



Nick Firth's Zoom Meeting
Tue. Feb 13, 2024

Summary:

The South County Federation (SCF) Meeting started with President Wendy Henley addressing housekeeping notes before approving the January meeting minutes and the treasurer's report. Casey Whitmarsh from the South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce provided an update, highlighting the importance of social media engagement and donations to support Brain Injury Services' nonprofit work. Supervisor Dan Stork provided updates on various community events, such as the Mount Vernon District Town Hall and early voting. He also shared comprehensive updates on several county projects, emphasizing the need for public participation.

The meeting revolved around the progress and challenges of the Overlook Park project, with concerns raised about the delay in finalizing programs due to ongoing discussions with Waste Management. It also discussed changes in the FCPD's pursuit policy, with insights provided into the reasons behind the policy change, citing safety concerns and the high costs associated with pursuits.

The Mount Vernon School Board representative Mateo Dunne provided a detailed update on the 2025 FCPS proposed budget, highlighting the proposed multi-million dollar increase and the historical dependence on state and county appropriations.

During the Fairfax County Park Authority update, positive developments were shared, such as the approval to start construction on a snack stand and bathroom at Woodlawn Little League and the potential partnership for building two rectangle-shaped fields near the Barrett House.

Representatives of elected officials covered various topics, from legislative sessions to infrastructure projects, highlighting the ongoing communication and collaboration between the officials and the community.

Members of the SCF discussed the construction of data centers in Fairfax County, with Supervisor Storck emphasizing the need for careful zoning and environmental considerations, expressing his support for data centers if they can be built in an environmentally sound manner. The discussion underscored the pressing need to increase state funding of Fairfax County requirements, the complexities of addressing the county's financial challenges, and the need for data centers to increase the tax base.

Peter Weyland, the Transportation Chair, provided a comprehensive update on the Bus Rapid Transit meeting, detailing the proposed system's design, the grant funding acceptance by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and the impact on traffic due to construction. In addition, the widening of Rolling Road at Old Keene Mill Road will begin in 2024 and is slated to end in 2027.

Nick Firth, Land Use Co-Chair, presented two resolutions for a vote regarding 9420 Gunston Cove Road, west of the railroad tracks, and a housing development on Old Ox Road. Both resolutions were approved.

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Chapters & Topics:

South County Federation Meeting

Wendy Henley, President of the South County Federation, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. She covered general housekeeping notes, emphasizing the importance of muting audio, turning on video cameras, and displaying full names for the record. The meeting then moved on to approve the January meeting minutes, with a correction to the Truist checking account amount (\$117.51). No other issues were noted. Ms. Henley motioned approval with modification, seconded by Larry Clark. The vote was unanimous.

Jim Fenton, Treasurer, reported that the financial accounts balances remain unchanged. The Nuveen (TIA CREF) Money Market Account balance is \$6,354.21, while the Truist checking account balance is \$117.51. Marty Schirmacher asked Mr. Fenton whether the accounts were earning interest. Mr. Fenton replied that the money market account is an investment account that earns interest. However, he is unsure about the exact amount of interest earned until the following quarterly statement arrives. On the other hand, the Truist account does not gain any interest.

Small Business Spotlight and Community Events

Casey Whitmarsh discussed the February small business spotlight, focusing on Brain Injury Services and urging support through social media engagement and donations. He also mentioned the upcoming 15th annual Monopoly tournament and the recent Lido pizza ribbon-cutting event, expressing gratitude for community involvement and engagement.

* Community engagement and town hall meetings

Updates on County Projects and Information Sessions

Supervisor Storck gives updates on the progress of the comprehensive plan, Overlook Park landfill, county data center report, and the Land Development Services virtual meeting on Chesapeake Bay code changes. He emphasizes the importance of community involvement and participation in the upcoming information sessions to review and provide feedback on the proposed changes.

Discussion on Overlook Park and Waste Management

Dale Rumberger, Environmental & Parks Co-Chair, expresses concerns about the delay in finalizing the programs for Overlook Park due to ongoing discussions with Waste Management. Supervisor Storck acknowledges the challenges and emphasizes the need for persistent advocacy to push Waste Management to fulfill its commitments. Marty Schirmacher raises concerns about the neglect of certain structures in the park and requests follow-up on the issue.

