

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations  
Membership Meeting of October 15, 2009

MINUTES

Approved at Membership Meeting of November 19, 2009

The October 15 membership meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7 p.m. President Jeff Parnes introduced the main topic of the evening: membership review and approval of the Federation's proposed legislative package for 2010. He noted that the package represents the Federation's positions on issues at the state and, in a few cases, the federal level. Based on feedback from state legislators at the "Report from Richmond" meeting last spring, the Federation Board decided to prepare the package one to two months earlier this year, in October, so that legislators would receive it at a point when they have more time to consider it. He noted that the new Federation Legislative Chair, Tania Hossain, had also begun work on the package, including soliciting comments and suggestions, two months earlier, in midsummer. It is based on our past positions, but updated to the present. The priority items in the package were reviewed by the Federation Board prior to this meeting and the Federation committee chairs commented on their sections of the package by e-mail. He turned the gavel over to Tania Hossain for the legislative package portion of the meeting.

Program

a. Legislative Chair Tania Hossain moved approval of the legislative package. No second was needed (although one was provided) since she is a chair. Discussion of the package was as follows.

b. Janet Oleszek suggested rearranging the format of the package to combine the Priorities section, which is the basis of the testimony and cover letter, with the remainder of the document, which includes lower priority positions. Given the timing, there was discussion of considering this change for next year rather than this year. Don Hinman suggested, as an alternative, providing a table of contents that would show the pages where topics were addressed (some are addressed both in Priorities, for top priority positions, and in the later part of the document, for lower priority positions).

c. Also on formatting, Charles Dane requested that each position have a year of origin (most already do); where no year is available, he suggested noting "(continued)" instead. This was accepted as a friendly amendment for this year's package.

d. Priorities section. Changes to the Priorities section were as follows:

1. Priorities: Conservation. Rationale section. Tania Hossain reported that she had received a friendly amendment from Fred Costello suggesting that we update the 2004-06 figure provided in the rationale to a more recent number, if available. She will research this.

2. Priorities: Education. Item a (Funding for K-12 Mandates). Janet Oleszek requested adding language to call for changes to the Local Composite Index (LCI) formula, which determines the funding for state mandates. No draft language was available. Bill Hanks moved that Tania Hossain, Janet Oleszek, and Charles Dane review the LCI issue offline; if all three unanimously agree on new language on adjusting the LCI formula, the language will be added here without further review by the membership. Flint Webb seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

3. Priorities: Energy. Item a (Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Production). Rationale section. Change "providing advice" to "providing consumer educational advice"

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4. Priorities: Energy. Item b (Renewable Portfolio Standard). Rationale section.
    - Change "renewable are clean" to "renewable sources are clean"
    - Change "conventional sources are risky," to "conventional sources may be risky,"
  5. Priorities: Energy. Item c (Purchase of Energy Saving Products).
    - Change "provide capital costs" to "provide low rate loans for capital costs"
    - Rationale section. Change "makes it" to "make it"
    - Rationale section. Delete entire sentence beginning "Utility companies have historically"
  6. Priorities: Governance. Item b (Planning). Change "land use, transportation," to "land use and transportation plans,"
  7. Priorities: Infrastructure. Item a (State Support for School Construction), section 1. Change "by local governing body" to "by the local governing body"
  8. Priorities: Infrastructure. Item d (Metro Funding). Rationale section.
    - Delete the word "Passed:"
    - Change "Congressman Tom Davis" to "then Congressman Tom Davis"
  9. Priorities: Tax Structure. Item a (Local and State Tax Policies). Rationale section. Question: is it correct that, for counties, only the tax on cigarettes was increased in 2004? Or were counties also provided with the option of a transient occupancy (hotel) tax?
  10. Priorities: Taxation Authority. Item a (Local Taxing Authority). Rationale section.
    - Question re final sentence: was the transient occupancy tax increased in 2004, as stated here?
    - Change "dedicated by the revenue to tourism" to "dedicated a portion of the revenue to tourism" (a portion, not all)
  11. Priorities: Taxation Authority. Item b (Additional Local Taxes). Rationale section.
    - Change "no benefit" to "now benefit"
    - Change "government budgeted initiatives" to "government funded services"
- e. Changes to the "Other Legislative Issues" section were as follows:
1. Citizen Interests. Item a (Virginia Freedom of Information Act). Removed because this was successfully accomplished with passage of the act.
  2. Citizen Interests. Item b (Smoking in Public Places). Removed because this was successfully accomplished. President Jeff Parnes asked that the success of this position be noted in the minutes and suggested that his cover letter and testimony can mention all such successfully passed positions, with the exception of the Virginia FOIA (item 1 above) since it was achieved some years ago. NOTE: removal of any lettered items means that subsequent items will be re-lettered.
  3. Citizen Interests. Item c (Minimum Wage). (Format Note: these minutes refer to the original item letters per the draft document, not any re-lettering that will be reflected in final version)
    - To eliminate dated language in the original position, change entire position to read "Support a minimum wage indexed to the CPI increase."
    - Rationale section. Change rationale in its entirety to read as follows: "The federal minimum wage is now \$7.25 an hour. That minimum wage is not adequate for Fairfax County."

