



General Membership Meeting Via Zoom
Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 7 pm

Summary

The South County Federation convened its monthly membership meeting, addressing various topics. Key discussions included the county's budget situation, potential cuts, and updates on ongoing projects such as the Pohick Road project and the Park Advisory Committee's investigation into cost concerns. Additionally, the meeting provided insights into transportation projects, the tourism initiative, and the recent introduction of a purple bin for recycling glass. The new director of the Workhouse Arts Foundation also shared his vision for the organization's future. Furthermore, the team tackled the area's ongoing traffic challenges and potential building projects.

Call to Order- President, Ms. Wendy Henley

Ms. Henley called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and warmly welcomed all attendees. She initiated the proceedings by presenting the minutes from the September 2024 meeting for approval. Ms. Henley invited members to raise any questions or suggestions for corrections. With no objections, she proposed that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded, and the minutes from September 2024 were approved as written. Ms. Henley also conveyed her sincere gratitude to all who attended the first in-person meeting in September, held at the Lorton District Police Station. She highlighted the importance of this meeting, as it represented a return to face-to-face interactions after years of virtual meetings. Everyone's attendance and participation were greatly appreciated. Furthermore, she expressed her appreciation for the exceptional support provided by Supervisor Storck's staff.

Treasurer Report- Mr. James Fenton

Mr. Fenton delivered the financial report detailing the organization's current financial standing. He shared that the balance in the checking account is \$1,380.26, while the money market account boasts a more substantial amount of \$5,064.88. Together, these accounts reflect a total combined balance of \$6,445.14. After presenting the figures, Mr. Fenton asked questions from the attendees regarding the financial report, but no inquiries were raised.

Truist Money Market	\$5,064.88
Truist Checking	\$1,380.26
Total	\$6,445.14

Fairfax County Park Authority Update- Mr. Linwood Gorham

Mr. Gorham reported that last month, at the request of the County Executive, the team began preparing to inform the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive about potential budget cuts. Specifically, they were tasked with identifying what they would need to cut if they had to reduce their budget by 10%. They completed this exercise and voted on what they referred to as the "unrecommended budget cuts." These proposed cuts included reducing the number of nature centers, closing one of their nature centers, and eliminating a few positions, including



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one naturalist and one historic preservation specialist. They also suggested reductions in various other areas to make the cuts as manageable as possible. They are currently advocating for their budget to remain unchanged and are optimistic about achieving this goal. Additionally, they have proposed a few items for reimbursement in the future. They believe it is essential to increase their budget to keep up with inflation, which impacts everyone, including government agencies.

As Chair of the Park Advisory Committee, Mr. Gorham is collaborating with the Mount Vernon Magisterial District to investigate the factors contributing to the rising costs of various projects. A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, featuring a presentation by a Planning and Development Department representative at the Park Authority. They have requested detailed breakdowns of specific projects in Mount Vernon to enhance their understanding and provide insights for future initiatives. If there are any questions, they can be addressed at that time. This concludes the update.

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Report- Supervisor Dan Storck

Supervisor Storck began his update by discussing potential issues related to the Plaza project. He mentioned that Delegate Henson is taking on the challenge of addressing some of these issues, including the need for traffic calming measures.

The update continued with the usual reports. The October newsletter was recently distributed, and a Good News Advisory was sent out in September, providing updates on developments in the South County and Federation areas, which recipients should have received.

Regarding Tourism Tuesday, the initiative concluded Tuesday, October 1st. The program aimed to drive more tourism and traffic to the area while supporting significant events, including Gunston Hall, the Workhouse Arts Center, and the National Museum of the United States Army. It was believed that this initiative effectively connected people with the available attractions in the community. This effort ties back to the branding work done for Potomac Banks, which highlights historical, recreational, and artistic events and locations.

Additionally, there was a follow-up on the purple recycling bins. In July, it was announced that a new purple bin had been added to the Norton Community Center and Library. The community was encouraged to take the opportunity to drop off glass for recycling, as it is a great way to contribute. Concerns were previously raised about vehicles pushing into the bin, damaging both the bin and the adjacent fence. County staff have been asked to investigate this issue and are working on solutions to prevent further damage.

The subject of data centers was revisited during a recent public hearing in the county. This marked the second significant hearing on the matter, continuing discussions that have been taking place over the past couple of years, particularly in the last year. The latest hearing was held on September 10th, so Supervisor Storck could not attend the September meeting. During the hearing, zoning ordinance changes that the board has been reviewing for some time were



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discussed. This was a rehearing due to the previous notice requirement not being met. The core of the discussion focused on ensuring that any regulations put in place would protect residential neighborhoods and the environment while also addressing the need for economic development through opportunities for data centers. Careful consideration is required to determine where these centers should be located, and any new construction must adhere to the highest environmental and water quality standards. A measure related to data centers that reflects these priorities was believed to have been approved. As the process moves forward, its implementation will be monitored. A pivotal point to consider is the significant revenue data centers contribute to local budgets. For instance, 95% of Loudoun County's \$940 million budget is funded through data center tax revenue, which is crucial for reducing real estate taxes and funding local government services.

