

The Fairfax County
FEDERATION
of Citizens Associations *Established 1940*

January 2008

THE BULLETIN

Volume 57, Number 5

General Membership Meeting



Thursday, January 17, 2008

7:30 p.m.

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

Topic: Education in Fairfax County

Guest Speakers:

**Dr. Jack D. Dale, Superintendent, and
Deirdra McLaughlin, Chief Financial Officer
Fairfax County Public Schools**



Upcoming Membership Meetings

February 21, 2008 7:30 p.m.

Northern Virginia Transportation Program



March 27, 2008 7:30 p.m.

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

The Fairfax County Fiscal Year 2009 Budget



April 17, 2008 May 15, 2008

June 19, 2008



2008 Federation Board Meetings

Packard Center Main Conference Room 7:30 p.m.

January 24 March 6 April 24

May 22 June 26



President's Message

As I sat in the audience last Saturday, waiting to address the Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly, I realized I was on speaking terms with eight of the nineteen members who had decided to attend (of almost thirty who comprise the delegation). I was speaker 13, and noticed that delegation members continued to trickle in long after the scheduled 9:00 a.m. start; by the time I spoke at around 10:00 a.m., the number of attendees had stabilized.

When you think about it, the fact that this meeting was being held at all is a monument to citizen activism. There are one hundred and forty total members of the Virginia General Assembly (forty senators and one hundred delegates) and about one seventh of them had chosen listen to the voices of the state's citizens. The list of speakers included Fairfax residents as well as those who had driven up from the Tidewater region to present their views. Most of the speakers I listened to asked the legislators to address issues that the speakers felt affected those who could not speak for themselves. There were impassioned requests to cap the payday lending interest rate to 36 percent, to ensure that day care funds were available for the working poor, and for additional mental health funding. Before I left I had not heard one special interest request that would benefit the primary speaker (looking over the list, I'm sure I would have and had I stayed later they would have appeared).

The Federation's presentation is rather unique in that we do not focus on one clearly identifiable item. Our legislative package, as approved by our membership in November, with an addendum adopted in December regarding a task force on the formation of a proposed Town of Reston, covers such a wide range of activities that all I could do in my allotted three minutes was to touch briefly on our priorities. In addition to my presentation I distributed a package that clearly sets out our positions in depth; if our legislators take the time to review our carefully thought out positions, we and the rest of the Commonwealth will benefit. Time will tell, and later this year as we prepare the package for next year's legislature, let us hope that we will be able to cross off many of our positions or annotate them as "Adopted."

To all, my best wishes for a healthy and happy new year to you and yours.

Jeffrey Parnes, President
FedPres2007@FairfaxFederation.org
703-424-2956

Wishing you peace in the New Year

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations Membership Meeting of December 13, 2007

DRAFT MINUTES

(for approval at the January 17, 2008 membership meeting)

The meeting of FCFA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached to file copy.) In the absence of President Jeff Parnes, First Vice President Charles Dane presided. He noted that he had not previously had the privilege of introducing Supervisor Sharon Bulova, who represents Braddock District, where he resides, and he wanted to thank her for her combination of communication and action on community issues, often through task forces. He thanked her for "listening and acting." He noted that Supervisor Bulova would introduce the speakers and then would have to depart to another meeting.

Program

Supervisor Bulova introduced the speakers. She explained the Braddock District initiative regarding safer and more attractive neighborhoods is a response to increased complaints about zoning and code violations, often in older neighborhoods. In recent years, Supervisor Dana Kauffman of the Lee District has also tackled the issue of single-family homes run as illegal boarding houses or businesses, an effort that led to the county strike force.

Since concerns like these may involve different aspects of local government, including zoning, police, the health department, and fire and rescue, neighborhoods have often been uncertain how to proceed. Supervisor Bulova assembled a council of representatives from older communities in Braddock District, which met with senior county staff to discuss a template for communities facing destabilization. The resulting plan emphasizes beefed-up enforcement, on the one hand, and enhancing the ability of communities to help themselves, on the other. The Kings Park neighborhood volunteered to become the pilot community, and is now midway through a year-long effort. The initiative was kicked off at the June 20 Braddock District town meeting, which was heavily attended. Supervisor Bulova explained that this evening's speakers represented both the countywide strike force and the Braddock initiative.

Art Wells, who organized the evening's program and speakers, noted that the June 20 Braddock District meeting was standing-room-only, with a very interested audience, and had helped to inspire this program.

