

McLean Citizens Association Board of Directors' Meeting Draft Minutes, February 4, 2009

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS (6)

Rob Jackson	President.....	Present
Steve DelBianco	First Vice President.....	Present
Darren Ewing	Second Vice President.....	Absent (Excused)
William Denk	Treasurer.....	Absent (Excused)
Sally Horn	Corresponding Secretary.....	Present
Desmond B. O'Rourke	Recording Secretary.....	Present

DIRECTORS REPRESENTING NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (20)

John Adams	Georgetown Pike & Potomac River Assoc.	Present
Ted Alexander	Westberry HOA	Present
Whit Ayres	Franklin Area	Absent (Excused)
Robert Wrede	Evermay Community Association.....	Present
Donald Borcharding	Brookhaven/Forest Villa Association	Present
Louis (Bud) Freeman	McLean House North Council	Present
Jane Greenstein	Chesterford HOA.....	Present
Gregg Hagedorn	Greenway Heights Civic Association.....	Absent
Philip Mento	Salona.....	Absent (Excused)
Ken Nunnenkamp	The Reserve	Absent (Excused)
James Phelps	Lemon Road	Present
Robert (Bob) Philipp	Shouse Village Community Association.....	Absent (Excused)
James A. Robertson	Evans Mill Pond Owners Association	Present
Ed Saperstein	Glen Haven Farms	Present
John Schaefer	McLean Broyhill Estates	Present
Suzanne Samuels	Langley Oaks.....	Present
Wade Smith	McLean Hamlet Citizens Association	Present
Tom Stoll	Chesterbrook Woods Citizens Association.....	Present
(Nominee not confirmed)	Hallcrest Heights.....	
Milt Whitfield	Lynwood.....	Present

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS (14)

Rob Bates	Present
Tom Brock	Present
Malcolm Butler	Absent
Rekha Nadkarni	Present
Chris Cole	Present
Frank Crandall	Present
Dan DuVal	Present
Bob Jordan/FCFCA	Present
Margaret Malone	Present
Dale Murad	Present
Theodore Smith	Present
Jim Turner	Present
Susan Turner	Present
Mark Zetts	Present

Guests whose attendance was recorded by recognition or signing in:

Joseph L. Gibson.....	Supervisor Foust's Office	Dan Alcorn.....	Transportation Co-Chair
Jack Wuerker.....	Transportation Co-Chair	Mike DeCicco	Connection Newspapers
April Cronenberg	McLean Newspaper	Jim Mietus	Dranesville Budget Task Force

CALL TO ORDER

President Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM at McLean Community Center’s Community Hall (sections B & C).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the MCA Board meeting of January 7, 2009 were approved as amended.

TREASURER’S REPORT

			TREASURER'S REPORT		
			4-Feb-09		
Checking Account					
Beginning Balance	1/7/09				17,975.02
Additions	None	Deposit			
Total - Additions					0.00
Total					17,975.02
Deduct					
	1/17/2009	Check # 1072	S. Horn - Office Supplies	25.18	
	1/17/2009	Check # 1073	Kwik Kopy - Placards	25.88	
Total - Deducts					51.06
					17,923.96
Certificates of Deposit					
	3000102773	APY 2.5%		5,427.25	
	3000102774	APY 2.5%		5,394.19	
	3000103064	APY 3.5%		5,589.40	
					16,410.84
Net Worth					34,334.80
Checking account and certificates of deposit are at SONA Bank in McLean.					
Respectfully submitted,					
William J. Denk, Treasurer					

REPORT OF PRESIDENT / EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Jackson proposed that the nominating committee for the slate of incoming MCA directors and MCF trustees will consist of Michael Clancy (Chair), Margaret Malone, Jim Phelps, Rosemary Ryan and Adrienne Whyte. His proposal was unanimously approved. Nomination forms for aspiring directors and trustees will be mailed this month. Applications must be postmarked no later than March 12, 2009.

