

Fairlington Villages
Noise Abatement Working Group
Meeting #2— April 20, 2022
7pm—8:30 pm

1. Attendance: Melanie Alvord and Anne Wasowski (Co-chairs), Holly Bergman, Kathleen Hendrix, Rosabeth Cuppy, Terry Placek, Susan Schoenberg, and Angela McNamara (Grounds Committee)
2. Update on next steps on exhaust legislation outreach (Melanie).
Melanie notified the committee about the Governor signing the bill allowing law enforcement to stop vehicles for excessive exhaust. The bill will go into effect on July 1 so now is the time to start reaching out to the City of Alexandria and Arlington County to request enforcement of this law.

Melanie will draft a sample letter (similar to what she did for the Governor) and provide it to members of the NAWG and encourage them and others to reach out to their elected leaders. She believes both Alexandria and Arlington will be responsive as they were part of a group also pushing for the Governor to sign the bill. Melanie thanked everyone who had taken time to send letters to the Governor.

Communication Actions

1. Meeting Minutes (will be provided to the Board)
 - Susan Schoenberg/Rosabeth Cuppy

2. Newsletter Articles / Updates

- Update: Melanie Alvord and Anne Wasowski

Cheryl Chevalier wrote an article for the May newsletter about NAWG and efforts to decrease perimeter and road noise. If others have interest in drafting articles for future editions of the newsletter, please let Melanie know.

3. Communications Plan (Melanie)

- The group discussed the need for a communications plan outside of emails to the NAWG and newsletter articles. Susan mentioned that Tracy Friend (Grounds Committee – Ward VI Rep) had posted the link to contact the Governor’s office on Nextdoor had had some solid support and thanks for the information. Rosabeth mentioned that Tracey did a similar thing on Facebook. We will ask Tracy to make a similar post once the sample letter and contact information for Alexandria and Arlington city officials is ready to go in an effort to get more of our neighbors outside of Fairlington to also contact local elected officials.
- Possible outreach avenues noted included: Posting to NextDoor, Facebook, and on Town Square. Melanie will reach out to members of the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations as folks in their communities are also dealing with excessive exhaust issues. Anne volunteered to reach out to the POC at the Arlington Condo. It was also mentioned that it would be great to find a contact at the Pointe at Park Center as they have units that directly overlook the onramp to 395 and must also be dealing with excessive noise.

Update on Outreach Actions

1. VDOT’s removal of trees
 - Contact: John Lynch, VDOT Northern Virginia District Engineer—Karen

Karen was not in attendance at this meeting; Melanie will reach out via email and ask for an update.

2. City of Alexandria: speed monitoring and trees request—Anne Sattgast

- Contact Form: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Alex311>
- Contacts: City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Director of T&ES

Anne S. was not in attendance at this meeting; Melanie will reach out via email and ask for an update.

3. Arlington County: Are there perimeter noise issues in locations other than King Street? Angela mentioned that there had been news recently that Arlington Co. police are very short staffed and as a result would likely need to prioritize crime related issues vs. noise and traffic related issues. This might pose an issue as we ask for enforcement of the new law come July 1.

Alexandria & Arlington Police Departments *(if pending legislation and ordinance are enacted)*
 Melanie shared that next steps should be focused on City and County council members and that we'd want to make several touches prior to July 1 but once they have given support we should then also start reaching out to our police departments to request patrols and encourage regular enforcement.
[Arlington Police Service Changes Press Release](#)

Update on Research Actions:

Overarching Consideration: How do we achieve our goal of noise abatement & at what cost—financial, environmental, and human?

- ❖ Criteria:
 - Efficacy in sound abatement
 - Determine where landscaping, particularly native plants, can be used effectively
 - Determine areas where fencing may be required in addition to landscaping to increase efficacy
 - Costs: Materials, installation, time
 - Environmental impact
 - Installation: Time and labor needs
1. Update: Research for information on landscaping to provide a buffer from the noise from highway.
 Committee Members: Carol, Debra, Karen, Holly

Debra was not able to be in attendance (as were Carol and Karen) so Anne W. shared the notes that Debra compiled on this subject. Debra put together a substantial package of information from the USDA regarding how to use landscaping to provide a buffer from noise. One of the most important features of this technique is using density and distance between the source of the noise and the development it is being used to protect. NAWG members in attendance discussed that while this might be a real possibility for the area off of King Street towards 28th St. where the land has a large hill and homes are at greater distance from the perimeter fence, it was not a viable solution from 31st down to where the topography changes as homes in that strip are much closer to the road.