The first speaker was Deputy County Executive Rob Stalzer, who spoke about the county strike force on illegal boarding houses and overcrowded single-family residences. The strike force began on June 1, 2007. It addresses concerns about the health and safety of residents and quality of life. Overcrowding refers to more than four unrelated people living in a single-family residence. He shared several recent images taken in overcrowded residences in Fairfax County that included locked, barred, or blocked exit doors and windows, dangerous wiring, excessive outdoor storage or trash, and a single room shared by numerous adult sleepers. The strike force includes two five-person strike teams with environmental, health, fire, zoning, and law enforcement expertise. About 50 percent of the strike force's cases have been in Lee and Mason Districts and about 10 percent in Braddock; 26 cases are being pursued in civil court and 22 in criminal court. Typically, a case involves about 10 different notices of violation and corrective work orders,

reflecting multiple violations. The most efficient way to contact the strike force is to go to the county website; citizens can also call the Strike Team Command Center at 703-246-2503.

The second speaker, Dave Ellis of the County Executive's office, talked about the modern challenges of community building. People are busier and more work-oriented than in the past; residents of the same neighborhood, who might once have worked for the federal government downtown, now have diverse jobs and lifestyles. Neighborhoods where most families were once at the same stage of life now include residents of different ages and family circumstances. Neighbors are also more diverse and may speak different languages. He encouraged getting to know neighbors informally. In terms of neighborhood organizations, he suggested that the old model of monthly meetings may no longer be best. It may be better to find more electronic methods of communicating and to emphasize more specific volunteer programs (for example, tutoring) rather than a general monthly meeting. He also encouraged holding events that would bring people in to talk and socialize and mentioned holiday lighting contests, spring clean-up days, and block parties. He also mentioned several county programs, including neighborhood colleges, citizen police academies, Neighborhood Watch, Citizens Corps, the volunteer boards, authorities, and commissions listed on the county website, and the local boards of local community, senior, youth, and recreational centers. He answered a question about the county's role in maintaining and updating contact information for homeowner and civic associations. Charles Dane noted that associations can go online to the county site and update this information individually as well. Dave Ellis also reported that the Statewide Conference on Neighborhoods—a conference in its 10th year, which is usually held in other parts of the state—will be held in Fairfax County in September 2008.

The next speaker was Elizabeth Teare, Assistant County Attorney. She reported that seven attorneys in the county attorney's office do zoning enforcement work. Neighbors who have made a complaint are sometimes uncertain about what

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Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

4022 Hummer Road, Annandale VA 22003

www.fairfaxfederation.org

2007-2008 President: Jeffrey M. Parnes

Newsletter Editor: Carol A. Hawn

The Bulletin is the newsletter of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. It is usually published monthly, with the exception of July and August. The purpose is to provide information to member communities, federal, state, and local officials, and other interested persons in Fairfax County. Articles reflect the view of their author and may be reprinted with the use of the following citation: "The Bulletin of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations".

Please contact Carol Hawn at 703-266-6872 or cahawn@verizon.net with newsletter name and address changes, comments, or suggestions.

Federation Meeting Cancellation Policy

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 or other emergency, 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 www.fairfaxfederation.org or you can call 703-266-6872 for more information.

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has happened to address it and she encouraged them to call the office at 703-324-2421 and find out the status of cases that have been filed. The process may include mailing and receipt of the notice of violation, reasonable time to comply, owner appeals, which take about three months, and, pursuit of the matter as a civil case. The standard of proof is a "preponderance" of the evidence and the county almost always wins the civil cases it takes to court in zoning enforcement matters. After a civil case, it may still be necessary to pursue contempt proceedings, fines, and jail time. Criminal cases may be filed in fire and building code cases. Property maintenance injunctions run with the land, not the owner, so a change in ownership does not end the case. She explained, however, that homeowner association covenants are private legal arrangements and not enforced by the county.

The next speaker was Mike Congleton, Senior Deputy Zoning Administrator. He stated that there were about 3500 complaints last year and have been 6000 this year, with no increase in the staff last year; the staff is now increasing as of this week. The county has 22 inspectors in all. If residents need help, they can call the department at 703-324-1300. He asked for patience; 80 percent of complaints are resolved in 60 days, but others take more time. The zoning enforcement staff coordinates with the public works department, the health department, the sheriff, housing, fire and rescue, and other staffs; they are moving toward a central call center in the future. The staff uses an outside language-translation service, LLE, which can provide a translator on the phone for any of 132 languages within two minutes. When a complaint is received, the staff investigates. About 25 percent of the time there is no violation. If there is a violation, a notice of violation is issued; if the matter is not resolved, the county goes to court.

