

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of April 21, 2005
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.) President Carol Hawn introduced Carl Bouchard, director of the Stormwater Planning Division of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

Program —

Mr. Bouchard said that long-term dedicated funding is needed for stormwater management in Fairfax County. This is a priority that has been woefully underfunded. The last bond to provide money for stormwater management was in 1988. A backlog of work has built up that would cost an estimated \$800 million to complete. Consultants have recommended the expenditure of \$60 million a year to address this backlog. The same level of annual funds would still be needed after the backlog was addressed, for maintenance of the existing and new or improved infrastructure.

The Stormwater Advisory Committee had recommended dedicating a penny of the tax rate this year (about \$17.9 million) to dealing with the backlog, and then establishing a stormwater utility fee in FY2007 that would provide a permanent dedicated funding source. The fee would be based on the percentage of a property that is impervious; for homeowners, it was estimated at an average of \$77 a year. However, the stormwater utility fee was not approved by the Board of Supervisors and will not be implemented at this time. The Board did not rule out consideration of other funding approaches in the future. At present, the plan is to dedicate at least a penny of the tax rate on an annual basis.

The recently approved county budget for FY2006 allocates a penny of the tax rate for the backlog of stormwater management work. This is in addition to the \$12.5 million standing budget for stormwater management. Previously, stormwater management funding came from the general fund, a bond fund, and a development pro rata fund. The county now plans to complete or transfer the work paid for by those funds, with the goal of paying for all stormwater management projects out of the new account.

The division has been asked to provide a spending plan for the new funds by June 20 and to provide a plan for streamlining the process of preparing watershed management plans throughout the county. These plans are already complete for Little Hunting Creek and Pope's Head Creek. Three additional engineers will also be hired. Typically, county engineers oversee and manage the work of contractors who design and install stormwater management systems. Projects on church, school, and park lands are tackled first because no land rights are required. The division is also developing a communications plan, including meeting with groups, developing brochures, working with schools and science teachers (including putting rain gardens on school grounds), and Spanish-language advertising and communications.

Hundreds of complaints are filed annually with the Stormwater Planning Division. These complaints range from severe stream undermining of houses to flooding and stream bank undercutting. Many problems arise because stormwater pipes were sized correctly when installed, but cannot handle increased runoff due to development upstream. This causes overflows and flooding. Over time, the greater runoff also degrades streams. It scours existing streambeds to bedrock, undercuts and collapses the banks, and turns streams into valleys. Efforts to slow or halt this process include armor-plating with riprap (a layer of large, angular stones) and bio-stabilization through plantings. Stormwater management is also needed to comply with the Chesapeake Bay agreement, which sets maximum levels of suspended sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen for the Potomac and Shenandoah watersheds. If the levels are not met by 2010, excess quantities will have to be removed.

Besides capital improvements and maintenance, stormwater management includes monitoring of streams, inspection of private systems, and street sweeping. The stormwater system includes stream channels,

valleys, and ponds as well as pipes, dams, and other infrastructure. There are several dams in the county, many owned by homeowner associations, that have had very little maintenance and now require costly repairs. Many were built to farm-pond standards 30 to 40 years ago and are simply worn out. It is not clear that HOAs will be able to afford to repair or remove these dams.

Green roofs, when properly installed, can counteract the impervious effects of a building. There is a demonstration project with a green roof on an outbuilding by the Providence Supervisor's office near Route 29 and Cedar Lane. The Yorktown Square condominiums on Gallows Road also have a green roof.

Mr. Bouchard also responded to several questions, integrating the answers into his presentation as summarized above.

Business Meeting —

- a. The minutes for the March 31 meeting were amended and approved unanimously as amended.
- b. President Carol Hawn reported that the Washington Post contribution to the Citizen of the Year banquet had not yet been received because of the Post's new quarterly disbursement system, but is expected.
- c. Jeff Parnes, who could not be present, has reported that the Federation's balance is currently \$5,197.95.
- d. Art Wells reported that the Nominating Committee had been formed and is active; the committee hoped to resolve a list of nominees by the following weekend. Members include Patrick Rea, Scott Schlegel, Carey Campbell, and Becky Cate, with Art Wells as the chairman.
- e. Charles Dane reported that the Education Committee is concerned about whether there will be adequate opportunity for public involvement in the review of the status of buildings and lands vacated by the administrative consolidation. He has met with Superintendent Jack Dale to discuss this and others on the committee have met with their supervisors. Superintendent Dale plans to take up this issue at the next School Board meeting. The intent had been to review these properties on a case-by-case basis to determine which should be retained for possible future use for schools and which should be transferred to the county. The committee's concern arose because no plan for public review of these decisions had been developed.
- f. Art Wells reported from Braddock District Council that Supervisor Bulova had attended the most recent meeting and been very complimentary about President Carol Hawn's presentation on the budget on behalf of the Federation. The Braddock District Council continues to follow up on its association workshop. It has decided to meet with legislators in the early fall next year, rather than in late spring.
- g. Sally Ormsby reported from the Providence District Council on a very well-attended town meeting co-hosted by the council. There were 400 to 450 persons present, including Congressmen Frank Wolfe and Tom Davis. At the meeting, Congressman Davis announced that he is against allowing the use of Metro lands as part of the planned high-density "smart growth" development in Vienna, which would significantly reduce the scale of that project.

Next Membership Meeting: May 19, 2005. The Honorable Gerald Connolly, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors; election of 2005–2006 Federation officers. Next Board meeting: April 28, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.