

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations  
Membership Meeting of November 13, 2008  
MINUTES

The November 13 membership 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 the Chair of the Environment Committee, Flint Webb, who arranged the evening's presentation.

Program

Flint Webb introduced the first of two speakers, Jim McGlone, Urban Forest Conservationist for the Virginia Department of Forestry, who spoke about the spread of the emerald ash borer and its devastating effect on ash trees. Mr. McGlone is responsible for a region that includes Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax City. Before turning to the emerald ash borer, he noted that he is eager to work with citizens associations on any of the following: developing management plans for trees in common areas owned by HOAs; educational programs on tree care; blurbs for association newsletters on tree-related topics; help with tree planting events, building rain gardens, and other community activities; and a limited amount of advice to homeowners. He is available on evenings and weekends.

The emerald ash borer is an insect that only attacks ash trees, which in Fairfax County means white ash or green ash. (Despite the name, mountain ash is not an ash tree.) Unlike other pests that attack only sick ash trees, the emerald ash borer attacks healthy ones, too. Its eggs are laid on the bark. When the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the ash tree and eat the cambria underneath the bark, girdling the tree. The cambria is a vital part of the ash, and the damage is eventually fatal. An affected tree can be treated for some time with a yearly injection or root soak with specific systemic pesticides. Emerald ash borers leave small D-shaped holes about 1/8-inch in size in the bark and no "frass" or pupal case near the hole. If you can easily see the holes, they are probably not from an emerald ash borer. There are also characteristic patterns under the bark.

The emerald ash borer is from Northeast Asia—Korea, Japan, Manchuria, far eastern Russia, and parts of Mongolia. It reached the United States in 1998 in Detroit, probably in packing material. It radiated out from Detroit and Michigan to other states, including Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland, and—within the last several months—Mississippi, Wisconsin, Quebec, and Virginia. In 2003, a nursery in Prince Georges County, Maryland, ordered ash trees from Kentucky, an unaffected area. The Kentucky nursery filled out the order with infested trees from Michigan. Some of the infested trees were planted at Colvin Run Elementary School in Fairfax County. When the problem was discovered years later, those trees were removed, as were all ash trees within a certain radius. That outbreak was successfully eradicated. But it was a temporary success. There are now several unrelated outbreaks in the county. Last July, the emerald ash borer was identified in Herndon. There are separate infestations in Newington, at a townhouse complex, and in Bailey's Crossroads, where the emerald ash borer was identified in August. Every tree in the Herndon outbreak was affected; in the Newington outbreak, it is every other tree so far.

Foresters are trapping some borers with glue traps, flat hanging squares that may be purple or green and should be left undisturbed. Emerald ash borers can fly 1/2 to 2 miles in a year, but they move much greater distances through firewood, nursery stock, and some wood chips. NASCAR has a public education program to warn against transporting firewood. Because of the infestation, there is now a legally enforced quarantine on hardwood firewood, wood chips, ash nursery stock, and ash roundwood from northern Virginia, including Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and Fauquier Counties. Legal penalties for breaking the quarantine are severe and can include federal prison time.

Ash trees account for 1.5 percent of the Virginia forest resource, but tend to be scattered within forests rather than grouped together. However, in residential use there are many ash street trees, which may be the only trees on some streets. About 40 million trees have already been lost in Michigan. (In Detroit, ash trees were brought in to replace street elm trees after Dutch elm disease.) Fairfax County has 1.8 million ash trees. The ecological impact of the loss of the ash trees is unknown, although at least one species, the grey ash sphinx moth, is dependent on them and would become extinct without ash trees.

Homeowner associations that own common areas, and individual homeowners, should make a plan. First, determine if you have ash trees on your property, and do not plant any new ash trees. If you find that you have ash trees, plan ahead for the need to remove them after they die (for example, set aside money for new trees). However, do not remove the ash trees if they are still in good health. Consider interplanting replacement trees now; for best results, plant seedlings, not nursery stock. Avoid monoculture; plant different kinds of trees from different genera and families. Mr. McGlone recommends against planting maple, which makes up 25 percent of urban forest, as there is already a threat to maples from the Asian long-horn beetle in the New York area..

Mr. McGlone also answered questions on oak tree decline and environmental stresses on trees, such as air pollution and mixture of very dry periods with heavy rain. It was suggested he may wish to connect with the Federation district council representatives to connect with associations through the councils as well.

Flint Webb introduced the next speaker, Roger Diedrich, who is active with the Cool Counties and Cool Neighborhoods initiatives. He is also the Mantua representative to the Federation and the Providence District Representative to the Fairfax County Trails and Sidewalks Committee. He began by reviewing the origin of the Cool Neighborhoods idea. The related Cool Counties initiative was launched in July 2007 by the Sierra Club, Fairfax County, and King County, Washington, at the National Association of Counties meeting. The goal is to offer concrete guidance and information to counties that set the goal of reducing carbon emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050. There are now 33 cool counties (that is, counties that have signed up for this pledge through the program) in 16 states, and 5 such counties in Virginia.

In our region, residential uses account for 42 percent of emissions and companies and industry account for 43 percent. Electricity is responsible for 56 percent of emissions, gasoline for 33 percent, and natural gas for 11 percent. At the county level, there have been efforts to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the number of SUVs in the county fleet and adding hybrids and encouraging mass transit, bike and walking trail use, recycling, and green building projects.

The Cool Neighborhoods initiative takes the effort to the household and neighborhood level. Under this plan, a household that reduces its carbon emissions by 2 percent a year will be recognized by the county as a "cool neighbor." If 20 percent of the homeowners in a neighborhood receive this recognition, it is recognized as a "cool neighborhood." Households that are already 20 percent below the county average will also be designated as "cool neighbors."

