

The Fairfax County FEDERATION of Citizens Associations

Established 1940

September 2006

THE BULLETIN

Volume 56, Number 1

General Membership Meeting



Thursday, September 21, 2006

7:30 p.m.

**Packard Center Main Conference Room
4022 Hummer Road, Annandale**

*September is
National Emergency Preparedness Month*

Our Guest Speakers will be:

Dr. Raja'a Satouri, MD

*Assistant Director of Health, Medical Services
Fairfax County Health Department*

*Donna Foster
Fairfax County Medical Reserve Corps*

Topic: Pandemic Flu



Upcoming Membership Meetings

October 19, 2006 7:30 p.m.

"Immigration: Why Should We Care?"

*A Panel Forum Dinner at JR's Stockyard Inn
Co-Sponsor: Fairfax Committee of 100
(see page three for details and dinner coupon)*

November 16, 2006 7:30 p.m.

Adoption of Federation 2007 Legislative Program

December 14, 2006 7:30 p.m.

(Please note this is the second Thursday of the month.)

Federation Board Meetings

All Board meetings at the Packard Center.

September 28, 2006 7:30 p.m.

October 26, 2006 7:30 p.m.

November 30, 2006 7:30 p.m.



President's Message

The Federation is ready for a new year of programs, and partnerships and sponsorships with county organizations. First, I am pleased to serve as president for another year. **Jeff Parnes** was elected first vice president, **Jeff Nolan** was elected second vice president, and **Esther Ferington** was re-elected secretary. A search is underway for a treasurer to fill Jeff's shoes. We also welcome **Bettina Lawton** and **Tania Hossain-Alvarez**, Human Services Committee Co-chairs.

In July, the Federation board joined **The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce** grassroots **Fairfax Tomorrow** initiative, recommending transit-oriented development as a tool for future county development. We concur the guiding principles of protecting neighborhood integrity, ensuring green space, and promoting economic growth, are essential to a healthy future. We anticipate the partnership and the expertise our members bring to the initiative.

On **September 19**, we are co-sponsoring, with the **League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area**, a **debate forum** featuring the **11th Congressional District candidates Tom Davis, Andrew Hurst and Ferdinando Greco**. The debate will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Questions will be taken from the audience.

Our **September 21 Membership Meeting** will feature **Emergency Preparedness and Pandemic Flu** with specialists from the county's health department. This promises to be a very informative session. The membership will also consider the three resolutions printed in this newsletter. And, **Charlie Dane**, Education Committee Chair, will present a board-recommended proposal naming the Fairfax County Public Schools Administration Building after **Mary Anne Lecos**.

On **October 19**, we will co-sponsor a **Forum on Immigration** with the **Fairfax Committee of 100**. The forum will be at JR's Stockyard Inn; a dinner coupon is enclosed in this newsletter. Our own **Bill Hanks** is helping to organize this. Due to the timing, this dinner meeting will replace our usual meeting at the Packard Center.

The membership will consider the Federation's annual Legislative Program at the **November 16 Meeting**. **Sally Ormsby**, our Legislation Chair, is the contact for submission of program initiatives.

Additional planned membership meetings will feature programs on growth, transportation and Metro, education, and our annual Richmond Report and 'State of the County' review. Please visit our website www.FairfaxFederation.org to sign up for email blasts or schedule changes, including inclement weather cancellations. As always, if you would like to become more involved with, or have questions about, the Federation, please feel free to contact me or any other board member. We welcome you and look forward to your participation in the coming year.

