquerading as news.

Your accompanying editorial’s thesis is that the delay due to the unstable soil underneath the tracks was due to a failure to fully investigate the underlying geotechnical conditions in the marshy site where city hall insisted on locating the station to suit maximal development.

But WMATA did know that the underlying soil was unstable because WMATA built 1,500 concrete columns 50 to 60 feet deep to support the weight of the station structure. It would, consequently, appear that WMATA’s geotechnical reports did adequately document site conditions. Why, then, didn’t WMATA bother to calculate whether the soil could support the weight of the trains, leading to having to remove and re-lay 1,400 feet of track?

In a previous letter on this topic, I pressed the question as to who screwed up: Was it the city for asking for the impossible, WMATA for failing to adequately spec the job for which it was letting a construction contract, or the construction company? And who is on the hook for the enormous extra cost associated with having to remove and amend the soil under 1,400 feet of trackage?

Mayor Justin Wilson dismissed the condition of the soil as a “minor obstacle,” when the Alexandria Times interviewed him, but said nothing about the additional associated construction costs or who is on the hook for them – although he did dismiss those of us opposed to the station’s siting as “a small group.”

A project of this magnitude should be subject to a bond referendum, as it would be in many places, because so much money from various taxpayer sources is involved. Virginia’s distinction between counties having to hold bond referenda, while cities do not, is arbitrary.

A bond referendum would have allowed Wilson’s contention that those of us opposed to the station’s siting are “a small group” to be tested and would force more transparency into the process because bonding for a cost overrun would subsequently also have to undergo a referendum.

-Dino Drudi, Alexandria

Staggering forward

BY MARK EATON

Since the 1960’s, the Alexandria School Board’s relationship to the electorate has been restructured about every 30 years.

In July 1964, the General Assembly approved an amendment to the city charter to enlarge the Board to nine members after the city’s African-American leaders asked City Council for an additional seat on the six-member board to promote minority representation. Council added three seats, thus creating a nine-member board.

In 1994, 30 years later, the first elected board took office. Now, nearly 30 years on, it appears that the implementation of staggered terms of office, and a reduction in the number of board seats, are increasingly likely.

So far, public reaction to the board’s investigation of staggered terms has been muted. A single speaker testified in favor of staggered terms at the board’s April 20 public hearing and a board member told me that there have been a modest number of responses to a survey about a possible change to staggered terms.

Proposals for changing the way politics is conducted in Alexandria often interest only a select few: officeholders, potential officeholders and local affairs obsessives. Election processes can seem abstract and remote from immediate concerns. For example, how Board members are elected seems unconnected to the effectiveness of classroom instruction or student wellness or other ACPS essential concerns.

A City Councilor, reacting to the possibility of the board moving to staggered terms, asked “Why now?” indicating skepticism about board terms as a priority.

The possible change to staggered terms for board members, which requires action by both City Council and the Virginia General Assembly, has been discussed intermittently for several years. According to current board members, the topic was sidetracked by the pandemic and the press of other business.

Adjusting election machinery can have consequences. For example, in 2009 city elections were moved from May to November – making them coincident with state and federal elections – which seems to have contributed to an era of all-Democrat councils.

The arguments for staggered terms involve predicted advantages: staggered terms should reduce the loss of institutional knowledge – which happens when multiple board members leave at the same time – and reduce the time necessary to build working relationships among board members and staff. They would help continuity with capital projects and instructional initiatives. Another argument, which may be more of a hope, is that staggered terms would reduce superintendent turnover.

Opponents counter that staggered terms are less responsive to the voters because staggered terms make wholesale changes – “voting all the bombs out” – more of a time-consuming process.

The staggered terms discussion includes consideration of a reduction of the size of the board. Mayor Justin Wilson told me that he favors staggered terms for the board and City Council. He sees reducing the size of the board as a significant priority because of the challenges of building consensus in or with a group of nine people.