Consensus was that maybe this is not a one size fits all proposition and that we need to look at multiple possibilities and solutions for different areas depending on need.

The grounds walk through will be held on Saturday, April 23 and there will be a sound engineer joining the group for the King St. section of the walk through. The NAWG is hopeful that this individual will have some ideas and suggestions.

Additionally, after the walk-through Holly will talk with Mark Johnson about where he thinks landscaping buffers might be possible. Anne will talk with Mark about dividing up the space along King St. into sections so that as we look at possibilities and the budget, we can look at doing this project in segments.

2. Update: Research information on noise abatement possibilities for fence along perimeter. Companies, government agencies, other associations.

Committee Members: Susan, Carol, Debra

Susan gave an update on fence/barrier research. Susan focused her research on barrier options to exclude large concrete walls. Options noted included: Mass Loaded Vinyl (MLV), wooden fencing, brick/stone/stucco, and earth berms.

Earth berms and brick/stone/stucco were quickly ruled out due to cost and/or space requirements to build. The group had a good discussion about MLV and wooden fencing as possibilities.

All research said that wooden fencing should be Cedar or Redwood, 8-12 ft in height with NO GAPS. Thick tongue in groove board works best. No gaps is critical as any gaps will allow noise to come through.

Susan shared that she found considerable recommendations for using a MLV product along with wood – either on the inside of the fence or sandwiched between two boards for noise absorption/blocking.

Susan found several companies that have provided MLV for outdoor use but focused most extensively on Acoustiblock. This product was purchased by Fairlington and used on Tennis Court 13 (by pool 4) to dampen basketball noise when the court was converted to multi-use. Per the board members at the meeting, feedback has been very good about the noise blocking ability of the MLV as well as the durability of the product over the past few years.

MLV can be used with chain link fence as well as with wood (either hung on the chain link or wooden fence or sandwiched in between two pieces of wood).

Susan mentioned she walked over to the other side of Fairlington (Mews) to check out the fences they had installed a few years ago; these are wood fences that replaced chain link. While they look better from afar these fences have gaps between the boards and at the bottom so they likely are not effective noise barriers. Additionally, there was no landscaping done at the fence line. Terry said the fences were made of pine and have not held up well. Susan said she would be happy to reach out to folks involved with selecting these fences or individuals living near them to learn more about their effectiveness.

One conversation focused on how close a fence can be to the property line and if there is a setback requirement. Holly agreed to research this with the City of Alexandria.

Overall the group felt strongly that there needs to be some kind of perimeter fence along the property both to mark the property line and for safety. Terry mentioned that in some areas motion sensor lights had been installed and perhaps that is also a possibility for areas backing to King Street for more safety.

3. Next Steps and Action Items

The Next NAWG Meeting will be May 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the community center.

Action Items include:

- Melanie/Anne to reach out to Karen and Anne S. re: information on their research
- Draft letter for City/County Council Members supporting enforcement of excessive noise law as of July 1, 2022 – Melanie to draft, everyone to send

- Leverage the Communications Plan noted above to get information out to all of Fairlington and other local area Condo Associations and residents to increase the volume of messaging to elected leaders once the draft letter is developed – All (Anne W- Arlington Condo, Melanie – AFCA reps, Nextdoor and Fairlington FB– ask Tracy Friend to post since she did the last one and has name recognition)
- Look up fencing information from the Mews Project and share with NAWG – Terry
- Look into permit and fencing regulations with City of Alexandria – Holly
- Connect with Mark after the walk through to talk about areas where natural buffers might be effective – Holly
- Ask Mark to divide the property along King into sections - Anne
- Research fencing companies in the DMV with a focus on chain link and wood; explore options and possible costs per square foot – Susan and Rosabeth
- Research MLV companies and products; gather high level info on pricing – Susan and Rosabeth