John Jennison, President

FedPres@FairfaxFederation.org

(703) 591-5586

FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS

2006 - 2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS and RELATED POSITIONS (09/12/06)

www.fairfaxfederation.org

		Officers	
President	John Jennison	(703) 591-5586	FedPres@fairfaxfederation.org
First Vice President	Jeffrey Parnes	(703) 904-0131	Fed1stVP@fairfaxfederation.org
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Past President	Carol Hawn	(703) 266-6872	FedPastPres@fairfaxfederation.org
		Committee Chairs	
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	Walter Sisson	(703) 560-2469	FedEnvironment@fairfaxfederation.org
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	Bettina Lawton		FedHumServcsChr@fairfaxfederation.org
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		Related Positions	
Bulletin	Carol Hawn	(703) 266-6872	FedBulletinEditor@fairfaxfederation.org
Website	Jeffrey Parnes	(703) 904-0131	FedWebmaster@fairfaxfederation.org

Federation Newsletter Available Online

The Bulletin, the Federation newsletter, is available online for reading or printing at your convenience. If you would like to receive notification when the latest newsletter is posted, please contact Jeffrey Parnes, webmaster, at FedWebmaster@fairfaxfederation.org. Not only will you receive *The Bulletin* days earlier than you would through the mail, you will also receive email alerts if Federation meetings are cancelled. The Federation Board would like to send an increasing number of newsletters in this manner; we will still mail *The Bulletin* to our member communities' representatives and alternates, if preferred.

Federation Treasurer Needed

The Federation is looking for an individual to serve as Treasurer. Jeffrey Parnes, immediate past Treasurer, was elected First Vice President, and cannot serve in both positions. If you are familiar with Quick Books, or would like to learn the software program (it is easy!), please contact John Jennison at FedPres@fairfaxfederation.org. The position takes little time and involves check depositing (once or twice per month) and writing two or three checks per month. We look forward to hearing from you!

Fairfax Tomorrow Initiative

As noted by President John Jennison in his column (*page one*), the Federation Board has agreed to partner with the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce on its initiative, **Fairfax Tomorrow: Plan Smart - Grow Smart**. For more information, visit: www.fairfaxtomorrow.org. This will be the topic of an upcoming membership meeting.

Inclement Weather Policy

With the upcoming potential for inclement weather, including hurricanes, the following policy will be in effect: if either Fairfax County Government or Schools are closed after 12:00 noon the day of a Federation membership meeting, or if it is announced that Fairfax County Government or Schools will be closed the day after a scheduled Federation membership meeting due to inclement weather, the Federation will not hold that event. This does not pertain to regularly scheduled closures. Membership meetings will not be rescheduled, although speakers may be asked to attend an upcoming meeting. We will make every attempt to post the cancellation on our website, www.fairfaxfederation.org. You can also call (703) 266-6872 for more information.

**The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
and
The League of Women Voters® of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
are cosponsoring an**

11th Congressional District Debate Forum

Tuesday, September 19, 2006

7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (doors open at 7:15 p.m.)

**Fairfax County Government Center Board Auditorium
12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax**

Participating Candidates are: Thomas M. Davis III, Andrew L. Hurst, and Ferdinando C. Greco

Questions will be taken from the audience. For more information, please contact John Jennison, Federation President, at (703) 591-5586 or Sherry Zachry, LWVFA President, at (703) 730-8118.

The Next Green Breakfast is October 7th

The next Green Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. at the Old Country Buffet in the Fair City Mall (Route 236 and Pickett Road, Fairfax). The cost is about \$7.50; please pay the cashier when you arrive. If you are a senior, ask for the discount. No reservations are necessary.

The program is: "Is Our Air Safe to Breathe?"; speakers will be Harriet West, Director, Clean Air Partners, WCOG, and Jim Gorby, Director, Fairfax County Department of Vehicle Services. For information, please contact Sally Ormsby at (703) 273-2048 or at sally.ormsby@cox.net.

Request for 2007 Legislative Program Ideas

Sally Ormsby, Legislative Committee Chair, requests suggestions for inclusion in the Federation 2007 Legislative Program. The program will be reviewed by the Board at its October 26, 2006 meeting, and discussed and approved by the membership at its Thursday, November 16, 2006 meeting. The program will include a number of recommendations for our General Assembly delegation during the upcoming 2007 session. Please send ideas to Sally Ormsby at sally.ormsby@cox.net or (703) 273-2048.

Federation Membership Renewals Due

It is again time to renew your community's membership in the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations for the coming year.

