

# THE LANDING PAGE

The Official Newsletter of Stratford Landing

## SLCA Leadership

**Christopher Morgan**, President  
**Mateo Dunne**, Vice President  
**Patricia Barron**, Public Safety  
**John Bioty**, Transportation  
**Nicole Vitale**, Recreation  
**Stori Zimmerman**, Membership  
**Leah Chapla**, Planning and Zoning  
**Glenn Ferri**, Historian/Website  
**Keith Kettell**, Rules

The Stratford Landing Citizens' Association is a not-for-profit, non-partisan team of volunteers founded in 1959 to promote the civic interests and general welfare of the residents of the Stratford Landing community. Membership is open to all who live within Stratford Landing and leadership opportunities are currently available.

Visit: <https://www.stratford-landing.org> or scan the code below to join today.



SCAN ME

## A Letter from the President

Christopher Morgan, President

What a Spring we're having. I'm convinced we call the season that here in Northern Virginia based on how the thermometer has been bouncing up and down over the past few weeks.

It's a busy time of year. While neighborhood kids are already playing T-Ball and Little League, swimming, diving, and tennis are very quickly commencing. After that, soccer will literally be kicking off. We have primary elections coming up, a new school season looming, and piles of mulches moving from stacked bags in our driveways to distribution in flower beds. There is much taking place in Stratford Landing.

Even though folks are busy, it's time for some to do a little more. Our Block Captains and Executive Committee members are all-volunteers and could use additional dedicated neighbors to become involved. We're able to move forward because of the expertise you're willing to share. Please email [president@stratford-landing.org](mailto:president@stratford-landing.org) if you're able to help us out.

Finally, as the weather finally stays warm and days get longer, keep outside safety in mind. Be mindful when driving around the neighborhood, and be careful with fire pits, the inevitable fireworks, and with the wildlife in the area. It's the time of year to start anew, plant seeds for the future, dust off the outdoor furniture, clean the grill, and make the most of your quality of life in Stratford Landing.

Christopher Morgan



## Volunteers Still Needed

We are again looking for a Secretary and Treasurer to serve on the SLCA Executive Committee. As an all-volunteer organization, our programs and activities are only possible because neighbors are willing to step up. The time commitments are minimal, and we need people that will follow through on their commitments. If you're interested but would like more information, we would be happy to answer any questions you have about serving on the SLCA Executive Committee. Please email [president@stratford-landing.org](mailto:president@stratford-landing.org).

## Egg Hunt More Than It's Cracked Up to Be

Our annual Egg Hunt was held on Sunday X at Stratford Landing Park and, boy, what a year! This year we were grateful to be sponsored by the Alexandria Children's Theatre (ACT) and had over 2,000 plastic stuffed eggs on hand.

Once the neighborhood kids were off, all eggs were discovered in record time and everyone seemed to have baskets full of treats.

This year, the Easter Bunny himself made a special visit to Stratford Landing and posed for photos.

Thanks to Nicole Vitale, our Membership Chair, the volunteers who helped stuff eggs, Roberta Cullen from the ACT, and everyone else who supported this fun annual event.



# Testimony for the Board of Supervisors About the Advertised Budget



I know that many of you were shocked and upset with your recent real property assessments, and I've had discussions with several of you about the financial challenges we're all facing today. The Mount Vernon area, along with most of the county, has seen home value assessments rise 10% on average since last year. A higher assessment value translates into us paying more in property taxes.

I know that along with everything else affecting the economy recently, this sudden expense is a painful burden.

The county is levying big taxes because they are spending big. The Advertised Budget for 2024 includes over \$9.8 Billion in county expenditures.

Last week, the Board of Supervisors held public hearings on the Advertised Budget and I traveled to the County Center to provide testimony. While I emphasized that I was speaking as an individual, I kept many of you, and the recent conversations we've had about your assessment values at the front of my mind.

The testimony I provided is listed below:

*My name is Christopher Morgan and I am a resident of the Mount Vernon district. At present I am the President of the Stratford Landing Citizens' Association, a community of 775 households, and until very recently a Board Member of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, though tonight I am here and speaking exclusively as a private citizen.*

*Firstly, I'd like to thank the County Executive for providing the Advertised Budget documents. Almost immediately, the advertised budget addresses the economy. Page 2 of the Summary concedes a recession is looming and, yet, then over the following 16 pages, 70 separate county programs are highlighted. For Sixty-five of those programs you recommend increasing spending. For only 3 do you recommend no change from the previous budget, and for only 2 do you recommend a decrease in spending.*

*In a period of the highest inflation in decades, and at a time when consumer purchasing power is the lowest it's been in a lifetime, this budget is heading in the wrong direction.*

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# Flashbacks

Glenn Ferri, Historian

## Flashback - Burma Road

World War II veterans and their generation may remember the infamous “Burma Road” connecting Lashio, Burma (now Myanmar) and Kunming, China. It was used as a truck supply route and was notorious for being extremely difficult and dangerous to traverse and maintain, running through challenging terrain, including mountains, jungles, and rivers.