The staggered terms discussion involves whether to continue, completely or partially, the current system of three voting districts where board members run in defined areas of the city, but are responsible to the entire community.

Staggered terms, how to implement them, the size of the board and whether voting districts should be maintained or voting should be at large, collectively generate a mind-numbing number of options. Those interested in the details can find out more in the materials prepared for the Board’s Feb. 23 work session on “School Board Election Cycle, Terms and Composition” which can be viewed at drive.google.com/file/d/1k5wa110tFAEytvOieCFr5c5TcPbzmwj/view?usp=share_link

According to the Clerk of the Board, a work session on staggered terms is scheduled for May 18 to discuss the survey results and the public reaction to the prospect of staggered terms and related topics. A board resolution is expected to be introduced and adopted in June.

Looking ahead, if staggered board terms are adopted can similar changes for City Council be far behind? Arlington County implemented staggered terms for its elected county and school system officeholders. It seems unlikely that Alexandria will maintain an “all-at-once” election cycle for council and implement staggered terms for the board unless maximizing voter confusion is somehow a goal.

When I retired from the School Board in 2006 after three three-year terms, it was difficult to get through the metaphorical exit: eight of nine board members left that year. Staggered terms would prevent a near-total turnover of that kind and, many hope, bring other benefits.

The writer is a former lawyer, member of the Alexandria School Board from 1997 to 2006 and English teacher from 2007 to 2021 at T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. He can be reached at aboutalexandria@gmail.com and subscriptions to his newsletter are available free at https://aboutalexandria.substack.com/.
Celebrating Preservation Month in Alexandria

The National Trust held its first National Preservation Week in 1973 and expanded to a month-long celebration in May 2005. Today, Preservation Month celebrates the buildings and spaces that are significant to American history.

Historic Alexandria is excited to announce events that highlight three current historic preservation projects in our city: behind-the-scenes tours of Gadsby’s Tavern, a walking tour of the Parker-Gray Historic District and a lecture on the restoration of the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House at 517 Prince St. Readers can also view an online Historic Preservation Viewer, which includes 100-year-old buildings and boundaries for both City of Alexandria and National Historic Districts at: geo.alexandriava.gov/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=historicpreservationviewer.

Long before the designation of National Preservation Week, Alexandria prioritized historic preservation. The city designated its Old and Historic District in 1946, making it the third-oldest designated district in the nation, behind only Charleston and New Orleans. In 1984, it designated historically African American Uptown as the Parker-Gray Historic District.

The establishment of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission in 1975, and the Archaeological Resource Protection Code, passed in 1989, were the first of their kind nationally and reinforced historic preservation as a priority in Alexandria through the guidance of city staff. Alexandria Archaeology has received national awards for its leadership in the fields of archaeology and preservation and serves as a model for local jurisdictions across the nation.

The Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 drove historic preservation in Alexandria in the 1970s. Some of the buildings restored for the commemoration were The Lyceum, Carlyle House and the two buildings that compose Gadsby’s Tavern Museum. After serving until the late nineteenth century as a tavern and hotel, these two buildings went through a variety of commercial uses and fell into disrepair.

In 1929, American Legion Post 24 purchased the buildings, saving them from demolition. In 1972, the buildings were given to the City of Alexandria, restored and reopened for the 1976 Bicentennial celebration.

Archaeological excavation, paint analysis and research of surviving documents have provided an accurate picture of the furnishings and use of the buildings in the period 1785 to 1808. Every Saturday in May from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Gadsby’s Tavern Museum offers a specialty tour, “Peeling Back the Layers,” providing visitors the chance to go behind the scenes in spaces not normally open to the public to see how the buildings have changed over time.

Historic Alexandria is also offering a lecture on May 9 on the first phase of the restoration of the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House with Al Cox, the former City Preservation Architect. Construction of the house began in 1772, with additions in 1784, 1797, and 1854. It is one of the oldest, least-altered wood-frame buildings in Northern Virginia.

