

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of February 19, 2004
(Approved 3/25/04)
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.) President Carol Hawn introduced Gary Groat of Fluor Daniel, a construction firm. Mr. Groat was accompanied by Martin Machowsky and Adrian Petz of Edelman Public Relations.

Program — Mr. Groat presented Fluor's proposal for four HOT (high-occupancy / toll) lanes to be added to a 12-mile section of the Beltway from just west of the Springfield interchange to just south of Georgetown Pike. Fluor would identify other firms to construct, maintain, and manage the lanes for VDOT; its role would be that of a general contractor bringing the deal together.

VDOT has been studying widening this section of the Beltway for several years. In May 2002 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) hearings, it presented plans that would have displaced more than 300 residences. Fluor's plan would eliminate no more than 6 residences. It would bring all lanes and most ramps up to current standards, but would limit improvements to 12 ramps to the space available, without displacing nearby buildings.

The Fluor plan would cost about \$700 million. It is largely self-financing; tolls would pay 87 percent of the cost. The Fluor proposal is being assessed by VDOT and is also going through the Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) process. If the plan were approved in late 2004, construction could begin as early as 2005 and the lanes could open in 2009.

Mr. Groat defined HOT lanes as lanes that can be used by HOV-3 vehicles for free, and by single- and double-occupancy vehicles for a toll. The toll amounts would vary by time of day. Tolls would be paid electronically via Smart Tag or EZ Pass, with no toll booths. Every six months, traffic volume would be reviewed. If volumes regularly exceeded 1600 vehicles per lane per hour, the toll amounts would be raised. This would lower volumes back to the desired level and ensure travel at the speed limit, he said. Large trucks would not be allowed on the HOT lanes.

The HOT lanes would be monitored from a central control room using cameras. The control room would alert police stationed along the lanes to apparent toll violations, which they would confirm visually before issuing tickets. The control room would also watch for stopped vehicles, with a goal of clearing all incidents within 15 minutes using dedicated tow/service trucks.

The lanes are intended to accommodate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). They are compatible with future rail projects. The HOT lanes would also tie together the existing HOV lanes on I-66, the Dulles Toll Road, and I-95/395. In the future, HOT lanes could be extended from Springfield to the Wilson Bridge, but this is a preliminary idea that has not been studied.

HOT lanes have been endorsed by the Environmental Defense Fund. They are supported by the Board of Supervisors and many Northern Virginia delegates and senators. HOT lanes are in use in four locations in the U.S., including SR-91 in Orange County, and are under study in numerous other areas. The HOT lanes on SR-91 are 8 years old and were described as very successful.

Question-and-answer exchanges focused on the issue of exiting from the HOT lanes into and across Beltway traffic (where there is no direct HOV-to-HOT connection, as at I-66).

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes of the January 15, 2004, Membership Meeting were moved, seconded, and approved as published.
- b. President Carol Hawn reported that the next round of public hearings on the Laurel Hill Readaptive Use planning begins Saturday, February 21. A presentation on the Laurel Hill project had been planned for this membership meeting, but did not take place.
- c. Sally Ormsby presented a Legislative Status Report (attached) on bills of interest to the Federation. The report included bills in the areas of freedom of information (“sunshine act”), tax reform, transportation, planning and land use, and the environment.
- d. Mary Anne Lecos moved that the Federation support Senator Chichester’s bill S 635, as amended, as the only viable tax reform alternative. The motion was seconded and approved.
- e. Jeffrey Nolan moved that the Federation oppose Delegate Griffith’s bill HB 1357, which exempts the General Assembly from the “sunshine act.” The motion was seconded and approved.
- f. Becky Cate reported that the Nonmotorized Transportation Subcommittee’s recommendations on trail connections to the Dulles rail project had not been adopted. The subcommittee is working on bike trail connections between the planned Fair Lee development and the Vienna Metro.
- g. President Carol Hawn introduced Vic Mukai, the Federation representative on the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee.
- h. Bill Hanks mentioned the American Federation of Teachers document “The Money is There,” which deals with the proposed FY 2005 FCPS budget.
- i. President Carol Hawn reported that the Planning Commission decision-only meeting on the West County Family Shelter on Route 29 was scheduled for February 19.
- j. Sally Ormsby reported on ongoing plans for the Citizen of the Year banquet speaker. One possible date, April 25, may pose a schedule conflict for many. President Carol Hawn reported a letter was sent to the Washington Post confirming their role in the Citizen of the Year event. Nominations for Citizen of the Year are due no later than March 1.
- k. President Carol Hawn reported that the organization that uses the Packard Center office next to the Federation’s office would like to store their fax machine in the Federation office. In accordance with the proposed arrangement, Sally Ormsby moved that the Federation allow its neighbors to use its office for their fax machine and in return pay half of the rent. The motion was seconded and approved.

Next Membership Meeting: Thursday, March 25, 2004 -- Fairfax County FY 2005 budget presentation; approval of Federation Budget Resolution; brief welcome visit with Acting Police Chief Suzanne Devlin. Please NOTE this is the fourth Thursday of the month.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Addenda:

Fluor Daniels “Capital Beltway HOT Lanes” Federation presentation, February 2004
Folder with supplementary Fluor Daniels materials