The final speaker of the evening was John Cook, president of the Kings Park Civic Association, the pilot neighborhood for the Braddock District initiative. He sees this pilot project as part of a new paradigm of local government in which the government, instead of identifying a problem and devising a top-down solution, instead acts as a facilitator to bring people together to identify issues, come up with solutions, and implement them. The county has been a critical partner in the Kings Park effort (which is at about the midpoint of its initial year) but through knowledge and assistance rather than money.

He said that he sees overcrowding as a symptom of eroding communities. Top-down enforcement alone will not work in addressing the underlying problem; one also needs to strengthen the community and tap its energy. Kings Park has about 1160 homes. It distributed a draft plan (which he shared at the meeting) to all 1160 for comment. The goal was to be all-inclusive and avoid any sense of "apartheid" between older and newer residents. Following finalization of the plan, the project started with a neighborhood college organized by the county for Kings Park that he said was phenomenal. A total of 38 residents attended. It included six 3 1/2 -hour Monday night sessions and a Saturday morning. There were sessions on zoning, law enforcement, budget, demographics (with the county demographer), community building, cultural competency, and conflict resolution. Participants each did a practicum and reported back to the group on their chosen topic. They got to know each other and began taking action; for example, two people interested in the entrance signs organized a work day and 12 people attended. All participants were energized and committed to doing something for the neighborhood. The next effort was to expand this energy to the community. For example, beautification and neighborhood infrastructure came

up as issues in the sessions, and a 10-person committee formed to tackle them.

He also went over the document that he had distributed. He noted that by educating block captains about zoning issues, the community can reduce the number of groundless zoning complaints, and can also resolve many issues informally among neighbors without involving zoning enforcement. He also emphasized the "new neighbor welcome" sessions that are part of the plan.

Business Meeting

a. The minutes for the November 15 membership meeting were unanimously approved.

b. The Treasurer's Report was deferred to the next meeting in the Treasurer's absence.

c. Charles Dane noted that the Federation is seeking volunteers for the Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary positions; interested parties should contact President Jeff Parnes. In addition, representatives are still needed for the Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee to the School Board (contact Charles Dane) and for the Airports Advisory Committee (ideally from Lee or Mount Vernon Districts) and the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (contact Esther Ferington). All contact information is at www.fairfaxfederation.org.

d. Jim Colby, Chair of the Land Use Committee, reported on the recommendations of the ad hoc committee on the proposed Reston township referendum, which was established at the November membership meeting. The committee met twice and reviewed background documents that included the 1979 document from the General Assembly, materials from the Fairfax County Division of Management and Budget, the earlier Reston township referendum, and county correspondence with the chairs of legislative committees. It found that there are several reservations related to unknown or uncertain specifics of the plan. The committee therefore unanimously recommended that the Federation encourage the convening of a task force on the issue that would include all key affected interests, as outlined in the membership meeting agenda, to complete its work during the upcoming two-year legislative term. Also, it recommended the task force be co-chaired by three persons, representing the Reston Citizens Association, the County of Fairfax, and the General Assembly. The motion was moved and seconded and was approved 22 to 4.

e. Art Wells reported on developments regarding BRAC (base realignment and closing). The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recently issued a report that comes down hard on the current nationwide BRAC round, stating that costs will be much more than had been estimated, savings will be much less, and the transition cannot be completed by 2011. He also noted that the Continuing Resolution (CR) for 2008 included \$5.6 billion for BRAC.

f. Carol Hawn stated that the next newsletter deadline is December 23.

g. Sally Ormsby stated that she may have found a new site for the Citizen of the Year banquet and will inform the Board of details.

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h. Charles Dane, as Chair of the Education and Youth Committee, noted Jeff Nolan's comments included in the meeting agenda, which mention that the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, on which Jeff Nolan is the Federation's representative, will be covering reading improvement and developing state regulations for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004.