Did you know that Stratford Landing also had its “Burma Road”? This was the nickname of a stretch of what is now Camden St. from around Linton Lane through around Creek Drive. Newsletters of the time cited “years and years of inactivity and total deterioration” and documented that “in 1968, for the first time in years and years, we took that double twisted path, and we cleared it of all rubbish, cars, tires, heaters, freezers, and the rest.”

The March 1969 newsletter writes: “Despite those who said it couldn’t be done, it has been done. BURMA ROAD WILL DISAPPEAR THIS SUMMER AND WILL BE REPLACED WITH THE CAMDEN CAUSEWAY [article’s caps] ... complete with a 36-foot-wide State Highway Department dedicated road with sidewalks and guard rails”. The article then goes on to describe contractual and logistical aspects of the project.

Well, it took a little longer than anticipated (some things never change!) and it wasn’t until the summer of 1971 that the new road was opened. The June 1971 newsletter asks residents, “As you drive through it now, just try to keep it clean, and recall the days when going through that strip was like going through --- Burma Road.” Perhaps we, too, as we drive, bike, or walk on that stretch, can be reminded of all the hard work that has gone into developing our neighborhoods into what you see today.

## Stratford Landing is Proud...

Leah Chapla, Contributor

to be the home of the newest Medal of Honor recipient – U.S. Army COL (Ret) Paris Davis!

Colonel Davis was awarded the nation’s highest military honor on March 3 by President Biden in the White House and on Saturday March 4. He and his Stratford family and visiting relatives and friends were given a special tour and recognition at the National Museum of the United States Army at Ft. Belvoir.

COL Davis served 26 years in the Army and was awarded the Medal of Honor, the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his heroic actions as a Captain in the 5 th Special Forces Group while serving in Vietnam in 1965. He was an Airborne Ranger and in 2019 was inducted into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame.

Thank you, Col. Davis! We commend you for your service and are very proud to call you our neighbor!



# Transportation Talk

John Bioty, Community Improvements and Transportation Chair

## **Update From the NPS Regarding the GWMP repairs at Waynewood Boulevard.**

Hump/Bump Repairs at Waynewood Boulevard - South Parkway - The National Park Service will be performing emergency concrete pavement repairs on the southern section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near Waynewood Boulevard over a two-week duration.

The repairs to the northbound lanes were completed this past weekend 3/17-3/19.

Due to forecasted inclement weather this weekend, the repairs to the southbound lane have been postponed to 3/31-4/2. Additionally, the joints from the repair patches will be grouted and sealed on 4/3-4/5 (pending good weather).

Please note that these dates and timeline are weather permitting.

## Traffic Safety in Your Neighborhood

Christopher Morgan

On, April 22nd at approximately 12pm, a child from the neighborhood had a collision with a vehicle while riding his bicycle. This occurred at the intersection of Londonderry Rd. and Camden St. The child is recovering from "wounds and scrapes", for which we are all very grateful. He was treated at the scene by first responders.

We must remain vigilant to ensure that this does not occur again, and with potentially worse results:

- As the weather warms, expect more people will be outside at all hours of the day and night.
- The speed limit throughout all of Stratford Landing is 25mph.
- Many of our streets lack sidewalks; be aware of pedestrians walking dogs and strollers in the street.
- Be aware of people crossing at many of our "T" intersections. This is a legal crossing, but there might not be a painted crosswalk.
- Watch out for kids playing basketball and other games in the streets.

Also:

- Please remind your children to wear helmets and proper safety gear.
- Instill in them how to pay attention and follow the rules of the road.
- Encourage reflective clothing if your children are out at night.

### **What Is the SLCA Doing?**

Our Board has been developing a plan over the past several months to request the installation of additional "traffic calming" measures in the neighborhood, including additional stop signs and speed bumps. This draft plan was developed in 2-phases. The first phase was the request of speed tables or speed bumps on Elkin St. (which becomes Londonderry where this incident took place). This is the area near the 7-11 and Riverside Gardens pool.

The 2nd phase is to request speed bumps on Stockton Pkwy (between Londonderry and the split intersection with Creek Dr.), Londonderry, Cavendish, and Yardley and to request new stop signs at Camden and Londonderry (4-way stop to replace 2-way), Camden and Stockton, traveling South on Camden at the blind turn, Culpepper Rd., and Childs Ln (4-way stop to replace 2-way).

We have split up the request into phases based on how difficult Fairfax County has made the process.

