



PROVIDENCE DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2012

Providence District has an estimated population of 114,052 residents, and encompasses approximately 22 square miles. Providence District covers a diverse geographic area. In general it follows the Beltway north to Route 287 and south to below Route 50-with parts as far south as Little River Turnpike; I-66 West to around the Lee Highway intersection; and Route 50 east to around Falls Church. For a map of the Supervisor districts, visit:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/maps/images/maps/handouts/pdf/supervisor.pdf> There are about 225 civic and homeowner associations in Providence District.

The Providence District Council (PDC) is a non-partisan civic organization that provides a forum for associations to express their views on major issues of common concern. In the recent past, the Council has had a number of resolutions addressing land use, the County budget, bond referenda, affordable housing, transportation, zoning violations and cut thru traffic. Council meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, meetings are not held in July and August.

PDC publishes this Newsletter on a monthly basis in both hard copy and electronic format. The newsletter's purpose is to provide information on important issues in Providence District and the County that may not be readily available elsewhere. Suggestions are always welcome.

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*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."* –Margaret Meade  
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Providence District Council Officers

We can be contacted at PDCouncilChr@yahoo.com or ProvidenceDistrictCouncil@yahoo.com.

- Chair: Denise Rodgers
- Vice Chair: Emily Korff
- Treasurer: Julia Hutchins
- Secretary: Vivian Morgan-Mendez
- Newsletter Editor: Becky Cate

Upcoming PDC Meeting

Program: **Election of 2011 PDC Officers and County Advertised FY 2013 Budget**

When: **Tuesday, March 20th, 7:15 – 8:45p**

7:15p – Election of PDC Officers
7:30p – Fairfax County Budget

Where: **Dunn Loring Center, Room 108, 2334 Gallows Rd** (NW corner Gallows & Idylwood Rds)

Marcia Wilds, county Revenue and Economic Analysis Coordinator, will meet with us to discuss and answer questions about the County Executive's budget proposal. Ms. Wilds forecasts county General Fund revenues and determines the fiscal impacts of the State's budget on the County.

The Board of Supervisors has advertised raising the tax rate to from the 2012 valuation of \$1.07 per \$100 to \$1.08. This allows the Board flexibility of an additional 1 cent or \$19.95 million above the county executive's FY 2013 proposed budget. Each one cent increase in the real estate tax rate impacts the average residential taxpayer's annual bill by approximately \$45.

In addition, the Board authorized the advertisement to increase the Stormwater Management Service fee of \$0.025 per \$100 of assessed value to support stormwater management programs and services and capital project requirements. The FY 2012 rate is \$0.015. This rate increase is required to meet the increasing federal and state regulatory requirements pertaining to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit requirements, and state and federal mandates associated with the Chesapeake Bay.

All are welcome to attend this meeting and participate.

Message from the Chair

Dear PDC Members,

There have been a number of developments since the last communication announcing that PDC did not have enough volunteers to remain a viable organization.

First I would like to thank everyone who took the time to contact us. Many of you made suggestions and offered comments of support. Your input is much appreciated by all of us involved with PDC. The outpouring of support was evidence that PDC remains an important venue for community discussions.

I would also like to thank Supervisor Smyth. In the process of trying to determine how to proceed, I had a meeting with Supervisor Smyth to discuss how we might be able to work with her office to keep a dialog going with concerned Providence citizens. Supervisor Smyth offered to organize and host four meetings in conjunction with PDC volunteers in order to maintain a venue for discussion of Providence issues.

Recently, Charlie Hall was able to recruit a full slate of potential officers. I am pleased to inform you that we will hold a brief business meeting prior to the presentation this month and vote on the following slate of officers to assume their duties immediately and finish out 2012: Chair: *Charlie Hall*; Vice Chair: *Carrie Nixon*; Secretary: *Cynthia Lee*; Treasurer: *Julia Hutchins*.

Information on these candidates is included in this bulletin. We are still working on someone to take over production of the newsletter and/or bulletin and will keep you informed on what happens.

Sincerely,
Denise Rodgers, PDC Chair

Officers Nominated for Providence District Council

The PDC Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of officers for the Providence District Council for 2012:

Chair: *Charlie Hall*;
Vice Chair: *Carrie Nixon*;
Secretary: *Cynthia Lee*;
Treasurer: *Julia Hutchins*.

Charlie Hall has lived in Fairfax County since 1985 and in Providence District since 1994. He is a former chair of the Providence District Council (2006-08), and former president of the Blake Manor Home Owners Association. Active in county planning issues, Charlie was among the founding members of Fairfax Citizens for Responsible Growth and the Greater Tysons Citizens

Association. He has written extensively in local publications on the importance of community inclusion and sound planning as the county urbanizes, and he helped instigate and shape the county's policy governing Transit-Oriented Development. Charlie has a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University and covered Northern Virginia governments for many years while working on the Metro staff of the Washington Post. He currently is a deputy director at Justice at Stake, a legal affairs nonprofit in Washington. Charlie is married and has two grown children.