He noted that the next meeting of the Education and Youth Committee, scheduled for January 8, may change because that the school budget draft will not be available until January 10. Those who plan to attend should check with him beforehand to confirm the date. He also reported that the local composite index has now reduced the expected state funding to the county by \$20 million.

i. Flint Webb, Chair of the Environment Committee, reported that the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee's Technical Advisory Committee (MWAQC/TAC), on which he serves, has recommended a state implementation plan (SIP) for PM 2.5 (small particles). One contentious issue had to do with unmonitored emissions from the Mirant coal plant. He will testify on the plan in January and will prepare his testimony for the Board to review at its December meeting. He also noted the State Corporation Commission's hearing on the Dominion Power lines is on January 8.

j. Carol Hawn reported that the draft of the plan to end homelessness in the county in 10 years has been presented to the Board of Supervisors' Human Services Committee; the Beeman Commission report has some time to go. Both drafts may be available online.

k. Sally Ormsby, Chair of the Legislative Committee, noted that Jeff Parnes, as Federation President, will testify on the Federation's legislative program on January 5 before the members of the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly.

l. Charles Dane, as First Vice President (membership), noted that he is continuing to contact district council representatives and he asked that each of those in attendance confirm that his or her own civic or homeowners association has joined the Federation.

m. Art Wells noted the December 6 Taste of Braddock was well attended. Sally Ormsby noted that the Providence District party on December 11 honored Fran Wallingford for community service.

Next Membership Meeting: January 17 – FCPS Proposed FY 2009 Budget Presentation with Public School System Leaders

Next Board Meeting: December 20 at the Marco Polo Restaurant in Vienna

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Esther Ferington

Federation Acting Recording Secretary

SAVE THE DATE

The Citizen of the Year Awards Banquet will be held Sunday, March 9, 2008. More information will be provided in the next issue of *The Bulletin*.

Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee

Updates on Selected Issues of Interest to the Federation November 1, 2007

Update on the PSTOC

On November 1, the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC) toured the Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (PSTOC), under construction at the West Ox Road Complex. The \$135 million project is a joint venture between Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). When completed, these entities will share resources at the site in a highly efficient and economical environment.

According to Mr. Hossein Malayeri, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services project manager, the site is over 65% completed and under budget. Also, there have so far been no accidents during construction. The 114,000 square foot facility is scheduled to open in mid-2008 and will house:

- Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications (911 call center),
- Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management,
- Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center (presently in the Government Center),
- Fairfax County Police Department Forensic facility,
- Virginia State Police Division 7 call-takers and dispatchers, and
- VDOT Traffic Management Center.

While the PSTOC is designed to improve communication systems, facilitate decision-making and the deployment of resources to meet emergencies and disasters, there will be improvements in the bus service to central and western Fairfax County with the inclusion of the bus operations center on the site. This separate \$53.5 million joint project between the county and WMATA will handle up to 300 buses and is expected to reduce maintenance on buses serving the area due to excessive driving from the Herndon and Huntington bus centers as well as non-revenue driving time.

Overall, the area where the PSTOC is situated is well on its way to functioning as a hub for public safety and transportation. Adjacent to the area are the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Training Academy, the Division of Vehicle Services, police helicopter facility, animal services, and solid waste transfer operations, all together covering a 250 acre campus. When completed, the county will have an enhanced ability to meet critical community and regional needs on a daily basis as well as for emergencies.

Public Safety Contract

At ITPAC's fall meeting, the County Department of Information Technology (DIT) staff presented a status report of the Public Safety Architecture Modernization Project for the integrated Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Public Safety Records Management Systems (RMS) for county agencies including the Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, Fire and Rescue, Public Safety Communication Center, and emergency medical services incident reporting. County staff provided a chronology of this complex project's major milestones, beginning in April 2005 through the awarding of the contract to Intergraph Corp. in September 2007. Intergraph, the prime contractor, will provide a highly configurable commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) package to the County. The negotiation team consisted of executive level

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representatives from public safety agencies to ensure that all functional requirements were accurately reflected. This project is well underway with a rigorous Fit and Gap Analysis and a review and demonstration of the installed product's performance on the 3500 functional requirements identified by the County. Technical workshops to assess training, data flow processes, and hardware, implementation, and integration reviews are currently underway. Project managers reported satisfaction with Intergraph's performance so far and emphasized the importance of building and maintaining good relationships through the project's life cycle.

Messaging and File System Management

DIT staff reported on the increasing number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and e-discovery requests from the County Attorney's Office which involves complex and time-consuming efforts at email/file retrieval and preservation. The growing number of requests strain existing staff resources and are of increasing concern to DIT Security and Infrastructure managers. Each request involves an average of 7.5 hours of staff time to search, review and respond. ITPAC and DIT staff engaged in a discussion of possible tools that might mitigate the current situation, policies and procedures to address the issue of data retention, and the acknowledgment that implications of data retention are a growing issue across information technology organizations. DIT is implementing e-mail user rights management and an enterprise data vault for management of the expanding volume of e-mails and attachments.