Pres. Jackson reminded directors of their obligation to give prior notice of an absence from the monthly board meeting. Three unexcused absences will lead to automatic removal of a director from the board.

He encouraged directors to spread word to their HOAs about the winter MCA Membership Meeting on February 18, at the Community Center. The spring meeting will be in May and will feature a prominent elected official, possibly Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA-10th District).

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

Dranesville Budget Task Force Report

Introduction

As Fairfax County grapples with the most difficult budget cycle it has faced in anyone's memory, it has been a great honor to have been asked by Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust to contribute to the consideration of the painful, even excruciating, choices county government must make to meet this crisis. Our Task Force has, we acknowledge, asked more questions than it has provided answers, and as the challenge has grown even during our deliberations—swelling from a \$430 million projected shortfall to one approaching \$650 million—we have often felt as if we have been chasing our tail. But one thing is clear: we live in a world-class county, and despite difficult, trying current circumstances, we will continue to do so. In the short term, our community may have to moderate our collective expectations that recent economic good times have raised, but we are convinced that, through shared sacrifice and prudent management, our County government can continue to meet its citizens' needs and maintain the quality of life that has made Fairfax the place we are all proud to make our home.

The Task Force

Comprised of members who bring a vast array of perspectives and talents to the process, our Task Force tried to focus on each Line of Business (LOB) in the County's budget. It was apparent to us that County staff had done, for the most part, an admirable job in identifying potential savings, and staff's hard work helped us quickly recognize the true magnitude of the budget challenge we face.

We have undertaken limited consideration of the business—or politics—of the revenue side of the County's options for addressing its budget shortfall, except in areas where the County is, through its delivery of services, able to generate revenue (park entrance fees, library fees, and the like). We are under no illusion that these sorts of revenue-enhancements can solve the problem, or even significantly contribute to its resolution, but in circumstances like these every little bit helps, and it is clear to us that citizens can and should expect that the direct cost of County services will go up.

We did not dive into the thicket of discussing or recommending a specific course of action on the County's main source of revenue—the property tax—except to observe our consensus view that, given the enormity of the likely revenue shortfall, no budget solution will be possible that does not include an upward adjustment in the property tax rate—both residential and commercial. Our view is, however, that the LOB review process has successfully identified viable, albeit difficult (although in some cases overdue) savings, and that the County professional and political decision makers should muster the discipline to strive to implement the overall 15% budget cuts agencies have identified (although not across the board and not necessarily the specific reductions which the LOB process identified). Then and only then the shortfall which will still predictably exist will necessarily have to be made up by increased revenue, including user fees and an increase in the property tax rate.

We focused on the proposals of the County staff, broken down by LOBs. We looked particularly for two things: first, agencies that had not, in our view, stepped up to the plate with realistic plans in response to County management's call for detailed budget cut proposals. In fact, it was clear to us that some agencies took the process more seriously than others and, indeed, we were affirmatively disappointed that some agencies did not propose realistic cuts. Second, we worked hard to identify potential savings ideas that had not been identified by County staff.

Principles

As the Task Force conducted its deliberations, a set of principles began to emerge which can fairly be described as representing the consensus view of the members as to the prism through which the County's political and professional decision makers should view the budget choices we face. Among those consensus principles (in no particular order):