Carrie Nixon has lived in the Providence District of Fairfax County for the past six years. She grew up in Prince William County and attended Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology. Carrie served as Chair of the Providence District Democratic Committee from 2008-2011, and is currently Vice Chair of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee. She was recently appointed as Providence's representative to the County's Transportation Advisory Council. Earlier in her career, Carrie co-founded Hope Street Group, a national nonprofit aimed at improving access to opportunity and promoting economic growth. She holds a dual degree in communications and political science from James Madison University and a J.D. from the University of Virginia School Of Law. Carrie practices law as the founder and managing principal of Nixon Law Group. She lives in the Vienna Oaks community with her husband and young daughter.

Cyndi Lee has lived in Providence District since 2001. She holds an Economics degree from University of California, Irvine, and an MBA from Boston University. She has been an active member of her nearby community and neighborhood HOA, and was recently voted to serve as HOA President of the Highland View HOA in Falls Church. Recently, she has worked for 15 years as a project manager for a Fortune 500 company. Cyndi is married and has two young children.

Julia Hutchins has lived in the Vienna Station town homes and has been active their homeowners' association since they were built in 1994. The MetroWest proposal caused her to become more involved in local area concerns. She has represented her HOA on the PDC and in two Providence District Area Plans Review Task Forces. Julia retired in 2008 from the U.S. Department of Energy where she worked as a project manager for two annual statistical publications. She now enjoys having more time to spend with family and friends and volunteering at church.

Public Hearings on the County's 2013 Budget

A Public Hearing on the effective tax rate will be held on **Tuesday, April 10, 3:30 p.m.**, [Fairfax County Government Center](#) Board Auditorium, as required by Virginia Code Section 58.1-3321 (the proposed tax rate will result in an increase of 1% or more in total real property tax levied).

In addition, public hearings on the FY 2013 budget, the advertised capital improvement plan (CIP) and proposed tax rates for tax year 2013 have been set for **Tuesday, April 10, at 6 p.m., and Wednesday and Thursday, April 11-12, at 3 p.m.** also at the [Fairfax County Government Center](#) Board Auditorium.

Those wishing to speak at any of the public hearings should contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903, to place their name on the speakers list or [sign up online](#). The Board of **Supervisors will adopt the budget on May 1**. Key budget dates are [available online](#).

And more on our Water Discussions...

Editorial: Town of Vienna Water Rates (by Laurie Genevo Cole, Vienna Town Council)

We need to talk about water. Where we get it from and why; how much we pay for it and why; and what the future holds.

First, some background: The Town of Vienna provides water and sewer service to Town residents and businesses. We also provide service to customers outside the Town limits. The Town owns and operates the delivery system for the water service (*e.g.* water mains, towers and pumps) but does not own its water supply. We have to buy water from another source—more on that in a minute.

Vienna owns and operates the sewer system that serves its customers. Our wastewater is treated at the Blue Plains and Norman Cole treatment facilities. We own rights to a certain amount of capacity at each plant, and pay treatment fees for what we use.

Vienna's history of providing water and sewer services is rooted in the time when the Town was a population center surrounded by undeveloped land. We took on customers outside the Town limits as, over the years, Fairfax County rezoned land for development in areas where the County could not provide service. We extended our water mains and increased our capacity to serve these customers at the County's request. Now, about 39% of our systems' customers are outside the Town's boundaries.

So, where does our water come from? Since 2008 we have bought all of our water from the City of Falls Church. For many years prior to that we purchased about a third of our water from the Fairfax County Water Authority (now called Fairfax Water), and the rest from Falls Church. We made the change because, in simple terms, Falls Church sells to us at a rate (\$2.19 per 1,000 gallons) that Fairfax Water will not match.

It is interesting to note that Fairfax Water charges its residential customers \$1.93 per 1,000 gallons—yes, they charge their retail customers less than what they are willing to charge Vienna as a wholesale customer. Their explanation is that their wholesale customers paid to “buy-in” to the capacity of the system, and it would be unfair to charge Vienna a similar rate without that buy-in.

Why do we pay so much for water service? The two biggest components of our water rates are the cost of purchasing water and the personnel costs to operate the system. We set our rates by figuring the systems' expenses each year and dividing them by the estimated usage.

It is true that Vienna has the highest per unit rate in the area (\$3.99 per 1000 gallons). This is not a “We're #1!” status we are happy about. But I think we need to look beyond that one number to get the full picture.

