

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of April 27, 2006
MINUTES

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

President John Jennison introduced the first of two speakers for this “Report from Richmond” meeting, State Senator James “Jay” O’Brien of the 39th Senate District. The second speaker, State Senator Richard “Dick” Saslaw of the 35th Senate District, was introduced later.

Program —

Senator O’Brien said that any report about the General Assembly session this year divides into two topics: transportation and the budget and “everything else.” In the latter category, he outlined his initiatives on adoption law, cable television competition, expansion of the sex offender registry, campaign finance, a local option for restaurant smoking bans, in-state tuition rates for children of military personnel, the community college transfer grant program, and the regulation of car-towing operators. He reported the constitutional amendment on marriage will be on the ballot this fall. The wording of the question that will appear on the ballot (as opposed to the text of the amendment itself) is still being fought over.

Senator Saslaw spoke to the transportation and budget. Three regional transportation plans, all tied together, have been voted through the Senate—Tidewater, Northern Virginia, and statewide. They rely on a 6 cent per gallon increase in the terminal tax on gasoline. Senator Saslaw listed current gas prices in states with high and low gas taxes to show the prices are not determined by the tax rate. Other proposed sources of funding include an increase in the grantor’s tax on real estate transactions and a local option for an increase in sales and transient occupancy taxes. The Senate plan generates \$110 million for Northern Virginia, plus additional money (\$66 million) from the statewide plan, and the House plan generates \$27 million. At this stage, all plans are subject to change. The first two obligations under the Senate plan are the \$50 million annual payment needed to match Congressman Davis’s bill providing \$1.5 billion over 10 years in federal funding for Metro (payments are also needed from Maryland and Washington, D.C.) and \$25 million for VRE, which needs more cars. He stated that without additional transportation funding, by the year 2010 the VDOT budget will only support maintenance. In the long term, he believes rail may be the solution. There is a great need for some road projects, such as widening Route 7, but we cannot build our way out. This year he worked on a bill regulating concessions—arrangements through which private companies build and operate HOT lanes or other roads. Often this is in conjunction with nearby retail operations. The bill established which parts of these projects are subject to taxation.

Senator O’Brien explained how this budget impasse differs from the one two years ago. The governors are different, and this governor is in his first year. The economy was much slower two years ago and there was concern about the state’s AAA bond rating, which is not under threat now. The underlying issue last time was education, which affects every district and is the single largest employer in many districts. The transportation crisis is really only in Tidewater and Northern Virginia. The short-term solution to the stalemate may be a continuing resolution. Senator Saslaw noted that pressure to resolve this impasse will increase in a few weeks, because school systems that depend on state funding to operate will have to inform teachers of possible layoffs by June 1 (90 days before school starts), unless the funding is assured.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the March 23 membership meeting were approved unanimously as written.
- b. The Treasurer’s Report was received and is posted on the Federation website.
- c. Carol Hawn reported the next newsletter deadline is May 4.

- d. President John Jennison noted that Charles Dane testified on the issue of surplus school properties.
- e. Carol Hawn reported on the Council on Homelessness summit on a plan to end homelessness in ten years (to receive federal funding, a community must have a plan to end chronic homelessness in ten years; Fairfax County extends the plan to all homelessness). She encouraged those who are interested to attend the regional meetings that will be held on this topic. Dates and times were not yet available.
- f. Steve DelBianco reported that the Planning Commission had voted 8-0 to proceed with the first group of zoning ordinance amendments (ZOAs), despite the Federation's recent resolution. The Board of Supervisors public hearing will be on May 1, and Steve will testify.
- g. Sally Ormsby reported that the budget and transportation funding remain undecided in the General Assembly. The session was not fruitful, although more bills were submitted than ever before.
- h. Sally Ormsby also noted the Planning Commission hearing on the draft Transportation Plan update in the Policy Plan was scheduled for May 4, a week after release of the proposal. A motion was made and approved for John Jennison and Earl Flanagan to write a letter to the Planning Commission requesting deferral of the hearing because the information was not provided sufficiently in advance.
- i. Art Wells reported for Braddock District that recent workshops on association issues were well-attended and the Federation might wish to consider them as a model. In addition, its Area Plan review is ongoing, with 17 task force meetings over one and a half years so far. Judy Harbeck provided copies of an affordable housing plan adopted by the Mount Vernon Council. The plan addresses affordable workforce housing as well as affordable housing for very low income people.
- j. Carol Hawn reported that the Nominating Committee would meet soon.
- k. President John Jennison noted that the Federation has appointed Jim Katcham to serve as the Federation's representative on the Land Use Accessibility Advisory Group.

New Business:

- a. Bill Hanks reported that 116 affordable dwelling units in Reston have been preserved. Realtors have held an all-day conference on affordable housing, and the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) and the Planning Commission have met on the topic. He has suggested on-site affordable housing for staff in commercial developments in the urban revitalization areas.
- b. Esther Ferington reported that the deadline has been changed from June 1 to September 1 for submissions of Fairfax County history articles, on any topic during the last 400 years, for possible inclusion in a book to be published next year by the Fairfax 2007 committee. For more information, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/opa/va2007/legacybook.htm.
- c. Carol Hawn noted the county's publication of *Anticipating the Future*, a report on changes in the county over the next several years. It was agreed to request copies for the next membership meeting.

Next Membership Meeting: May 18, 2006, State of the County and "Ask the Chair," with Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerry Connolly

Next Board Meeting: May 25, 2006, with Patty Nicoson, Dulles Corridor Rail Association

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.