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4. Citizen Interests. Item g (Check-off to Support Organ Registry). Removed because this was successfully accomplished. Note this achievement in president's cover letter and testimony.
5. Citizen Interests. New item (Car Title Loans). Tania Hossain will draft language to add this section to the package. Car title loans, in which a car title is the collateral, are a new or newly popular form of predatory lending in which interest rates are extremely high and cars can be repossessed if only one payment is missed. The Federation wishes to take a position against this practice.
6. Citizen Interests. New item (Restoring Rights of Felons). Tania Hossain will draft language to add this section to the package. In Virginia, voting rights may be restored to felons after three or five years, depending on the level of the offense; Virginia is one of two states, however, in which this restoration requires an application and approval by the governor's office for each case. The Federation wishes to support automatic restoration of rights after the specified number of years, as in most other states.
7. Community Associations and Services. Item a (Commercial Vehicles in Neighborhoods). Removed because this was successfully accomplished. Note this achievement in president's cover letter and testimony.
8. Community Associations and Services. Item b (Association Officers, Directors, Trustees). It was noted that this had already been changed to include the phrasing "imposes obligations other than those in an association's governing documents." The year should change to "(continued from 2001; revised 2010)"
9. Community Associations and Services. Item c (Delayed Payment to Associations for Delivery of Resale Disclosure Packet). It was noted that this language had also been updated for this draft. The year should change to "(continued from 2009; revised 2010)".
10. Education. Item e (Public School Calendar).
  - Section 1. Change "Support legislation" to "Support new legislation" (this change is in conjunction with the change to Section 2)
  - Section 2. Change "Support including in the current law the following important reasons" so that it reads instead, " Alternatively, revise current law to include the following important reasons"
11. Education. Item f (Reform of State and Federal Accountability Systems).
  - Section 1. Removed.
  - Retain former Section 2 as the entire position, which no longer requires numbered sections.
12. Education. Item g (Alternative Assessments). Removed because this was successfully accomplished. Note this achievement in president's cover letter and testimony.
13. Education. Item i (Salary Competing Factor). Change "identified" to "identified"
14. Environment. Item a (Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act). Section 1. Change "weakens the Act" to "weakens the Act and call for the Clean Water Act to explicitly give the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the authority to regulate non-point-source pollution."

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15. Environment. Item c (Petroleum Tank Farms). Change "to a more appropriate location that minimizes" to "so as to minimize". A vote was called and the change passed unanimously. Also, delete phrase "from unknown year" for consistency with style throughout document.

16. Human Services. Item b (Human Trafficking). Removed because this was successfully accomplished. Note this achievement in president's cover letter and testimony.

