

Ceremony marks kickoff of hospital expansion in Arlington

By Scott McCaffrey

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Brenda and Bob Hawthorne and Jocelyn and Randy Anderson are serving as co-chairs of the \$26 million capital campaign for the Virginia Hospital Center Foundation, and spoke at the Oct. 22, 2019, ceremonial ground-breaking of the hospital expansion. (Live Wire Strategic Communications)

And they're off: A ceremonial ground-breaking on Oct. 22 marked the formal kickoff of Virginia Hospital Center's expansion.

Shovels already had been in the ground for several weeks, as workers attempted to get a head start on Mother Nature's winter wrath as the three-year, quarter-billion-dollar expansion effort ramps up.

Construction began in September. Hospital officials are meeting monthly with the leaders of the surrounding civic associations – Langston, Tara-Leeway Heights and Waycroft-Woodlawn – to keep lines of communications open as the construction phase ramps up.

The hospital earlier this year inked a land swap with the Arlington County government, gaining control of county-owned land just north of the existing hospital campus on North George Mason Drive. The Edison Street site, as it is known, had been home to a collection of antiquated public-health buildings that are being razed to make way for the hospital expansion.

The hospital's roots date to the early 1940s, although the oldest fixture on the current campus is the power plant, dating from the 1950s. The last major expansion of facilities came almost 20 years ago.

The first phase of the current project slated to be completed is a parking garage, expected to come on line in the third quarter of 2021. An outpatient center should open about a year later, along with a variety of public amenities agreed to during the development-approval process; about 1.2 acres of the 5.5-acre parcel will be maintained as green space.

As part of the land swap, the hospital deeded to the county government an 11.6-acre tract along South Carlin Springs Road, and handed over \$4.7 million in cash. The hospital is leasing back the Carlin Springs parcel from the county government through the end of the year, as it works toward moving facilities currently located there to new spaces.

The county government is evaluating its long-term options for use of the Carlin Springs parcel.