1. No aspect of the County budget should be off limits to budget-cutting
2. In allocating scarce dollars County government should prioritize its core functions as: public protection (police/law enforcement, fire, etc.) first; education, second; and human services, third, consistent, however, with Principle One. We recognize how difficult it is to prioritize those crucial functions in the context of increasingly scarce resources, when each function is so vital to the continuation of what makes Fairfax County the place that it is, and each function is intertwined with and dependent upon the other.
3. We are concerned that the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) proposal known as "Tier 2" may well represent an insufficient cut. We looked, with some attention, at the FCPS budget, but not with nearly the level of detail that we reviewed the County's General Fund expenditures. It is clear to the Task Force that, while we recognize the FCPS as perhaps the crown-jewel of our community, and the principal driver of our County's economic and cultural ascent over the past several decades, as the recipient of 53% of the County's expenditures FCPS will necessarily have to be a major participant in the budget cuts which will have to be imposed. This is consistent with Principle One.
4. The 15% reduction exercise has been a helpful process in analyzing areas of focus, but cuts should not be "across the board." County decision makers need to be mindful that some areas of the budget may simply not be prudently cut by 15%, while others may well be susceptible to cuts larger than 15%, or even elimination.
5. County professional and political management should look for every reasonable opportunity to raise fees for County-provided services.
6. New programs and areas of recent growth ought to be a focus of decision makers, and have been a focus of the Task Force. Under these economic circumstances, it may well be that programs the County once did without, or once funded at lower levels, are programs that we will have to (or can) do without or fund at lower levels again. This budget crisis may well provide an opportunity for the County to exercise fiscal restraint for the long term, and an opportunity to make tough decisions now that it might not otherwise make.
7. Rooting out fraud, abuse, and redundancy will not solve our problem, although the effort to identify and address those issues should be of paramount importance.
8. Expenditures should not be cut in areas that might encourage laxity in financial integrity, especially in the Department of Finance.
9. Functions in one agency should not be cut and transferred to another agency(ies) unless it will, in fact, result in a significant overall decrease in costs.
10. Outsourcing should be encouraged where it will result in significant savings.
11. Balancing the budget must involve both increasing revenues and decreasing expenses.

Recommendations (in no particular order)

1. While recognizing that planning for and promoting better economic times is important to the County's future, the Task Force nevertheless concluded that the Economic Development Authority and the Office of Community Revitalization and Reinvestment ought to be a focus of major cuts, and concluded that the EDA, in particular, had not presented a credible response to the LOB process.
2. The Task Force was disappointed that the LOB presentations of certain other LOBs was also not realistic, including the Courts, the Sheriff, the Health Department, and the Department of Finance.
3. Consolidation of certain County offices/programs should be seriously considered, including, among others, merging Public Information Office functions across departments/agencies, merging Technology Office functions across department/agencies, and merging the Department of Administration for Human Services and the Department of Systems Management for Human Services.

4. Our review revealed starkly that the necessary cuts will most affect our County workforce, since so much of the budget is comprised of personnel costs. The number of vacant positions throughout the County government was surprising to us, and our view is that, as a general proposition, any position that has been vacant—as many appear to have been—for more than 18 or 24 months, clearly ought to be cut.

5. The Task Force believes that the area of personnel benefits represents a fertile ground for potential savings, and that the BOS should consider significant changes in the benefits to County employees. Areas that should be examined and closely considered include the current healthcare structure (e.g., increase deductibles, dependent costs or reduce benefits); proportional coverage for part-time employees (e.g., do not give 100% coverage to employees who work 20 hours per week, or increase their costs for full benefits); elimination of overtime; and restructuring the retirement program for all new hires to allow for lump sum payouts. The BOS should also examine and closely consider some combination of reducing paid vacation days; suspending 401(k) match programs; consideration of further furloughs; and elimination or reduction of COLAs or market rate adjustments for Police and Fire. The Task Force recommends elimination of the DROP program. Finally, the County should also consider moving from a defined benefits program to a defined contribution program.

6. There is a huge fleet of county vehicles. No new vehicles should be purchased until there is a critical assessment and re-justification of absolute need. In the meantime, usage of present vehicles—and any other County travel-- should be strongly constrained. In addition, the practice of employees driving County vehicles to and from home should be drastically reduced and permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Instead, the County should emphasize reimbursing employees for the use of their personal, rather than County-provided, vehicles.