The hope is to reach out to community leaders such as HOA boards to set up a plan for those in a neighborhood who wish to participate. The plan would include a block captain for every 70 or so households, to track who has chosen to participate and what they're doing, and to report the results each year to the county for recognition. The program is flexible about what constitutes a neighborhood; for example, it might be organized through a church, synagogue, or mosque, or it might be along one street.

Individuals who choose to participate would take the following steps: inventory their existing household emissions through a simple calculator worksheet; select and implement actions to reduce emissions, which can be quite simple changes; and monitor annual progress. Typically, assessing current emissions requires a few records, many of which are available online: record of the home's electricity consumption

over 12 months, natural gas or oil consumption over 12 months, the water used in the last four quarters, and estimated gasoline or diesel use, including lawn mowers and similar equipment, as well as vehicles. To learn more, see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/coolcounties/neighborhoods/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment/coolcounties/neighborhoods/)

Roger Diedrich took questions on participation by Boy Scout and Girl Scouts as part of a project, privacy concerns, the possibility of adding financial incentives, and the position on this issue held by the candidates for the Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

Business Meeting —

- a. President Jeff Parnes asked that the minutes be approved for the previous membership meeting of October 16. The minutes were prepared by Scott Schlegel and Charles Dane. The minutes, as amended, were unanimously approved.
- b. At the suggestion of President Jeff Parnes, those present introduced themselves to the group.
- c. The Treasurer's Report was received and filed by unanimous consent.
- d. Under Old Business, President Jeff Parnes noted that the positions of Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary remain vacant. In addition, the positions of Human Services, Legislation, and Public Safety Chairs are vacant and also need to be filled.
- e. Also under Old Business, Charles Dane, as head of the Education Committee, gave an update on the status of the possible Fairfax County Public Schools consolidation of administrative offices by purchasing the former Red Cross building. The purchase will require approval of a bond by the Board of Supervisors. At issue is the declining cost of real estate since the July appraisal of the property.
- f. Under New Business, Charles Dane is acting as Legislative Chair. He has asked for information from the county and school staff on last year's package, so that we can remove items that were accomplished and make appropriate factual modifications. He also noted that those who have suggested additions to the package should forward them to him. The draft will be reviewed at the November 20 Board meeting and then distributed in the *Bulletin*.
- g. Flint Webb, Chair of the Environment Committee, noted that the Council of Governments has adopted a climate change plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The goal is to reduce the projected levels in 2020 by 80 percent (as opposed to reducing emissions from some measured level in the past). He also noted he attended the Green Breakfast on headwaters protection for streams, the Achieving an Energy-Efficient Virginia meeting on legislative ideas, and would be attending the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Commission's Technical Advisory Committee, to which he is the Federation representative.
- h. Don Hinman, Chair of Association Services Committee, stated that the county now has the draft of the brochure providing a guide to new communities in navigating the bond release process, on which he and Jim Colby worked. He expects it to be released soon on the Web, and possibly in print.
- i. Kosmo Tatalias, Chair of the Budget Committee, noted that the advertised 2010 budget is expected to be released on time at the end of February. He will need help in updating our review and response, and would like to meet individually with the Federation Committee chairs. The departments are in the process of briefing the Board of Supervisors with 5, 10, and 15 percent cuts, and may need to propose more. President Jeff Parnes asked all committee chairs to look over their area of the county budget and to look over last year's Federation budget resolution.

j. President Jeff Parnes reported he has contacted the Washington Post about the Citizen of the Year banquet and been advised that he needs to send a formal letter to follow up the co-sponsorship request. He also urged everyone to submit nominations for Citizen of the Year.

k. Charles Dane, Chair of the Education Committee, noted that, without a change in last year's county transfer, the school budget faces a shortfall that was \$157 million in July and has grown to \$223 now. This is partly because of the loss of another \$50 million in state funding. In addition, the increase in the number of students is in the thousands, partly due to students leaving private schools to enroll in public schools. The budget shortfall will result in increases in class size, reduction in the number of high school classes offered, reduction in some athletic programs and summer schools, as well as administrative and transportation reductions. If the county cuts funding for school clinic aids, resource officers and after-school programs, FCPS may have to pick up some of these costs and carry out further academic cuts. The Education Committee met on November 11 and thinks that the Federation should come out with a position to maintain the real estate tax payment by the average homeowner at last year's level, and for the County Executive to recommend that the Board advertise a greater range of possible tax rates, to maintain flexibility.

l. In his role as Membership Chair, Charles Dane reported there are currently 35 paid member associations and discussed keeping the contact information current.

m. Bill Hanks, the Chair of the Resolutions Committee, reported that, acting as Corresponding Secretary, he had forwarded the Federation's recent resolution honoring Sally Ormsby to all the Supervisors, calling for October 26, 2009, the 73rd anniversary of Sally Ormsby's birth, to be named Sally Ormsby Day.

n. Kosmo Tatalias, as Webmaster, asked all chairs and district council representatives to provide updated information for their part of the website.

o. Art Wells reported from Braddock District that there was a lines of business and budget process presentation at a recent Braddock District meeting organized by Sharon Bulova. He reported that the next Braddock District Council meeting, on November 18, would be on the Tysons Land Use report and on the possible purchase of the second FCPS administrative building. The big news in Braddock, he said, has been Supervisor Bulova's announcement of her candidacy for the Chair of the Board of Supervisors.

p. There were no other district council reports, except that President Jeff Parnes noted that the Plan Amendment Task Force for Sully is starting.

Next Membership Meeting: December 18, 2008. 2009 Legislative Package, Acting Federation  
Legislative Chair Charles Dane

Next Board Meeting: November 20, 2008

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm