

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of April 17, 2008
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached to file copy.) President Jeff Parnes introduced Second Vice President Esther Ferington, who introduced the program, which consisted of three in-depth reports by Federation representatives to different groups.

Program

Esther Ferington reminded members that the Federation has volunteer representatives to a number of bodies, including county boards, authorities, and commissions and School Board advisory committees. This evening's program consisted of presentations by Federation representatives to three organizations. There are many more Federation representatives than those who could be included; she distributed a list of all the Federation representatives and thanked all of them for their hard work as Federation volunteers.

She introduced the first speaker, Lou D'Alessandro, the Federation representative to the Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB), a federally mandated board that advises on the distribution of community service block grants (CSBGs) and serves as an advocate for the poor in Fairfax County. He began by noting that Fairfax County, with a median household income of \$100,318, is wealthy enough that many residents are not aware there is a significant poverty issue in the county. At present, there are 117,030 residents of Fairfax County who are considered low-income. Of these, 1,813 are homeless. More than 25,000 children qualify for the free school lunch program. Issues of concern include homelessness, hunger, and low wages. CAAB also addresses health, emergency services, and community and economic development. Its current priorities include childcare funding and childcare subsidies, affordable housing, immigration issues, payday lending, and mental health issues. Every dollar it distributes to an agency is leveraged 4 to 5 times. Lou also presented detailed examples of programs that are funded.

Lou stated one of his goals as a CAAB member is to give presentations to local associations. (He may be reached through the Federation website, www.fairfaxfederation.org, using the Contact Us page.) In addition to scheduling a presentation, Fairfax residents interested in taking action may also participate in food collection drives, particularly in delivering nonperishable foods to distribution centers, attend poverty simulation exercises, advocate for Community Services Block Grants, and identify neighbors in need who may be reluctant to ask for help and advise them about available services; the county's coordinated services number is 703-222-0880.

Esther Ferington then introduced the second speaker, Thomas "Vic" Mukai, who is the Federation representative to the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee. He explained that ITPAC formed in 1997 to address issues related to the county's use of information technology. The membership consists of district representatives and others, many of whom are CIOs or the CEOs of local tech companies. The group works closely with Wanda Gibson, the head of IT for Fairfax County, who has been named one of the top five best government IT officers in the nation. ITPAC seeks to keep informed on county IT issues, review and make recommendations on its initiatives, and keep up with ongoing issues related to legacy systems and upgrades.

The basic goal of county IT is to make access to government services more reliable, secure, and efficient. Some examples he cited include responding to mandated requirements (such as the federal mandate on police radio frequencies); the completion of prior IT investments (as in the inspection and permitting system); enhanced security (including issues of data security and privacy); and improved services and efficiency (land use databases that are available on an authorized basis). Other examples of issues ITPAC

has been dealing with include the redesign of the county website, now underway, to comply with ADA regulations and present information in a more user-friendly manner; improved public safety efforts such as dispatcher resources during 911 calls (allowing responses to be dispatched while calls are in progress), the public safety and transportation operations center (PSTOC), and voting machine requirements.

For the final presentation of the evening, Esther Ferington introduced Charles Dane, Chair of the Education Committee, who in turn introduced Judy Harbeck, one of three Federation representatives to the School Board Transportation Task Force. Charles Dane explained that the other two representatives, Jan Auerbach and Walt Carlson, were unable to attend at the last minute. All three worked long hours in the task force's numerous meetings. Originally, Jan Auerbach was to present the majority report and Judy Harbeck was to present some thoughts concerning the minority report. Instead, Judy Harbeck presented the full Powerpoint presentation on the task force's work and then, as planned, her own comments. [To see the report and other documents related to the task force, go to www.fcps.edu , click on School Board, then on Current Board Topics, and then on 2007 Transportation Task Force.]

The task force arose partly because of the recurrent issue of the desirability of later high school opening times and partly because the bus system is near the breaking point, according to a recent consultant's report. Since the same buses are used for multiple schools and grade levels and for transportation of students to a variety of programs, including but not limited to specific special needs programs, the entire bus system has now been stretched and finetuned for efficiency to the point that it has become inflexible and strained. Students today often experience 30 to 40 minute bus rides, which has the effect of encouraging use of cars simply to save time, and buses are scheduled to drop off high school students before schools are open.

The majority report recommended later high-school starting times and ways of improving the system, including structuring bus usage around the school system's new "consortia" divisions. Following her summary of the report, Judy Harbeck explained that while she was in general agreement, her concerns had to do with desiring a stronger emphasis on the reengineering aspect, and greater inclusion of parents with students from different grade levels and diverse backgrounds. Charles Dane reported that he, Judy, and the other two Federation representatives sent a joint letter to the School Board Chair, encouraging broad input as the School Board reaches out in community meetings on the matter.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes of the March 27, 2008, membership meeting, as published in the April newsletter, were unanimously approved.
- b. Scott Schlegel presented the Treasurer's Report, which was received and filed.
- c. Art Wells reported on BRAC (Base Realignment and Closures Commission) matters, including that the footings have been poured for the new hospital at Fort Belvoir, there is a draft EIS (environmental impact statement) for the Bethesda hospital, and the VDOT budget cutbacks will have a potentially very serious impact on BRAC planning.
- d. President Jeff Parnes reported he had spoken with the Washington Post regarding the Post's contribution for the recent Citizen of the Year banquet and also requested that its web page that cites the program add a link to the Federation website.
- e. Bill Hanks reported that the Nominating Committee, chaired by past president John Jennison, has assembled lists of meeting attendees and shared excerpts from the bylaws on officers' responsibilities. It was noted that a full slate of nominations is needed for the May newsletter.
- f. Charles Dane, Chair of the Education Committee, reported that the school budget is looking worse by the minute; there was a \$25 million shortfall in the county's investment income and there a

projection of 1500 additional students. The most optimistic scenario is that the Board of Supervisors will levy the 3-cent increase, distributing two-thirds of that increase to the schools. That will still mean major cuts in the advertised FCPS budget. The Education Committee is discussing recommendations on the cuts, but won't know specifics until the Board of Supervisors fixes the transfer amount.

g. Flint Webb, Chair of the Environment Committee, reminded members of the April 19 observance of Earth Day in Fairfax County and on April 20 on the National Mall. Stream clean-up opportunities continue; an enormous amount was collected by the clean-ups to date. He attended a climate change and air and waste management conference with four EPA air directors.

h. Speaking as First Vice President, Charles Dane reported that he projects that membership for the year will likely end up at a total of 45 member associations; he has been working toward an ambitious goal of 48 for the year, an increase of 50 percent.

i. President Jeff Parnes reported that he testified on the Federation's position on the proposed Fairfax County FY 2009 budget before the Board of Supervisors.

j. Art Wells reported that the Braddock District Council had a briefing on the proposed FY 2009 county budget in March and has a Richmond (General Assembly) briefing in early April. There was also a briefing on the George Mason Conference Hotel project at the George Mason-Braddock forum, as well as information on George Mason's shuttle bus system, which could be a model. Jim Davis reported that the Mount Vernon Council is working toward a resolution on proffers such as vegetative buffers being recorded, so that when development properties change hands such proffers are still recognized and adhered to. Jeff Parnes reported that the Sully District Council canceled its most recent meeting, on Richmond matters, because of a schedule conflict with the veto session in Richmond.

Next Membership Meeting: May 15, 2008. Report from Richmond from four of our General Assembly members

Next Board Meeting: April 24, 2008

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.