17. Human Services. Item ? (Libraries). Change "state aid libraries" to "state aid to libraries"

18. Legislative Process. Item a (House of Delegates Subcommittees). Rationale. Delete current language, which is dated, except for "The practice of public votes on bills should be made part of the Laws of Virginia." Note: There was discussion of crafting new language, offline, regarding the practice of scheduling very early votes with insufficient prior notice. I am not certain whether this was for this year's package or for next year. -- EF

19. Legislative Process. Item b (Legislative Redistricting). Change position to read: "Support Virginia legislative redistricting by a nonpartisan group subject to approval by the legislature, on the Iowa model."

20. Northern Virginia Regional Issues. Regional Planning. Change "strengthening" to "strengthen"

21. Public Safety. Item c (Firearms). Change "including sales at guns shows" to "including private sales at gun shows"

22. Taxation and Finance. Item d (Personal Property Tax). Rationale section. Delete the word "soon"

23. Transportation. Item a (SAFETEA-LU and Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA)).  
-- Change SAFETEA\_LU in position to SAFETEA-LU  
-- Change "loss federal" to "loss of federal"

24. Transportation. Item b (Stop for Pedestrians).  
-- Change "crosswalks" to "marked crosswalks"  
-- Rationale section. Change "denoted crosswalks" to "marked crosswalks"  
-- Rationale section. Change "very unsafe" to "unsafe"

25. Transportation. New item (Overweight Truck Penalties). Bob Jordan will draft language to add this position, based on a recent position taken by the McLean Citizens Association. The Federation favors increased fees for overweight trucks.

f. It was agreed that, in addition to the changes above, small edits, typo corrections, and other wordsmithing would be entrusted to the Legislative Chair without further review.

g. Late in the review of the package, Tania Hossain had to leave to attend another meeting and Jeff Parnes resumed the chair. Upon completion of the discussion above, the motion to approve the legislative package, as amended, passed unanimously on a voice vote. The chair thanked Tania Hossain and all those who had contributed suggestions to the legislative package.

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h. It was moved and seconded that the calendar not be included in the version of the membership minutes reproduced in the Bulletin, since the Bulletin already lists the calendar and this would be a duplication. This is only an issue when the minutes include the calendar, which this month's minutes do not.

i. In reference to the Federation Web site, Charles Dane noted that he is still listed as the Membership Chair. Also, Janet Oleszek noted she is not receiving e-mails addressed to the Federation Board.

j. The membership minutes for the September 17 meeting were unanimously approved.

k. The Treasurers Report was received and filed.

l. The remaining officer and chair vacancies were reviewed.

m. The need to find a new meeting location was reviewed.

n. It was agreed to move the Greater Washington 2050 program to November 19 and the Tysons Corner Task Force program to February 18 – in other words, the topics for the two membership meetings have been swapped.

o. Bill Hanks, as chair of the Audit Committee, moved approval of the audit report, which was distributed. The report was unanimously approved.

p. The start of Budget Challenge Dialogues for the next fiscal year was noted.

q. Charles Dane, as Chair of the Education Committee, reported that Superintendent Dale would attend the November meeting of the committee. He also thanked all those who had submitted budget suggestions in response to his recent request.

r. President Jeff Parnes noted that the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors has agreed to a Federation request for participation by Bill Hanks as a Federation representative to the citizens committee on the issue of Fairfax County becoming a city, when such a committee or task force is formed.

s. Art Wells submitted notes on Braddock District for the record, because of the lateness of the hour. Let the record reflect that there was a George Mason / Braddock District forum on October 7 on topics including the 123 and Braddock Road intersection, construction projects at GMU, the University Mall renovation, and off-campus parking. The Braddock Budget Committee met on October 8 and plans to meet again in mid-November; its goal is to submit a report and recommendations by early January. The Braddock District Council met on October 13 as well. Supervisor John Cook's Community Engagement Initiative, which will promote voluntarism and civic engagement, will be held October 21 at the Lake Braddock Secondary School cafeteria.

Next Membership Meeting: November 19, 2009. [Note as of 10/23: topic has now changed to Greater Washington 2050]

Next Board Meeting: October 22, 2009.

Meeting adjourned.