If your community needs to renew for the 2006 - 07 year, you can print a membership application/renewal form off the Federation website, www.fairfaxfederation.org. For a paper copy of the application, or if you have any questions or need additional information on your community's membership in the Federation, please contact Jeffrey Parnes, First Vice President and Membership Chairman, at (703) 904-0131 or at jparnes@cox.net.

We look forward to your participation in the collective voice of the Federation this year!

Important Information on October Federation Membership Meeting

The Federation membership has been invited to join the Fairfax Committee of 100 at a dinner forum on October 19, 2006. The topic will be: "Immigration: Why Should We Care?" The forum will be held at JR's Stockyard Inn, 8130 Watson Street, across International Drive from the Tyson's I Shopping Center.

Below is a discount coupon for use by Federation representatives who attend. Reservations are required and will be taken beginning October 1, 2006 by calling (703) 813-5577.

Registration begins at 6:30 p.m., and dinner will be served beginning at 7:00 p.m. The panel forum is scheduled to start at 7:45 p.m.

Because this is a unique opportunity to collaborate with another countywide organization, the Federation will not hold an October membership meeting at its usual location. For more information, or if you have questions, contact Bill Hanks at (703) 385-3753 or at wwwhanks@cox.net.

40% Off COUPON

**Fairfax Committee of 100 Dinner Meeting
"Immigration – Why Should We Care?"**

Thursday, October 19, 2006, at JR's Stockyard's Inn
8130 Watson Street at Tyson's Corner
(across International Drive from Tyson's I Shopping Center)

6:30 Registration and Social Hour
7:00 Dinner (\$40 less 40% = **\$24 with this coupon**)
7:45 Panel Discussion

Reservations taken between October 1-16
703-813-5577

**Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of June 15, 2006**

DRAFT MINUTES

(for approval at the September 21, 2006 membership meeting)

The meeting of FCFCA was held outdoors at the Hidden Oaks Pavilion behind the Packard Center at 7:00 p.m. and picnic food was provided.

Following the picnic, President John Jennison introduced the speakers, who included a Mason District police officer who spoke about National Night Out; Jeff Nolan, the Federation representative to the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, who in turn introduced the co-chairs of that committee; and the principal speaker for the evening, the Honorable Gerry Connolly, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

Program

National Night Out Against Crime is held on the first Tuesday in August, which is August 1 this year. This is a crime prevention and community-building event that is part of Neighborhood Watch and is sponsored nationally by Target. It has been a big success in Fairfax County, with 37 neighborhood events held last year, almost a third in Mason Police District. The parties may be for neighborhoods, blocks, or apartment or townhouse complexes and are reported to the press and local political leaders. County police officers, political leaders, and local Target workers will swing by many of the parties. Many materials are available, including wristbands for kids, tee-shirts, banners, fans, handouts, and giveaways. To participate, check the national website for an information packet.

Jeff Nolan introduced Carmen Sanchez and Brenda Cross, co-chairs of the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities. Carmen Sanchez explained such a committee is mandated by the state for each School Board; its purpose is to meet the unmet needs of students with disabilities. The committee includes 32 representatives from the county districts, the school clusters, and citizens groups like the Federation; most are parents of children with disabilities. The IDEA act of 1976 is the federal law that governs students with disabilities and is administered by the states. To be provided for under the law, a student must have a disability and be able to benefit from instruction. There are 13 disability categories, including learning disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, and visual and hearing impairment. Each disabled student has an individualized education plan. In some cases the plan only requires access. Services may include types of instruction and transportation. Currently just over 14 percent of those enrolled in Fairfax County Schools are enrolled in this program, with an average of 1.8 services per child. The most common disabilities are specific learning disabilities. Many spend less than half a day in special education and the rest of the day in regular classes. Of the students with disabilities who graduate from Fairfax County schools, 94 to 96 percent are involved in meaningful activity, versus a national figure of 75 percent. The percent of the school budget devoted to special education has held relatively steady at 17 percent.

