

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of February 17, 2005
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.) President Carol Hawn introduced Sergeant Ken Bresson, Gang Intervention Coordinator in the Youth Services Division of the Fairfax County Police.

Program — Sergeant Bresson stated that there are several gangs represented in Fairfax County, including Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), the South Side Locals, the Crips, the Bloods, 18th Street, Tiny Rascal Gangsters (TRG), Folk Nation, and People Nation. About 1500 gang members and a total of 2000 to 3000 gang-associated persons (including gang members, their girlfriends, and others) live in the county, as compared to a total population of more than 1 million.

There were 1288 gang-related cases in 2004, of which almost two-thirds were low-level calls such as graffiti, broken bottles, destruction of property, and police service calls (calls to which the police responded, but found no crime). Although such cases are considered very low level by police, police are aware that for neighborhoods these are not low-level matters.

Sergeant Bresson said that gang members are less likely now to identify themselves openly. Some signs of gang membership are a tendency to dress all in one color; a refusal to wear a rival gang's color; signals like bandanas or one pant leg up and one down; tear-drop tattoos; or use of elaborate hand signs. Sometimes special clothes are worn once a week, for gang meetings.

Not all graffiti is gang graffiti. Some is "tagger graffiti" by individuals or groups producing graffiti for its own sake; some is hate graffiti. Gang graffiti is addressed to the community or other gangs. It may claim territory, cross out a rival gang's graffiti, or include a roll-call of members. Several photos of gang graffiti were shown, all from inside the county.

The county gang investigation unit includes 8 to 10 detectives and 2 supervisors. There is a school liaison commander, a crime prevention and school education officer coordinator, and a gang intervention coordinator. Each Fairfax police district station has one or more station gang coordinators, who pass reports up to the unit and attend monthly coordination meetings. The stations' crime prevention officers assist with Neighborhood Watch, home security surveys, and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design for businesses and residences. School education officers (SEOs) go to every elementary school. They do presentations to all county fifth graders on bullying and gangs. School resource officers (SROs) are assigned to every high school and many middle schools and are responsible for school security and safety. SROs teach federally supported Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) classes at middle schools. In high school, they teach the state-funded Class Action curriculum on legal consequences of gang activity. Principals decide how and when to include these programs.

The Code of Virginia includes anti-gang laws and Fairfax County has been a major motivator for several recent additions, including placing machetes on the concealed weapons list and outlawing recruitment and hazing of new gang members. The Northern Virginia Regional Gang Taskforce started by Congressman Frank Wolf includes Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, Loudon, and Prince William counties. It has facilitated serving warrants between jurisdictions and established a hotline for suspected gang activity (1-866-NO-GANGS).

Gang members are usually 12 to 22 years old. Gangs in Fairfax County are not for-profit organizations. They are antisocial and commit heavy graffiti and assaults. Violence is generally gang-on-gang. Gang members in Washington and Maryland usually stay there although they may travel through the county. Gang members generally walk in groups or ride in cars, not on Metro. Gang activity is concentrated in the Culmore area, Herndon, West Springfield, and the Route One corridor. Membership has been stable because gangs have had trouble penetrating the school system. Police and the schools work closely together to keep gang recruitment out of the schools.

There are many intervention resources available for gang members who want to get out. Sergeant Bresson noted that gang members also drift away from gangs over time.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the January 20 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved as written.
- b. The Treasurer's report was read and unanimously approved as written.
- c. John Jennison reported on efforts to increase Federation membership. There was a good response to the mailing. The next step is to get lists of associations from District Councils.
- d. Sally Ormsby reported on the Federation's legislative program. Remaining bills of interest include: amber lights on Neighborhood Watch cars (when not in motion); two proffer bills, which are not supported by the Federation; a bill permitting landfills to be sited much closer to water; the nutrient trading bill for sewer treatment plants; new revenue for stream and Bay clean-up; the zoning variances bill; and new funding for roads, transit, and parking garages.
- e. Charles Dane reported that the Education Committee gave a presentation on the proposed school budget at the recent FCPS School Board hearing and will be meeting with the budget staff to clarify a couple of specific issues. Full funding of the requested County Transfer is unlikely but funding above the original guidance percentage is likely.
- f. President Carol Hawn reported the transportation element of the comprehensive plan is being updated; this is an 18-month process. She also reported there is a Federation Representative is needed for the Criminal Justice Advisory Board.
- h. Patrick Rea reported from the Mount Vernon District Council on two development issues, one with a high residential component for the Chuck E. Cheese's property on Route One, the other regarding the Ourisman car dealership, where the Wilson Bridge project has eliminated part of the parking lot. A planned parking garage has hit a snag because of a trail designated for the area; an alternative trail under the bridge is a security issue for VDOT.
- i. Sally Ormsby reported from the Providence District Council that "Dr. Gridlock," the Washington Post columnist, was the speaker at the most recent meeting. She also reported that a further expansion of the Tysons One mall is to be determined.
- j. Jeffrey Nolan reported on follow-up to the Braddock workshop for local associations.
- k. Art Wells reported that the selection committee had chosen Dr. Worley as citizen of the year, with citations of merit to Merrily Pierce and Jennifer Cooper. The banquet will be on March 13 at the Fairview Park Marriott.
- l. Sally Ormsby reported that Kate Hanley would be the guest speaker.
- m. President Carol Hawn reminded all present to complete their school census forms.
- n. Sally Ormsby agreed to serve as the Federation representative at the Land Development Services stakeholders meeting on low-impact development practices.

Next Membership Meeting: Thursday, March 31, County Executive Tony Griffin. Next Board meeting, March 10. REMINDER: Citizen of the Year banquet March 13, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.