Cox will explain some of the physical and archival research that preceded the recent restoration of the exterior building envelope, show discoveries made during this phase of construction, and discuss the next steps for documentation and interpretation. Please register in advance for the free lecture, and the free walking tour, or register for a Gadsby’s Tavern Museum specialty tour at alexandriava.gov/shop.

PHOTO/OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

ATTIC

OUT OF THE ATTIC

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Have you ever participated in the PNC Parkway Classic?

65% No, I don’t like to run.
15% No, but I’d like to.
8% I don’t run, but volunteer.
6% Yes, I run it every year!
6% I have run it.

This Week

What needs to be prioritized in improvements to Duke Street?

A) Multi-modal transportation options.
B) Traffic congestion.
C) Safety.
D) Access to neighborhoods and businesses.
E) I’m not sure.

Take the poll at alextimes.com
LEGAL NOTICE

A Public Hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, room 2400, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 on the following applications:

BAR#2022-00524 OHAD Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 424 S Lee Street Applicant: Charles Enoch

BAR#2022-00526 OHAD Request for addition and alterations at 424 S Lee Street Applicant: Charles Enoch

BAR#2023-00181 OHAD Request for alterations at 625 First and 510 Second Street Applicant: EAHG Alexandria LP

BAR#2023-00183 OHAD Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 625 First and 510 Second Street Applicant: EAHG Alexandria LP

BAR#2023-00179 OHAD Request for demolition/encapsulation at 220 S Fairfax Street Applicant: Addison and Greg Perkins

BAR#2023-00177 OHAD Request for alterations at 114 N Alfred Street Applicant: William Cromley

BAR#2023-00178 OHAD Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 114 N Alfred Street Applicant: William Cromley

BAR#2023-00185 OHAD Request for signage at 111 S Pitt Street Applicant: Sheila McGraw

BAR#2023-00163 OHAD Request for signage at 108 N Fairfax Street Applicant: Sheila McGraw

BAR#2023-00161 OHAD Request for demolition/encapsulation at 301 N Fairfax Street Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC

BAR#2023-00162 OHAD Request for concept review at 301 N Fairfax Street Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC

BAR#2023-00163 OHAD Request for signage at 108 N Fairfax Street Applicant: Sheila McGraw

BAR#2023-00161 OHAD Request for demolition/encapsulation at 301 N Fairfax Street Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC

BAR#2023-00162 OHAD Request for concept review at 301 N Fairfax Street Applicant: 301 N Fairfax Project Owner LLC

Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD); Parker – Gray District (PG)

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Lanning Blaser at lanning.blaser@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703-746-4666 or visit alexandriava.gov/dockets

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Alexandria City School Board will hold a public hearing on its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Alexandria Police Department (APD) during its School Board Meeting on May 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room located at 1340 Braddock Place in Alexandria.

Public comments regarding the FY 2024 Combined Funds Budget and the FY 2024-2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget may be submitted in the following ways:

• Sign up to speak at the May 18, 2023 public hearing at: https://acpsweb.wufoo.com/forms/s6oswnl1inlx/
• Email written comments to the Clerk of the Board at: boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us
• U.S. Mail: Clerk of the Board, Alexandria City School Board 1340 Braddock Place Alexandria, VA 22314

Only comments related to the FY 2024 Combined Funds Budget and the FY 2024-2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
Budget will be heard at the public hearing. Requests to speak or to submit written comments must be submitted by Noon on May 17, 2023.

For more information, please contact the Clerk of the Board at 703-619-8316.

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to modify an existing facility (new tip heights 75.2’ & 84.2’) on the building at 3514 W Braddock Rd, Alexandria, VA (20230219). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr, West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

LIVE IN SENIORS/ ADULT CARE

I am a mature lady with twenty years experience in caring for seniors and adults in their homes, preferably live in. I am CNA and medication aide certified. Can be contacted via email angelchristabel@live.com

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