

Park and Recreation Commission

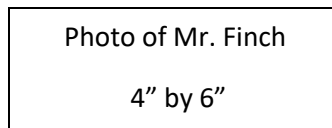
July 27, 2021 Meeting

Memorial Plaque Request: To memorialize Mr. Larry Finch

Sponsor: Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) and Friends of Arlington Parks (FOAP)

Proposed Location: Zachary Taylor Park (Attachment II).

Proposed Plaque Inscription: See art proof in Attachment III



"1933 – 2020
In Memory of Larry Finch
Good Friend and Neighbor
With appreciation for his advocacy of
Arlington's parks and green spaces –
His sustained commitment improved
These areas for all to enjoy.
Plaque Dedicated 2022"

Description of Request:

The purpose of the [Arlington County Memorial Plaque Policy](#) is to provide the public with an opportunity to recognize exceptional individuals who have made a significant public service contribution to Arlington County and its residents. The policy provides criteria to assess whether an individual's contributions during their lifetime make them eligible for a memorial plaque; terms by which the plaque must be financed, fabricated, installed; a process for seeking approval of memorial plaque requests; and describes the extent to which the County is responsible towards its maintenance.

DRCA has provided a letter of support (Attachment I) for the memorial plaque on behalf of the civic association which includes a description of Mr. Finch's contributions to the community to demonstrate his multiple volunteer roles and his sustained efforts towards, "supporting the health, sustainability and funding of Arlington's Parks."

DRCA and FOAP are requesting to place a 12" by 12" memorial plaque, with an inscription and an etched image of Mr. Finch (4" x 6") which will be attached to a boulder near the entrance to the park (Attachment II and III). The boulder and plaque will be placed near the entrance trail and in the vicinity of a White Swamp Oak planted by DRCA in 2013 to recognize Mr. Finch's contributions before he moved from Arlington. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff assisted in selecting the location and support the boulder placement at this site as it will not impact the roots of the nearby White Swamp Oak and it will be visible from the walkway.

Mr. Finch's Contributions and Service:

1. Service on County Commissions/Committees:

- Mr. Finch served on the Urban Forestry Commission from 2003 – 2013 and chaired the commission for part of his tenure.
- He served as the Urban Forestry Commission liaison on the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- He was a member of the Land Acquisition and Preservation Policy Sub-Committee from 2011 – 2012.

2. Recognitions:

- **Bill Thomas Award Recipient:** Mr. Finch was a recipient of the Bill Thomas Award in 2006. He was recognized for his *"lifetime of service in helping to develop Arlington parks and other natural areas, serving on many boards and commissions in the process. Even when not serving in an official capacity, he's been an advocate on the sidelines - working at events, sharing information and monitoring progress on local projects. He walks the walk and talks the talk whether it's raising money, planting a tree or lobbying a politician."*
- In 2012, Mr. Finch received the Sun Gazette trophy awarded by the Arlington Civic Federation where he served for many years as chair of the Environmental Committee.

3. Park Enhancement Grant (PEG) Projects: Mr. Finch successfully sponsored and was granted funds towards several PEG projects for park enhancements in Zachary Taylor Park and Lee Heights Park. The grant funds awarded for improvements at Zachary Taylor Park included invasive plant control and native plant restoration, installation of two natural stone benches, the design and manufacturing of wayfinding maps for the Donaldson Run trails and improvements at the 26th Street N, entrance to the park. At Lee Heights Park the funds were used to replace a split rail fence and other park enhancements.

4. Donaldson Run Civic Association: Larry's involvement with DRCA extended from 2000 until 2014 when he moved to California. Larry worked for a number of years engaging neighbors in efforts to preserve, protect and enhance parkland. He established a Parks Committee within the civic association that organized stream walks and recruited volunteers for invasive plant removal and stream monitoring. In 2001, he developed an integrated parks concept plan for Donaldson Run's parks. The Plan's recommendations included stream bank restoration, replacing old bridges in the park, and installing kiosks and entrance gateways. During the next 10 years, Larry was able to see these recommendations become reality.

In April 2004, Larry was elected as a director to the DRCA Board. He held this position until he left the area in 2014. He was a hands-on volunteer. No job was too large or too small if it benefitted Arlington's green spaces. His volunteer efforts included:

- Working with the County program each year to deliver free trees to families throughout the neighborhood.
- Leading an effort to reforest an area along Donaldson Run where mature trees had been lost.
- Educating children about the wildlife in the parks at volunteer events.

- Organizing invasive plant removal sessions in the park.
 - Continually educating the neighborhood through newsletter articles about tree health, invasive plants, stream erosion etc.
5. **Arlington Civic Federation:** Mr. Finch served on the Executive Committee and decades as Chair of the Environmental Committee. A written tribute from April 13, 2012 when Mr. Finch received the Sun Gazette trophy is included in Attachment IV.
6. **Participation in Environmental Groups/Organizations:** Larry's involvement went far beyond his neighborhood. Many parks and environmental organizations benefitted from his contributions. A partial list of his affiliations include:
- **Friends of Arlington's Parks** - Larry was a key member of the Board of Friends of Arlington Parks for many years. He represented the organization at numerous events and meetings, and often took the lead in composing letters and forming positions promoting green space in Arlington. Larry wrote many of the articles for the Friends of Arlington Parks newsletter and was an editor of the publication.
 - **Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE)**
 - **Northern Virginia Conservation Trust**
 - **Potomac Overlook Park**
 - **Friends of the Donaldson Run Watershed**
 - **Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable**

Donaldson Run Civic Association

June 12, 2021

Bill Ross
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission
Arlington County
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Larry Finch memorial plaque

Dear Mr. Ross:

The Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA) would like to memorialize the work of Larry Finch, a longtime DRCA resident and board member who was known to all as a diligent and effective advocate for Arlington's parks and greenspaces for many years. We hope the Commission will provide a letter of support to the County Board for our request.