Discussion on Police Pursuit Policy and Other Community Concerns

Mr. Schirmacher expresses concern about the police pursuit policy, questioning the decision not to pursue individuals committing misdemeanor offenses. Supervisor Storck explains the reasons behind the policy change, emphasizing the safety and cost considerations. Lt. Anthony Stancampiano adds that there are built-in exceptions to the policy, allowing for overrides in specific circumstances, such as observing a DWI or dealing with serial crimes. A question regarding merging FCPD and Animal Control will require further investigation.

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Update on FCPS Budget and School Board Public Hearing

Mateo Dunne, Mount Vernon School Board representative, delivers a comprehensive update on the FCPS budget, emphasizing the proposed \$300 million increase, the reliance on state and county appropriations, and the need to support the diverse and changing student population, including ESL and Special education. He stresses the budget's alignment with a strategic plan, his priorities of academic excellence, mental and behavioral health support, and fiscal responsibility, and his focus on questioning business as usual to ensure maximum return on investment for taxpayer dollars.

Fairfax County Park Authority Update

Linwood Gorham updates the group on the progress of ongoing projects, highlighting the imminent construction of a snack stand and bathroom at Woodlawn Little League and the potential partnership for building two rectangle-shaped fields near the Barrett House. Mr. Schirmacher raises concerns about preserving historical structures and marking tape in the apple orchard, prompting Linwood to investigate further to address these issues.

Updates from Representatives and Legislative Updates

Ms. Henley leads a section where representatives from various officials provide updates, including a new representative from Congressman Jerry Connolly's office and a legislative update from Benjamin Hermerding, Delegate Kathy Tran's Chief of Staff. The meeting also includes a visit to Delegate Tran's office and a shout-out to a member in the newsletter, highlighting the engagement and interaction between the officials and the community members.

* General Assembly session and legislative updates

* Budget process and biennial budget in Virginia

Discussion on Data Centers and Parks & Environment Updates

In response to questions about data centers, Supervisor Storck emphasizes the necessity of data centers in Northern Virginia and Fairfax County due to the increasing demand for data access. He stresses the importance of zoning and environmental considerations, indicating that he will support data centers if they can be built environmentally sound. Additionally, the Parks & Environment committee, led by Linwood Gorham, provides updates on budgeting efforts within the Mount Vernon District for FCPA priorities.

* Data centers and zoning ordinances

Funding Challenges and School Budget

Supervisor Storck addresses the county's funding challenges, particularly in funding schools, and emphasizes the need for state support. He highlights the impact of high property taxes and the limited revenue-generating options available. Ms. Henley suggests allocating a percentage of data center revenues to the school district. Still, Supervisor Storck explains the limitations of this approach and expresses concerns about the school board's budget proposal.

* Funding for schools and county services

Bus Rapid Transit, Parkway Upgrades Update, and Rolling Road

Peter Weyland, Transportation Chair, discusses the recent Bus Rapid Transit meeting, emphasizing the proposed system's features and the grant funding received from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission. He also addresses the renaming of Jefferson Davis Highway to Richmond Highway and the EPA assessment findings for the GW Parkway Mount Vernon Trail upgrades, indicating upcoming

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changes to the Parkway's travel lanes. In addition, the widening of Rolling Road at Old Keene Mill Road will begin in 2024 and is slated to end in 2027.

Public Safety

Jonathan Kiell, Public Safety Chair, reported on the Fairfax County Police District Webpages. Each district has its page that provides information on community reports, crime numbers, problem areas, and good news for the community. Lieutenant Anthony Stancampiano answered questions at the meeting. He reported no updates and that the DWI Squad was working from Lorton Station while the Operations Support Building was under construction. Office equipment is arriving, and Shirley Ginwright is helping with community outreach. Ms. Ginwright said they plan to form the Community Advisory Committee in May or June. She is gathering a list of potential members and aiming to form the largest and best group in Lorton. Lt. Stancampiano noted that anyone can attend the meetings, and membership is not required. During the meeting, Mr. Shirmacher asked about the Police Union's opposition to merging the police department with the animal control unit. Lt. Stancampiano responded that he didn't have much information, but the discussion is before the Board of Supervisors as part of the 2025 budget process.