Chairman Gerry Connolly spoke about the status of the Board of Supervisors' six priorities, which the supervisors unanimously agreed on at the start of their current term. These are: gang prevention and intervention; affordable housing; education; the environment; tax diversification; and transportation.

Fairfax County has the lowest crime rate of the 50 largest jurisdictions in the United States, and its crime rate is lower than 30 years ago. The gang prevention and intervention program is to prevent gang recruitment and activity becoming a more serious problem in the county. In general, the law enforcement side of the county's efforts has been strong; this is an attempt to improve prevention and intervention. A local summit established a task force that focused on efforts at the middle school level. Previously, afterschool activities were strong in elementary and high schools, but not in middle schools; only three had regular afterschool programs. By the end of this year, every middle school in the county will have these activities, and they will be available five days a week, instead of three days as in the past. Through a partnership with Cox Communications, the number of boys and girls clubs has increased from one to six.

Affordable housing was also the subject of a summit and task force. The Board of Supervisors adopted all 18 recommendations of the task force unanimously, including the dedication of a penny of the tax rate to affordable housing. This financial war chest has allowed the county to compete as existing affordable housing comes on the market. The goal had been to preserve 1000 units within this 4-year term; as of now, almost 900 have been preserved. Chairman Connolly is now hoping to double the original goal. The county is also building a fourth homeless shelter, looking at amending the affordable dwelling unit ordinance to include high rises, looking at building a single room occupancy (SRO) facility, and considering supporting the development of affordable workforce housing on county-owned parcels, including near the Government Center.

Chairman Connolly spoke at some length on details of the education goal. Fairfax County's education system remains among the best in the nation and the transfer to the school system from the county general fund remains the single largest item in the county budget.

In terms of the environment, Fairfax County has also dedicated a penny of the tax rate to stormwater management. The county is now accelerating watershed studies by merging a number of them. By the end of the year, studies will be in place for all 30 watersheds in the county. In response to a question, Chairman Connolly said that additional dedicated funds would be needed to fully address the backlog of stormwater management needs. The county is virtually at build-out in terms of land use, so competition is strong for remaining parcels. However, the Park Authority has acquired the equivalent of seven Central Parks in the last few years and now owns 9.3 percent of the land in the county; Chairman Connolly is encouraging them to aim for 10 percent. This is in addition to state and federal public lands in the county. The entire county bus fleet now uses low-emitting diesel fuel, hybrid cars are being purchased, and the county is a regional leader in air quality.

Tax diversification has been affected by the unprecedented growth in real estate values. Although this has allowed the lowest tax rate in county history, at 89 cents, actual property taxes continue to climb. The car decal and decal fee have now been eliminated. The supervisors have adopted the maximum tax relief for seniors permitted under state law, making another 2200 seniors eligible. Additional education funding from the state has allowed somewhat less tax burden locally. The county now has some new sources of revenue from cigarette, recordation, and hotel taxes, which collectively have reduced the property tax rate by 3 cents.

(see DRAFT MINUTES - continued on page 5)

(DRAFT MINUTES - continued from page 4)

The answer to transportation is to provide options. Rail to Dulles is a priority; the Dulles corridor is northern Virginia's top job location. Expanding transit on Route One has increased ridership 40 percent in two years. Light rail is being explored for the Columbia Pike corridor. HOT lanes will add capacity and enable Bus Rapid Transit. Telecommuting accounts for 5 to 6 percent of current commuters; Fairfax County has now met its goal of having 20 percent of eligible county employees telecommute, but other employers, including the federal government, must do more. Spot improvements around the county and the continued improvements at the Springfield interchange and Wilson Bridge will also help. The brand-new Cross County Trail offers 40 miles of trails, almost all in stream valleys; it will connect with the Potomac Heritage Scenic Trail, forming a 100-mile loop.

Chairman Connolly answered questions on stormwater projects, more sidewalks to encourage walking as a transit option and increase safety, construction of an SRO, the reduced homeland security funding for the metropolitan region, recreation facilities, planning for the large workforce increase at Fort Belvoir under BRAC, infill housing, and low-impact development.

