



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 5, 2007**

DATE: April 26, 2007

SUBJECT: Adoption of a new graphic file for the official Arlington County seal

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the new graphic file (Attachment 1) as the official Arlington County seal, and authorize the County Manager to pursue trademark protection for the seal.

ISSUES: None.

SUMMARY: The current graphic file for the official Arlington County seal has several problems, making reproduction difficult, particularly at small sizes. Input from public comment indicates support for the proposed improvements and adoption by the County Board will enable the County to apply for trademark protection, which has not been possible with the current graphic file. Staff will be asked to use the new graphic file for future production, printing, etc., thus not incurring additional costs.

BACKGROUND: The Arlington County Board adopted the official Arlington County seal on June 6, 1983, choosing resident Harvey Wilcox's winning design that was submitted in a County flag design contest.

Over the years, a number of defiled seals cropped up, as specific graphic standards for the seal were not put into place until 2004. Those standards are part of the graphic standards manual created for Arlington's visual identity, which includes an Arlington logo.

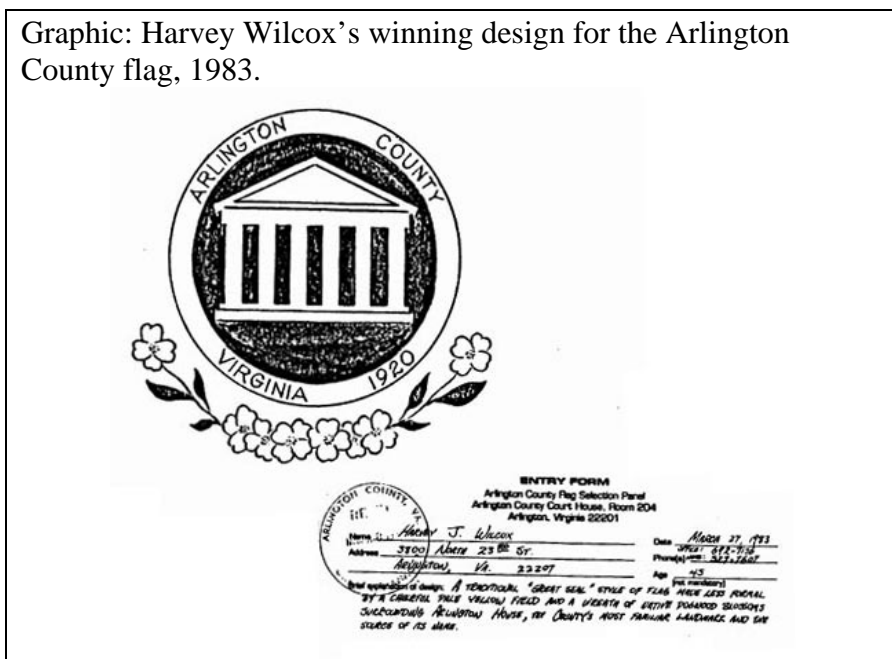
Since 2004, the number of incorrect uses has dropped dramatically, although tainted examples can still be easily found. Now, an effort is underway to set stronger graphic standards in place, to further protect Arlington's "great seal" of government, as well as improve the seal's graphic digital file.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Diana Sun, 703-228-3247

Graphic: Harvey Wilcox's winning design for the Arlington County flag, 1983.



DISCUSSION: Why change the seal's graphic file? The current graphic file for the Arlington County seal has several problems:

- Does not use "Arlington blue" (PMS 307), as specified by 1983 County Board action.
- Uses three greens and two yellows, making printing more complicated.
- The outlined letters are difficult to read, especially at smaller sizes.
- The roofline of Arlington House is not defined, as it was in Mr. Wilcox' winning entry and as it is on the actual Arlington House.

Graphic: The current graphic file for the official Arlington County seal. Many variations exist.



With the issuance of a new, official graphic file, we will request that all County departments and offices use the official graphic file, hoping to eliminate the numerous different images. To properly protect the seal, there can only be one official graphic file.

What is the difference between the current seal and the proposed seal?

The differences in the two are very subtle, yet important, changes:

- Solid letters for better clarity; particularly easier to read at smaller sizes.
- Expanded space between rings – results in a less “squashed” look.
- Restored Wilcox’ roofline for Arlington House, and is more true to the Arlington House portico.
- Adopted Arlington House’s capitals and tapering – a more refined look and a nod to the seal from the 1960’s.
- Thickened lines for better definition and better clarity, especially at smaller sizes.
- Reduced colors to one green and one blue, for a cleaner look and simplified printing.
- Restored Pantone 307, “Arlington blue,” as specified by the Arlington County Board in 1983.
- Chose white for dogwoods – the correct botanical choice, as determined by Arlington’s Urban Foresters.

Graphic: New graphic file proposed on December 12, 2006 and subject to Public Comment.



Public Comment

The County took public comment on the proposed graphic file for 60 days (December 12, 2006 through February 13, 2007); and received comments from 81 people. A sampling of the comments:

- *“More distinct and sharp in design.”*
- *“It’s more detailed yet, surprisingly, has a ‘cleaner’ look.”*
- *“The flowers distract from the seal and should be discarded.”*
- *“It seems to be missing a scroll with a motto.”*
- *“I am glad to know that we don’t have bigger problems.”*

- *“Thank you for making the improvements, conducting the research, and further protecting the seal.”*

Generally, the comment reflected consensus that the proposed new graphic file is preferred to the current graphic file. Thanks to the comments received, we are making two improvements:

- Making the leaves a solid color (no veins), improving clarity; and
- Using a slightly thicker font and widening the space around the letters, to improve readability, especially at smaller sizes.

Graphic: Revised proposed graphic file, incorporating feedback received during the Public Comment period.



Additionally, the designer of the County seal, Harvey Wilcox, wrote in a letter to the County Manager:

- *“For what it’s worth, the fellow who designed the 1983 Arlington County Seal thinks your proposed refinements to it are splendid!*
- *“Restoring the roofline, tapering the columns and giving them capitals strike me as especially nice touches. I think they contribute a great deal and, with the bolder lines and lettering, make for quite an elegant seal. My compliments to your artists!”*

When is the seal used and when is the logo used?

The County seal is used for all items related to the Arlington County Board. It is also used to mark all items of a permanent and lasting nature. The Arlington logo is used as a marketing mark on all other items. It is used on department materials to bring cohesiveness to County information.

Staff will be provided a detailed graphics standards manual to ensure correct usage of the seal, including a color selection for the “cheerful pale yellow” field.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff will be asked to continue to use existing printed materials, etc. and to use the new graphic file when producing/printing new materials. Thus, additional costs should not be incurred.