Land Use

The Land Use Committee Co-Chairs Nick Firth and Keith Shovlin reported on a resolution regarding a business owner looking to expand their operation from Merrifield to the Lorton area. The committee met twice to address concerns with staff, but they could not move forward. The resolution is to oppose the Gunston Cove Road business application. During the meeting, Kenneth Frye asked questions about the site's zoning, its permitted uses, the Visioning plan, and its impact on taxes. Mr. Firth clarified that the site has been zoned I-6 Industrial for a long time, and by right, it can only be a concrete batching plant. The Visioning Task Force is still in process, aiming to offer guidance at the Comprehensive Plan level. The motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Firth and seconded by Mr. Shovlin. The vote passed with one abstention from Kenneth Frye of Newington Forest.

Nick Firth introduced a resolution for a proposed housing development at the intersection of Hooes Rd and Route 123/Ox Road. The proposal is to change the Comprehensive Plan and zoning. The resolution supports the comprehensive plan amendment to change the density from R-1 to 2.64 units per acre. However, the committee will not provide full support until the staff report is filed and the zoning discussion is complete. The motion passed unanimously. The move to approve the resolution was proposed by Mr. Firth and seconded by Mr. Shovlin with unanimous approval.

Mr. Shovlin shared updates on recent and upcoming business openings. Taco Rock opened in January, while Yafa Grille, Kokee Tea, Hangry Joe's Hot Chicken, and F45 Fitness are expected to open soon at Liberty. He also provided an update on the Praesum redevelopment of Sunrise Assisted Living Home. The redevelopment had conditions on the Non-Residential Use Permit, and as of January, they have filed for pre-approval of their stormwater permit. However, there has been no update on the Chick-fil-A application since July. During the meeting, Marty Shirmacher inquired about a lot on Gunston Cove Road and whether its current use as a storage lot for dump trucks is legitimate. Nick Rinehart looked into the matter and found that the lot is owned by the people who own the Sunoco gas station and is zoned C-5. According to Mr. Rinehart, nothing precludes using the lot based on zoning.

Education

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Wendy Henley supported Mateo Dunne of the FCPS School Board's budget update and appreciated the presentation's clarity and thoroughness. She did not have any additional feedback to offer but thanked Mr. Dunne for his hard work and dedication to improving the county's education system.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next meeting is March 12th at 7 p.m.

Action Items:

- * Dale Rumberger-Beechwood will provide an update on priorities at the next meeting.
- * VDOT will install no parking signs on the shoulder of the 95S off-ramp leading to Lorton Road to prevent trucks from parking there.
- * Ben Hermerding will follow up with VDOT and Fairfax Water to address the manhole cover issues on Lorton Road. (This issue is not just manhole covers but the covers of water shut-off valves on Lorton Rd.)
- * Nick Rinehart will take the issue of manhole cover depth and stormwater management to Fairfax County stormwater management for resolution.
- * Benjamin Hermerding will continue to ask VDOT to contact Fairfax Water and get them to lift the manhole covers off of Lorton Road.
- * Nick Rinehart will confirm ownership of stormwater manholes and follow up with Fairfax County stormwater management.
- * Nick will schedule a committee meeting to discuss the recommendations for data centers.
- * Dan Storck will question the county staff on their responses to the recommendations for data centers.
- * Linwood Gorham will chair the ongoing effort within Mount Vernon District to look at the budgeting process for FCPA and their priorities.
- * Peter Weyland will put a link in the chat to direct people to review the signage and displays from the Bus Rapid Transit meeting.

Key Questions:

- * What are the updates on the proposed merger of the county animal shelter and police service?
- * What is the status of the Praesum facility?
- * What is the plan for the two rectangle-shaped fields near the Barrett House?
- * What is the status of the South Run Valley Trail?
- * Will there be language in the updated comprehensive plan that will provide revenues to the schools when data centers are built in Fairfax County?

Notepad:

- * No notes

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