Over 1 year and 9 months ago, in June 2021, leadership from Riverside Gardens Citizens Association, whose neighborhood borders ours contacted Supervisor Storck's office to request speed bumps near their pool area and the 7-11. It took until Nov. 16th, 2021 for the Supervisor's office to respond to the initial request. At that point, the next step was for RGCA to form a citizen "task force" and follow the process. RGCA contacted the SLCA in April 2022 for assistance to join this "task force". Myself and John Bioty were eager to volunteer to assist and have joined several meetings with the county in order to initiate this process. We attended the project kick-off meeting in Nov. 2022.

*continued on Page 06*

## Traffic Safety in Your Neighborhood (continued)

The process is not easy. After the initial request, adjacent property owners are asked their views, FCDOT does a study, a "vote" takes place involving neighbors within a certain radius, and there is a final review in which an adjacent owner may "veto" the installation.

We have been waiting for progress on the Elkins St. phase before requesting the 2nd phase so that we know how to expedite the process. Since the 2nd phase of the request is planned to be more-comprehensive, and we are all volunteer-based we really need to ensure we are efficient.

None of this plan is also a "done deal". Neighbors are welcome and encouraged to be involved in the process. While traffic calming measures generally improve safety, they can impede first responders in times of emergency and such concerns are always heard.

It should be noted that in 2007, John Bioty led a similar project with Fairfax County and dedicated many, many hours of work. Much of the request was denied and only the existing speed bump on Camden St. was installed. We certainly thank everyone involved then for their time and service. Such incidents are highly preventable and we are continuing our efforts.

What Are the Challenges?

Unfortunately, Fairfax County is not looking at pedestrian issues comprehensively and every single element is in a separate silo of approvals and procedure.

While this is purely my personal opinion, there should be a single point of contact, single review process, and single document on knowledge for:

- Speed bumps and speed tables -> This process starts with the county
- 4-way stop signs -> VDOT apparently has a rule where 4-way stop intersections are required to be so far apart, which is why our previous request was denied. Why?
- Sidewalks. -> There is no realistic process today to receive new sidewalks, which would increase both walkability and safety. As you know Stratford Landing is not unique in the area in that what would make for a great walk requires pedestrians to go into the road.
- Our neighborhoods also need Odometer Signs ("you're going 30mph"), painted crosswalks, school bus stop traffic pattern reviews, temporary speed bumps and rumble strips to gauge effectiveness before an expensive installation, and police enforcement among other issues.

Safety, transportation, and traffic issues are a critical aspect of our quality of life and it's likely going to take the involvement of many of us to enact meaningful change.

Please continue to be safe in Stratford Landing and encourage all kids to do the same.



## Testimony (continued from page 3)

In your own words on Page 1 of the Summary:

"According to the January CPI report, Americans are paying 10.4% more in food, 7.3% more in energy, and 8.3% more in rent compared to a year ago. The stresses are beginning to show in the economy. Inflation has strained Americans' finances. The savings rate, which was running at above 8% to 3.3%, as Americans rapidly spent down their savings and pandemic-related aid. Credit card balances were up 15% year-over-year in the third quarter of 2022, the largest increase in more than two decades."

Those are exactly your words.

In other words, "times are tough".

And yet in this budget you propose that the "average" household – that's those who have a combined income \$127,000 – and who live in an average home that came with a price of \$760,000, that this average family should pay Real Property Taxes of \$8,532, representing a 6.67% of that family's total income just on county municipal property taxes. This does not include Personal Property taxes, sales taxes, or anything levied by the State or Federal government. And it certainly doesn't include the 10.4% increase in food, 7.3% in energy costs, etc.

This budget includes increases for landscaping services, increases for subsidized veterinary care, increases for personnel services within the office of each supervisor, and offices of the chairman, and many other increases, all passed on to an already struggling population of citizens.

I hope the BOS is brave enough to amend this proposal and request the County Executive produce a balanced budget that reduces inflated spend, and offers appropriate tax relief in these difficult economic times.

The Chairman thanked me for my testimony and additionally thanked me for bringing my young son with me to the meeting. I did remind him that it was for this next generation that I was putting in the time and effort to speak today and emphasized the importance of not leaving debt for our children.

The complete hearing is available online here: [https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/2817?view\\_id=7](https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/2817?view_id=7) and my testimony is called at the 6:32 mark.

## Welcome Stratford on the Potomac and Stratford IV Residents

At the previous SLCA General Membership meeting in October, we amended our by-laws to allow people who technically don't live within the historic Stratford Landing boundaries to join as Associate Members.

This makes many more families eligible to join, receive our newsletter, and participate in our events. Visit [www.stratford-landing.org](http://www.stratford-landing.org) for more information.



## NVCT Update

We don't have any news to share on the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust's properties on Stockton Pkwy. The SLCA Board continues to be in touch with NVCT stakeholders. Please continue to keep an eye on the property and feel free to report any concerns you may have to [president@stratford-landing.org](mailto:president@stratford-landing.org)

## Contact Us

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