Business Meeting

a. The minutes for the April 27 membership meeting were approved unanimously as written.

b. Carol Hawn, who served as chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for the next year: John Jennison, president; Jeff Parnes, first vice president; Jeff Nolan, second vice president; Esther Ferington, recording secretary (membership minutes). The position of Treasurer is as yet unfilled. A change to the bylaws regarding the position of Corresponding Secretary will be submitted this fall. She thanked Steve DelBianco and Art Wells for their work on the committee. The floor was opened to nominations for these positions, but no nominations were made. The officers were elected unanimously.

c. Jeff Parnes gave the Treasurer's Report, noting that this had been a very good year for the Federation, due in large part to a successful Citizen of the Year banquet and receipt of donations from the Washington Post for the banquet. He will develop the budget for next year this summer so it is ready to hand off to the new Treasurer. The balance as of the meeting was \$8474.87, with some expenses still to come. This is a net gain of \$3599.93 over this time last year.

d. President John Jennison announced that due to the picnic and outdoor setting, the rest of the business portion of the meeting would be brief. He thanked Jeff Parnes for his work as Treasurer and noted that the Federation is in good shape, with money in the bank and a marketing program for new members underway.

e. Steve DelBianco presented a resolution on the zoning ordinance amendments (ZOAs) on minimum yard requirements and related matters. After a discussion, a vote was taken in favor of the resolution.

f. President John Jennison thanked Merrily Pierce, Sally Ormsby, and Carol Hawn for their work in making tonight's picnic possible.

Next Membership Meeting: September 21, 2006.

Next Board Meeting: June 22, 2006.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Draft Resolution on**Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) Regarding Increase in Maximum Fence/Wall Height**

(for membership approval at the September 21, 2006 meeting)

Background

Current law allows property owners to seek variances to minimum lot width, yard setbacks, and maximum fence height, subject to review by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). In 2004, the Supreme Court of Virginia reaffirmed that current law allows variances only if strict adherence to the Zoning Ordinance would restrict all reasonable use of the property.

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) subsequently determined that the County should have more flexibility in granting variances, or "modifications", to zoning requirements. In late 2005, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning Staff published a table of potential modifications and conducted several work sessions to gather public comments. In 2006, the BOS asked Staff to present a series of ZOAs, and the current schedule and status is shown below:

1. Process changes related to fence and yard setbacks in conjunction with other development applications, plus a change to the method for measuring the height of accessory structures. Adopted May 1, 2006.
2. Fifty percent (50%) Reduction in Minimum Required Yards. Adopted July 10, 2006.
3. Increase maximum fence/wall height. Planning Commission public hearing scheduled for September 27, 2006 and BOS hearing on October 23, 2006.
4. Changes related to carport enclosures and to minimum required yards for pop-up additions to existing structures. Hearings in fall 2006.
5. Reduce minimum lot width. Hearings in fall 2006.
6. Allow emergency basement access to extend into minimum required yards. Hearings in fall 2006.

Proposed Resolution regarding Maximum Fence/Wall Height

At its August 24, 2006 meeting, the Federation Board unanimously reported the following resolution for consideration at the next Membership meeting.

WHEREAS, County Staff has proposed an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that will establish a special permit to allow fences/walls up to 6 feet high in front yards; and to grant the Zoning Administrator the authority to approve increases in height of existing fences/walls by 5-10%, and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment includes standards that will restrict use of these special permit provisions, and

WHEREAS, the current maximum height of 4 feet is appropriate and adequate for fences/walls located in front yards.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (the Federation) favors the proposal to allow Zoning Administrator approvals of up to a 5% height increase for an existing fence/wall, as recommended by Staff;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation opposes the proposal for a special permit to allow fence/wall heights up to 6 feet in front yards;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation approves other provisions in the proposed ZOA, provided that applicants affirm that the relief sought is consistent with any applicable homeowner and/or citizens association covenants.

Steve DelBianco
Chair, Land Use Committee

