

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of December 16, 2004
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.)

President Carol Hawn introduced Jeffrey Steers, director of the Northern Virginia regional office of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and deputy regional director John Bowden.

Program—Mr. Steers explained that DEQ has recently made it a priority to do more outreach around the state and to increase opportunities for public participation.

DEQ is the largest environmental agency in Virginia. It is responsible for permits, enforcement, monitoring, and assistance in regulatory and policy development on issues related to air, water, and waste. Besides enforcing state regulations, it enforces provisions of federal laws including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

DEQ has seven regional offices for the entire state; the Northern Virginia office covers 14 counties and 6 cities. The regional office has a staff of 90.

Mr. Steers listed a great variety of ongoing responsibilities for the regional office. These include the solid waste permit program, local emergency planning for hazardous materials, issuance of hazardous waste permits, monitoring of air and water quality, emissions inspections, pollution prevention, environmental impact review, waste tire program, the Chesapeake Bay Program, spill response and remediation, and more.

Responding to a question about the most serious environmental issue in the DEQ Northern Virginia region, he said that in terms of health, the most serious issue is air quality. The region is in nonattainment for particulate matter of 2.5 microns. Air quality is difficult to manage in part because of lack of control – it is affected by weather and interstate transport of air pollutants. The main local source is automobile emissions. Printers and dry cleaners are also major contributors.

In terms of scale, the most serious issue is the effect of impacted streams and other polluted sources on the Chesapeake Bay. The region has until 2010 to address this problem, after which the EPA can impose a plan and fines. Non-point-source emissions are the biggest challenge.

In response to another question, he stated that the department has been tasked by the legislature with implementing an “air check” roadside emissions program in which remote sensors will assess emissions from passing cars; those with good results will have their next emissions test waived, those with failing results will be required to have their cars repaired and reinspected within 30 days. This program will operate only in nonattainment areas such as Northern Virginia.

Business Meeting —

- a.. The minutes for the November 18 membership meeting were unanimously approved as written.
- b. Charles Dane reported that 5 members of the Education Committee had met with the Assistant Superintendent for Facilities for the school system and that the Committee had drafted a resolution on the new school headquarters building. The resolution was approved by the Federation Board and has been submitted to the Board of Supervisors. It was included in the most recent Federation newsletter. President Carol Hawn thanked the Education Committee for their timely efforts on this issue. The membership voted to affirm the Federation Board’s action.

- c. It was reported that the web page is again up and running and has been updated.
- d. Charles Dane explained that the January meeting with Superintendent Dale will include not only the budget (as in the past) but other topics such as organizational changes, management philosophy, School Board targets, and the administrative consolidation.
- e. Flint Webb reported he had attended several recent environmental meetings including the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council. Multipollutant air quality issues were discussed and there is a major push on the Clean Smokestacks law. Deadlines for lower emission limits are approaching. There is a proposal for a national standard for ozone.
- f. A resolution on natural area buffers for major local trails was moved, seconded, and approved and will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors.
- g. Victor Makai, the Federation representative on the county's information technology committee, sent a report on the cost of technology and the plans for a "reverse 911" notification program for cell phones and computers.
- h. Jeffrey Nolan reported from the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities on the issue of twice-exceptional students who are gifted and also have learning disabilities. Previous policies have prevented such students from being considered in both categories at once. The Committee supported the resolution of the Fairfax County Council of PTAs on this subject. The Committee's supporting resolution was read into the School Board meeting minutes by Jeffrey Nolan.
- i. Bill Hanks reported on the Housing Preservation Task Force. The lack of affordable housing, not only in local counties, but now in outlying counties, is alarming. Many long-time residents could not afford now to buy the house they live in. As the counties become skewed toward very low or very high income, the middle class is shrinking. Among other consequences, this income group has been a basis for voluntary and civic associations.
- j. President Carol Hawn report on the Council on Homelessness of the Community Collaborative on Housing, which is just getting organized. There is a push to encourage SRO (single room occupancy) housing.
- k. Jeffrey Nolan reported from the Braddock District Council that the annual Taste of Braddock was well attended and successful.
- l. Patrick Rea reported from the Mount Vernon District Council that officers had been re-elected. The council supported a resolution on the Groveton High School site in favor of commercial rather than residential development. The council has 73 member associations.
- m. Norman Neiss reported from the Providence District Council that Herb Taylor and Will Elliott had won the annual Community Service Award.
- o. Sally Ormsby discussed the status of the Citizen of the Year banquet.

Next Membership Meeting: January 20, 2005, Jack Dale, Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools. Next Board meeting: January 6, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.