Elections and Voting Machines

New state legislation has had an impact on the County's voting machines. In late-September 2007, the State Board of Elections administratively ruled that the wireless feature existing within touch screen voting machines could no longer be used in Virginia. This affects the machines used by the county and is a major step backwards in several ways:

- After the polls close, precinct workers will have to manually capture and tally the votes from each individual machine, and manually phone the results in to the central system
- Electoral Board staff must now manually re-key in all results into a central vote tabulation and reporting system
- There will be an estimated 60-90 minute delay in election results – both in the beginning of election results transmissions, and the "end of the night" when all precincts typically have reported.

In previous elections, vote collection by precinct was performed electronically by a "master" machine that also connected into the central reporting system and electronically submitted all vote counts via an encrypted modem connection. The Registrar/Electoral Board will begin replacing the current voting machines in the next two years as the current machines become de-certified in Virginia. ITPAC participated in a discussion of the consequences of regressing to paper processes and time consuming hand tallying as a result of hype, fear and insecurity that grew as a national phenomenon in past elections in a variety of states.

County E-payments and Govolution

The County Departments of Information Technology (DIT) and of Finance (DOF) presented an overview for e-Payments and Govolution. They discussed the overall county vision of one

service provider for electronic payment processing, and the inception of the project in 2002. Staff provided an overview of county transactions, showing a tremendous growth in credit card use (from \$2.8 million in 2003 to over \$47 million in 2007). When stratified by department, Parks was 68% of the total transactions, with the Department of Tax Administration (DTA) in second place with 18% of the transactions. However, when dollars associated by these transactions are considered, Parks had \$23 million of the total (about 50%), and DTA had \$20.3 million (about 43% of total transactions). The staffs explained project marketing and the service team approach, which is turn-key service. The benefits to the customers were discussed (primarily enhanced security and convenience), with many benefits to the participating agencies (lower cost processing, quicker access to funds, and more streamlined operations).

The DIT staff explained the savings regarding return on investment from leveraging economies of scale and savings to taxpayers by having lower credit card convenience fees based on our consolidated volume. Direct debit would be included in the next six months or so, along with edit checking the routing number at the point of sale. DOF mentioned that the county gets next day funding from people using e-check, and they would look into a faster transfer of funds. When asked whether there is a higher increase from using the web or the "interactive voice system," DIT replied that the largest increase has been from the web. DIT also explained that the decision to use govolution is left up to the agencies, but almost all are participating. When asked what the county is paying govolution, DIT replied that it is a monthly fee, unlike the per transaction charge that govolution's competitors wanted. There was discussion about the merchant fees, and DOF explained that the county was able to get them reduced. The rate is set by a combination of volume and security level, but the general consensus was Fairfax County Government had about as low a rate as possible, since banks have a minimum that they charge for bad debt, security, etc.

County Web Redesign

Mr. Greg Scott of DIT demonstrated the new county website. It will be fully World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. The navigation orientation is changing. The new design will incorporate more graphics and new subject pages. One of the major objectives was to reduce the click factor, and organize home page content surfing around the most popular subject pages and content. There was a concerted effort to obtain input regarding the design and content navigation from agencies and the public, with web based surveys and over 220 people participating in focus groups to include citizens. DIT pointed out the improved search capabilities which will be in the new release. There was discussion about Google versus the County's web search engine and how firms like Google have extensive investments in their architecture, including more expensive search and data-mining capabilities. In response to a question from ITPAC about more senior citizens doing searches, Mr. Dave Molchany of DIT mentioned that this concern is being pursued under the Board of Supervisor's Aging Initiative and DIT's participation in presenting assisting technologies and Senior's focused web pages. For future projects, other enterprise technology challenges and any initiatives that support the goal of reducing paper processes in government operations will be considered.

Vic Mukai

Federation Representative to ITPAC

Fairfax County
FEDERATION
of Citizens Associations

4022 Hummer Road
Annandale, VA 22003

Membership
Meeting

Thursday,
January 17, 2008

7:30 p.m.

The Packard Center
4022 Hummer Road, Annandale

**Topic: Education in
Fairfax County**

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Directions to the

Packard Center, located in Annandale Community Park

Take I-495 (Capital Beltway) to Little River Turnpike
(Route 236 - Exit 52B);
go east toward Annandale.

Turn left at the first stop light onto Hummer Road.

Go 200 yards to the entrance of Annandale Community Park on the left.

Keep right to the large parking lot.

Please use the left entrance into the Packard Center Building.

www.fairfaxfederation.org