When Larry left Arlington in 2014 to live closer to his family in California, DRCA worked with the County to plant a swamp white oak in his honor near the Military Road entrance to Zachary Taylor Park, which had been the beneficiary of a number of his park enhancement grant applications. It was our intention to have a plaque installed at that time, but County policy permits such memorials only for those who have passed away. We are following up on our goal now that Larry died last September. We have been in touch with his family, who are quite excited and honored by this idea.

Larry was well known to your Commission. He served as an active member of the County's Urban Forestry Commission and was its liaison to your Commission, which honored Larry in 2006 with an award for his "outstanding volunteer efforts in support of the health, sustainability and funding of Arlington's parks." His work in this area ranged from delivering free trees to Arlingtonians; to devoting his time to environmental education efforts at the annual Taylor School fair; to helping shape policy as a leader with other local institutions such as Friends of Arlington Parks, the Gulf Branch Nature Center, and as chair of the Environmental Committee of the Arlington County Civic Federation.

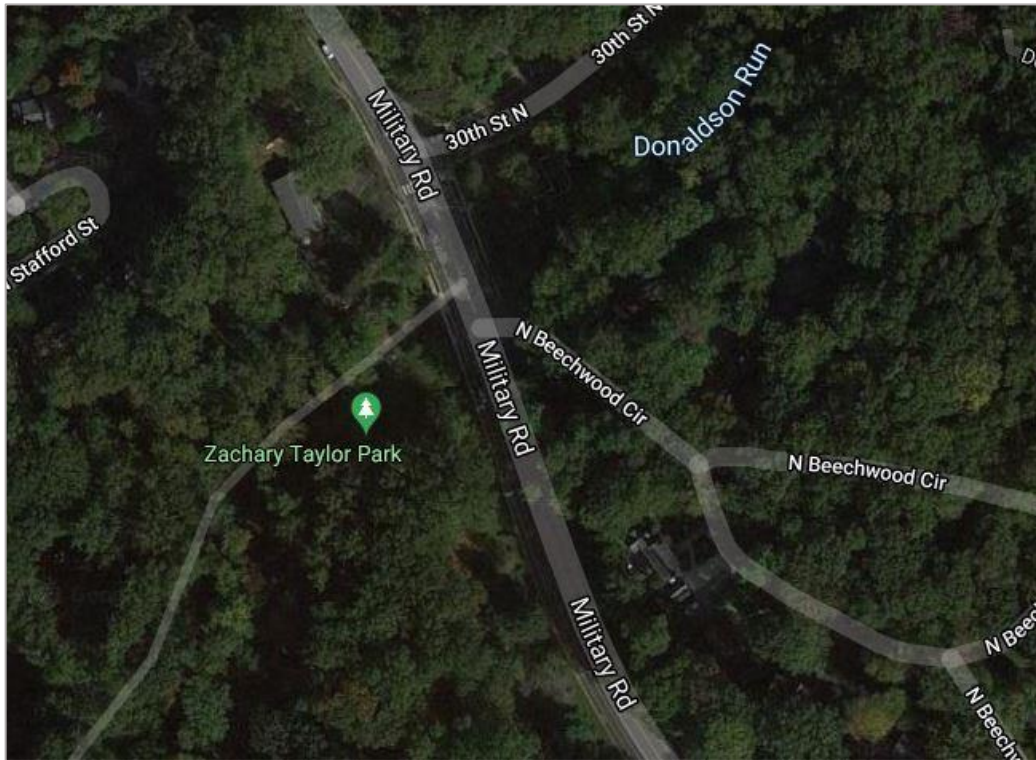
At the DRCA meeting held on May 12, our membership voted to contribute to the cost of this memorial plaque. The Friends of Arlington Parks has also agreed to make such a contribution. We hope your Commission will support our request to the County Board.

Sincerely,



Bill Richardson
President
Donaldson Run Civic Association

ATTACHMENT II





1933 - 2020

**In Memory of Larry Finch
Good Friend and Neighbor**

**With appreciation for his advocacy of
Arlington's parks and green spaces -
His sustained commitment improved
these areas for all to enjoy.**

Plaque dedicated in 2022

**Sun Gazette Trophy
Larry Finch
April 13, 2012**

Tonight we recognize a person who is remarkable for his many accomplishments and contributions to Arlington. If we were to try to see his “carbon footprint”, it would require the use of a microscope, as he has for decades fought against green house gases, stream pollution, and any threat to Arlington’s tree canopy.

It was Larry Finch that, through the Donaldson Run Civic Association, led the movement to create the one and half mile long Donaldson Run Walkabout. One of the highlights of this walking tour is the Zachary Taylor Park where one can see a prime example of how a stream bed can be restored without rocks or concrete.

Within the Arlington County Civic Federation he has served on the Executive Committee and decades as Chair of the Environmental Committee.

He represented the Arlington County Civic Federation on the Arlington County Community Energy and Sustainability Task Force in 2010 and 2011. The task force worked to reduce per capita green house gas emissions by as much five times over the next forty years.

Larry is a leader within the Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE) where he was instrumental in the Arlington Tree Canopy Fund. He played an important role in raising funds for the continued operation of the Gulf Branch Nature Center.

He is the Chair of the Urban Forestry Commission and was instrumental in the *Natural Heritage Resource Inventory* (NHRI) which provides Arlington County with specific data of our streams, wetlands, trees, and open lands. Arlington’s *Public Spaces Master Plan* is also one of Larry Finch’s contributions to a better Arlington.

To Arlington’s own Johnny Appleseed and dedicated member of the Civic Federation we salute you, Larry Finch, for your tireless efforts.