7. Implement strategic budget cuts rather than across-the-board cuts. In some cases, cuts may be less than the 15% proposed in the LOBs and in other cases cuts may exceed 15%. While the LOBs can provide guidance to that process, they should not be the only criteria used. It became very clear from our review of the LOBs that there was no consistency in the level of seriousness that departments devoted to this process. In some cases, the proposed LOB reductions reflected evident care and consideration of their charge. In other cases, the proposed reductions did not appear to be serious, or even worse, were frustratingly disingenuous. In evaluating the need for cuts, special scrutiny should be given to those departments and programs which received the largest increases in funding and personnel - or recently launched new programs or initiatives - during the fiscal years at issue. In addition, a number of the program cuts proposed in the human services area in particular were deeply troubling and presented a great risk of real harm to some of our most vulnerable county residents. Cutting human services deeply during this crisis may -- in some instances -- be counter-productive, as doing so will undoubtedly create additional need by removing many of the supports needed by people who are barely making ends meet. In addition, many of the proposed human services cuts to county contracts would weaken the non-profit organizations with which the county partners, thereby putting yet more strain on services to the county's low-income residents. In short, some of the proposed cuts would ultimately end up costing the county more in the long run, and should be avoided where possible.

8. Many departments and agencies should have their management reporting structures reworked. For example, there are far too many department heads with only two/three horizontal reports; further down the organization this is also the case. This is neither cost effective nor efficient.

9. The presentation by DPWES relating to creating a storm water utility was suggested as an additional revenue source. The Task Force recommends that the BOS seriously consider the proposal.

10. The BOS should revisit its policy guidance relating to the use of the Revenue Stabilization Fund.

11. We are pleased to learn that the BOS is leading by example, and has cut its current budget by 7%. It should continue that leadership by extending those cuts to 15%, and making them permanent.

12. Consistent with the Task Force's view that the County should look for any and all sources of revenue available to it, the Task Force supports re-imposition of the County decal fee, without display requirements.

13. The County should eliminate the accounting practice of carrying forward excess funds above the actual cost of contracts.

Conclusion

After public release of the County Manager's proposed budget, there will be opportunity for continued community dialogue, and we hope that the community will take full advantage of that opportunity. To date, while we applaud County staff's tireless efforts to inform, work with, and involve citizens in this grueling budget process, we reluctantly conclude that the data collected at community dialogue sessions, and the compilation of citizen responses at those sessions, are not particularly helpful in providing direction. If nothing else, the numbers of participants, as a percentage of the overall population, was relatively small. There is an element of self-selection in participants that has to be factored in as well. In addition, the process for most citizens was very abstract in the absence of an actual budget against which to react.

Thus, we hope -- with an acknowledgement that the impact on the limited staff who can respond to concerns and questions should be weighed -- that County leadership will solicit additional citizen dialogue in the spring after the County Executive's proposed budget is released. We stand ready to continue to make whatever contribution to that dialogue Supervisor Foust and our fellow citizens of Dranesville might find helpful.

January 23, 2009

Dranesville Budget Task Force

Richard C. (Rip) Sullivan, Jr., Chairman
Paul Anderson
Steven Bloom
Sue Boucher
Nancy Hopkins
Jim Luce
Jim Mietus
Al Rosier
Rosemary Ryan
Ted Smith
Tim Thompson
Jim Turner
Armand Weiss

In the absence of Burt Halprin, Chair of the B&T Committee, Ted Smith and Jim Mietus introduced the report. After much discussion and the lack of any clear resolution, the report was put to a vote, and was tabled until the March meeting. Ted King was opposed and Jim Turner abstained.

EDUCATION & YOUTH COMMITTEE

No resolution.

ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

No resolution.

Co-Chair Frank Crandall gave notice of a workshop session to be held in Herndon Library March 5, at 7 p.m. Topic: the invasion of local trees by the emerald ash borer. Info: Heather Finch at 703-2241770.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Planning & Zoning Committee Report

February 4, 2009

Co-chairs: Dale Murad and Mark Zetts

McLean Professional Park (MPP) APR: MPP Owner Peter Lunt withdrew his APR nomination to allow retail in MPP. The nomination was reviewed by the Dranesville APR Task Force on January 21, 2009 and MCA, MRC, MPC, Bryn Mawr and other residents testified in opposition. The Task Force voted unanimously to oppose it.

