

Membership Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2013

Approved 10-17-13

The September meeting of the membership of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations was called to order by President Rob Jackson at 7:40 p.m. at Mason District Government Center. Extra time was allowed for several attendees who were delayed in traffic.

New Format--President Jackson explained that the Board had approved a new format to test for the Membership Meetings. Routine committee reports would be dispensed with allowing members more time to participate in substantive discussion of issues. If the membership does not like the format, let the Board know.

Attendees introduced themselves.

Administrative Matters

Minutes--The June Membership minutes as amended were approved unanimously and filed for the record.

Audit--Bill Hanks, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the results of a recent audit by the Committee of Federation funds. No discrepancies were discovered. Motion to approve the audit was made by Mr. Birch and seconded; unanimously approved on a voice vote.

Treasurer Report/Budget Approval—The proposed Federation budget for FY2014 was circulated; the Board having approved the budget at its August 22 meeting. There was a question about whether the Federation had received all the sponsor funds to support the Citizen of the Year banquet held in April. SAIC has not sent the check yet and President Jackson will contact SAIC to discuss the matter. Mr. Birch moved approval of the budget and the motion was seconded, passing unanimously by voice vote.

Resolution on Residential Studio Units (RSU) (Land Use Committee)—President Jackson offered ground rules to focus the discussion and allow everyone to participate: 1) members should speak only twice on any issue, and 2) Fred Costello of the Land Use Committee could explain/clarify items as needed. President Jackson offered a history of the Federation's involvement with the Zoning Ordinance. Both Supervisors Smyth and Foust had asked the Federation to consider the ordinance and issues relating to our member communities. There has been limited time to review the issues and ramifications of allowing RSUs. In the future, the Federation needs to review its distribution lists to ensure we get information sent to member organizations and get it posted timely on the Federation website. The real failure has been on the part of County staff who has not involved the community sufficiently in this issue.

Mason District Council was strongly represented at the meeting and wanted to have input to the Federation's resolution. The Federation's Land Use Committee had the lead in drafting a resolution that was distributed to attendees. There were no objections to the Background and Whereas clauses. The initial concern was about allowing RSUs in areas with zoning R-12. Strong arguments were made to use R-20 as the standard, similar to other parts of the state such as Charlottesville and Portsmouth. Ms. Loeffler moved a change to provision #8 of the Resolution to change R-12 to R-20 zoning. After a second, discussion included questions regarding the applicability to new construction, the rehabilitation of old buildings and the conversion of single family houses into RSUs. There has been no study about the

need for RSUs as part of the County's housing stock. The question was called and approved unanimously. The vote approving the amendment was Yes -- 26, No – 3, Abstain 2.

The next issue concerned provision #14 of the resolution regarding the distance required between RSUs. Research in other areas of the state supported having a larger distance between RSU developments to reduce clustering. Mr. Parnes moved approval of an amendment to change the distance from 500 feet to 1/8 mile or 660 feet. After a second by Mr. Barfield and discussion, the amendment failed on a vote of Yes – 7, No – 26, Abstain – 0.

Another amendment to change the distance to 1 mile was approved on a vote of Yes – 21, No – 7, Abstain – 5. After a discussion about reconsidering the distance and the amendment another motion was made by a member of the Mason District Council to change the distance to 1000 feet between RSUs. After a second and discussion, the amendment passed on a vote of Yes – 19, No – 9, Abstain – 5.

A motion to allow RSUs in areas not part of residential areas (no neighbors) failed for lack of a second.

The next issue dealt with nearness of RSUs to public transit, #13, and how transit is defined. A motion to define transit as “rail stops (light rail, heavy rail, VRE) or bus stops located on major arterial streets” was seconded and discussed. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

An issue was raised concerning provision #10 about related occupants in the RSUs. The initial amendment to remove “related” from the language was withdrawn before a vote. A second amendment was offered and seconded that stated, “RSUs shall be at least 90% single occupancy. No unit shall have more than 2 occupants.”

President Jackson raised an issue that had been identified by the County Attorney regarding whether the standards for RSUs could be substantially different than those for independent living or other types of housing. The standards must be consistent. Will restricting RSUs be translated into new restrictions for independent living, housing for disabled population, etc.? To address this issue, President Jackson offered an amendment to add provision #15 to the resolution. “The County should make all conforming changes to other Uses in the Zoning Ordinance.” A proviso was added that should the uses and ordinance not be able to be conformed, the Federation would withdraw its support for RSUs. After discussion, the amendment was defeated on a vote of Yes – 11, No – 12, Abstain – 6. Upon a vote to reconsider adding #15, the vote was unanimous in favor of reconsideration. The amendment to include only the first sentence, “The County should make all conforming changes to other Uses in the Zoning Ordinance” was approved on a vote of Yes – 24, No – 5, Abstain – 0.

Mr. Parnes moved to approve the entire resolution as amended. After a second and discussion, the resolution passed on a vote of Yes – 24, No – 5, Abstain – 0.

Library Restructuring –Mr. Parnes offered that libraries' budgets had been cut by 30% in recent years. As a result, library management was proposing to: change the format for operations; change staffing requirements; remove requirement for MLS for librarians; and emphasize electronic information and books. As part of the plan, libraries had destroyed books. There had been significant pushback from residents who did not want to allow a beta test of a new paradigm for operations at Burke and Reston libraries. The Federation had appointed a committee to review and determine facts. Kathy Kaplan provided testimony to the Library Foundation and other venues, which resulted in a delay in implementing the beta plan. Further discussion and community input will be gathered before any changes are made to library operations. The Federation website will keep current information about the discussions and meetings.

Membership -- President Jackson asked attendees to think of ways to increase HOA membership in the Federation. How can the Federation improve communications and provide services that the members value? Suggestions included: increase liaison with elected officials; get articles published in the press and Patch; research and discuss hot topics that affect the membership communities; and ask members to staff Federation committees and become more involved. Attendees were asked to think about other methods to improve the value of Federation membership to communities. President Jackson offered that

he sees the Federation increasing and improving communication with HOAs. However, he wants the Federation to be less broad and focus on a few really important issues rather than trying to develop a resolution about 25 issues in the community.

Transportation – Mr. Parnes offered that in October and November Fairfax County officials are seeking input from residents about transportation funding priorities. Money will be available from the state and the County must decide how to use the funds. The Committee of 100 will hold a meeting on October 16 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss Virginia transportation goals, funding, and priorities. Bill Hanks, who is Reservations Chairman for the Committee of 100, offered to process \$39 reservations for dinner at: wwhanks@cox.net.

Adjournment— Membership meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Next Meetings

Membership meeting—Legislative Resolution: October 17, 7:30 p.m., at Mason Governmental Center.

Board meeting: September 26, 7:30 p.m., at Braddock Hall

Minutes prepared by Linda Boone, Recording Secretary