Comparing Vienna to similarly-sized (that is, small) systems in our area shows we are not out of line with the going rate: City of Fairfax \$3.96; Falls Church \$3.03; Leesburg \$3.57; Manassas \$3.24. When other charges are factored in, such as service fees and excess use charges, on an annual basis, the Vienna customer will still pay more than the Fairfax Water customer but the difference narrows (\$732.72 vs. \$576.40, assuming 19,000 gal. per quarter). Again, we are on a par with the smaller water systems.

But no one wants us to have the most expensive water in the area. So what should we do? Keep running a small system or go in with a larger operator? The Town Council has been trying to make headway on this question for several years. It has not been a fast-paced march to a conclusion.

In December 2006 Fairfax Water wrote to the Town that it was not interested in taking over the Town's water system, but wanted to discuss being a wholesale provider. A year later, in November 2007, Fairfax Water and Fairfax County's wastewater department made a presentation offering to take over the Town's water and sewer systems. The offer proposed that the Town turn over the two systems (all the lines, towers, trucks, etc.). In exchange, Fairfax Water would freeze the Town's water rates for in-town customers until the rates for Fairfax Water caught up—which they estimated would

happen in 2020. They would, however, lower the rates for the out-of-town customers. The Council did not believe this was a fair offer, or in the best interests of Town taxpayers.

We determined we needed an independent valuation of our systems' assets, to judge the fairness of any third party's offer to acquire our systems. Initially we planned to share the cost of the valuation study with Falls Church. We later decided to contract for the study on our own, and that process is finally underway. We are also evaluating the capital needs of our systems.

Another crucial factor, I believe, is the future of our Town personnel, who put the "service" in "water and sewer service." They are an integral part of our system and our Town operations at large. How much *value* do our residents place on the service we provide, as opposed to just the commodity of water?

The Town of Vienna sets its water rate according to the requirements of state law, which includes holding public hearings in advance of any rate increase. The Town does not agree that Fairfax County has the legal authority to inject itself into the state-mandated rate-setting process. The County's action, aside from any issues of legitimacy, imposes a financial burden on both the Town's water system and the County taxpayers to undertake the "review" process.

Vienna's rate is based on the cost of providing excellent service to its customers, both inside and outside the Town limits. According to the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission report, the Town's water rate is below the state average. It is important to note that Vienna serves customers outside the Town because, at the time those customers tied into the water system, Fairfax Water could not or would not provide service to them. As recently as this fiscal year Fairfax Water requested that the Town of Vienna provide service to a residence outside the Town limits that it was not practicable for Fairfax Water to serve. The suggestion that such customers are "captive" to the Town's system ignores the reality of how they came to be Town customers, and the nature of water utility infrastructure.

Member Reminder

It's time to renew your PDC membership for calendar year 2012! If you would like to pay for multiple years, we will accept this option, as well.

PDC is an umbrella organization of Homeowner and Civic Associations. It is an independent forum and not associated with county offices or officials. We welcome individual memberships and participation, too.

PDC Members

Avon Park CA
Blake Manor HOA
Blake Tree Manor HOA
Blakeview HOA
*Cedar Crossing
Cedar Forest HOA
*Circle Woods HOA
*Country Creek HOA
Courthouse Oaks HOA
Courthouse Station HOA
*Dunn Loring Gardens CA
Dunn Loring Improvement Assn
Dunn Loring Village HOA
Dunn Loring Woods CA
Edgelea Woods HOA
*Falls Hill CA
Five Oaks Estates HOA
Great Oak Square HOA
Hampton Commons HOA
*Harrison Grove HOA
*Hill Road CA
Holmes Run Acres CA
*Hunter Brooke
Mantua CA
Merrifield View HOA
Morada Ridge HOA
Oakborough Square HOA
Pine Ridge CA
Silentree of Tysons HOA
*Stonehurst HOA
Stonehurst IV HOA
Stonewall Manor CA
Tudor Hall HOA
Tysons Exec Village HOA
Tysons Glen HOA
Tysons Manor HOA
*Vienna Station HOA
Walnut Hill HOA
Waterford HOA
*Woodburn Homes CA

* Membership renewed for 2012

PDC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___ New Application ___ Renewal

Association

Name: _____

Association

President: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Association Voting

Representative(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____

Business Phone: _____

Association

Address/Management Company (if applicable): _____

Number of households in your Association: _____

Do you want the PDC Newsletter sent: ___ Hardcopy ___ Electronically ___ Both

Please make check for \$10 payable to **Providence District Council**. Bring with you to the next meeting or mail to:

Julia Hutchins
9538 Daniel Lewis Ln
Vienna VA 22181

* Everyone is welcome to attend PDC meetings. Prior to each meeting, please determine who will officially represent your organization on PDC issues and resolutions.