Vinson Hall APR: Vinson Hall withdrew its APR nomination to allow a maximum of 350 independent living units. It will instead pursue a Special Exception amendment that will permit the facility to expand the number of units to a level previously approved under its existing SE permit. The timing and the specifics of its SEA are not yet known.

Presentation on Wireless Technology: The committee will receive a presentation on wireless antenna technology and industry trends at either our February or March meeting.

Wireless Antenna 2232 Review Applications: The number of applications for cell towers will be rising significantly in Fairfax County this year. This is due to rising demand for wireless bandwidth from users of wireless devices such as the I-Phone. In addition, Cricket will be starting up wireless service sometime this spring and it plans to install 90 antennas. Roughly 10% of these will be in the Dranesville area, the locations of which are yet unknown although there is a burgeoning trend to place these antennas inside existing church steeples.

- Mark Zetts

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

McLEAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Resolution on Proposed Changes to the Level and Structure of Fees for Overweight Trucks in the Commonwealth of Virginia

February 4, 2009

WHEREAS in 2008 the Virginia General Assembly directed the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to review the current fee structure for permits granted to overweight vehicles operating on Virginia's highways, in order to determine what, if any, additional fees should be associated with highway damage and added maintenance costs caused by such vehicles; and

WHEREAS the review was carried out by VDOT's research partner, the Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC), in consultation with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and representatives of the industries that own and/or operate overload and overweight vehicles; and

WHEREAS the results of the VTRC study show clearly that the monetary damages and additional maintenance costs caused by overweight vehicles are significantly higher than the fees paid by those vehicles; and

WHEREAS a large number of haulers are allowed to receive permits for overweight loads without any fee payment whatsoever (including haulers for concrete, containerized cargo, excavated material, cotton module, specialized well-drilling equipment, solid waste, Virginia-grown farm products in Accomack and Northampton counties, and sand, gravel, and crushed stone in the seven southwest Virginia coal severance counties); and

WHEREAS VDOT has drafted legislation (SB-1018) recommending changes to existing overload and overweight fees that are not based on the full costs of damage and added maintenance costs, due to concerns about the business impacts of charging fees that fully reflect such damage costs, and that rely on lump-sum (flat) charges rather than a combination of lump-sum charges and charges per vehicle-mile traveled;

WHEREAS costs not borne by those responsible for highway damage must be borne substantially by the taxpayers

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) strongly supports appropriate user charges for overweight trucks and therefore recommends a fee structure and level for overweight trucks that more closely reflect the estimated pavement-and bridge-damage costs attributed to them, in order to:

- allow the Commonwealth to generate sufficient revenue to recover more fully the costs that the Commonwealth incurs to mitigate the damage and added maintenance costs caused by overweight trucks;
- send better price signals to the trucking industry and consumers of the products that are being transported, in order to reduce the amount of damage and added maintenance costs caused by the overweight trucks, as the price signals take effect over time;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MCA recommends an additional full review of the results of the VTRC study and VDOT's recommendations, expanding the group of "stakeholders" to include the general taxpayer as well as individuals, groups and organizations with a direct commercial interest in the results of the study;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the MCA recommends that the additional full review should include although not be limited to:

- the justification for issuing free permits to a large number of categories of haulers of overweight loads;
- the need for mileage-related charges as well as lump-sum fees, given the high correlation between vehicle-miles traveled by overweight vehicles and the pavement damages they cause.

Rob Bates introduced a Resolution that applies to overloaded and overweight trucks on State roads. It recommends increases in charges. VDOT is not pressing for new charges. The VDOT rationale is that higher fees would not be acceptable to "stakeholders" (trucking firm owners). However, since there is no penalty fee system, the flat fees of \$100 and \$250 are not the best way to penalize offending trucks.

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

TYSONS CORNER LIAISON COMMITTEE

No Report.

MCLEAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

No Report.

MCLEAN REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

No Report.

FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS

No Report

MCLEAN CITIZENS FOUNDATION

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

President Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Desmond B. O'Rourke, Recording Secretary