Significant progress has been made on the waste management landfill at Overlook Ridge Park. Recently, a successful tour was held with the leadership of the South County Federation and other key stakeholders. The county attorneys have been engaging with the waste management representatives, and approximately 30 individuals have convened to address the project's final details. Once these details are finalized, waste management will submit all required documents to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for state approval. Christine Morin has been involved in this process and notified DEQ to prepare for the upcoming submission, which will facilitate a quicker review once the documentation is received. Although progress is being made, the timeline has extended beyond initial expectations. The team appreciates everyone's patience as they continue to advance the project.

Supervisor Storck emphasized that progress is critical and expressed his pleasure with that. Regarding the Lorton Road and Silverbrook Road intersection project study discussed last week, he noted the questions surrounding the Lorton Road and Silverwood Road intersection study and aimed to clarify a few points. He mentioned that a federal earmark provided by Congressman Connolly had been turned over to the county's Department of Transportation (DOT), totaling approximately \$850,000. The DOT has begun scoping the project. Following this phase, the capital projects team will conduct an initial project review involving the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Storck's office, the county's transportation office, and input from the community. While this initial work will help progress the project, funding remains a significant challenge, as the overall project will likely be expensive. However, with the scoping process underway, they can prepare for the design phase. Supervisor Storck reminded everyone that this process can be lengthy and is not expected to be completed quickly. Still, he assured them that all parties were committed to seeing it through. He noted that the search for additional funding is a priority, particularly in light of new federal regulations, such as the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). These guidelines ensure public rights-of-way, like sidewalks and street crossings, are accessible to individuals with disabilities. However, these regulations may potentially increase costs and delay project completion. The team plans to gather more information and provide updates in future meetings.

Supervisor Storck mentioned that more speed cameras will be added soon. The immediate focus is maintaining the current cameras, particularly in South County. Future installations will occur at designated locations that meet specific criteria.



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Supervisor Storck addressed the topic of budget cuts, noting that the County Executive has requested each department to assess their budgets and outline potential actions in the event of a 10% reduction. He emphasized that this exercise proved beneficial last year, saving approximately \$50 million. Given the tighter budgets this year, a more comprehensive examination of operations is necessary to identify areas requiring discontinuation or enhancement for improved efficiency. As chair of the audit committee, Supervisor Storck is mainly dedicated to ensuring that community operations run effectively and efficiently.

Workhouse Arts Center- Mr. Keith Gordon, President and Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Gordon thanked the South County Federation for the invitation to the meeting and the opportunity to introduce himself and share his vision for the Workhouse Arts Center. He said it was a pleasure to be among everyone and part of the meeting, noting how welcoming the Lorton community has been since he started. Regarding background, Mr. Gordon has been with the Workhouse Arts Foundation since July 1, 2024. Before this role, he spent about 20 years in professional sports and nine years working with a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C. He viewed joining the Workhouse as a fantastic opportunity to unite people with shared interests, like his previous experiences in sports.

His vision for the Workhouse is clear: in the short term, he aims to stabilize the organization; in the midterm, he plans to position it for growth; and in the long term, he seeks to establish a sustainable operation that provides value to the community while maintaining financial responsibility. This approach will enable continued investment in the Workhouse and surrounding communities. During the first three months, Mr. Gordon focused on thoroughly examining the organization's operations to ensure everything functions effectively. He acknowledged the leadership transitions over the past few years. Still, he conveyed his excitement about being in this position now, stating that he has no plans to leave and is committed to showcasing the best of the Workhouse for the community and its residents.

Mr. Gordon emphasized that the Workhouse aims to become a welcoming destination for more extended visits rather than just brief event attendance. The leadership team is working to change perceptions of the campus, likening it to a stadium where visitors can enjoy various activities. Understanding that relying solely on art sales is insufficient for sustainability, they are introducing new initiatives such as a grab-and-go food station and interactive art exhibits. To enhance visitor engagement, they plan to offer additional experiences, including live music and the sale of refreshments. Currently, the campus features a haunted trail and aims to create an inviting atmosphere that encourages visitors to stay longer. The team is focused on maintaining year-round engagement and analyzing their rental spaces and programming to ensure that the offerings are profitable and valuable to the community. Any initiative that does not meet these criteria may be reevaluated.



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Mr. Gordon announced that there will be a Workhouse Ball this year instead of a Gala, as previous events overwhelmed staff and did not meet expectations. By moving all activities to spring, he aims to focus on daily operations and effectively plan an annual fundraiser. The Ball will be combined with another event called "Collect," enhancing overall quality, with resident artists required to donate artwork valued at least \$200. The goal is to create a significant spring event that offers more than just a black-tie dinner, allowing attendees to engage with the Workhouse's history and story. Mr. Gordon noted the scheduling of the Ball in relation to the nearby Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) event to avoid conflicts and ensure community support. He also invited those who haven't visited the workhouse recently to return for personal tours, highlighting the inclusion of the Bunny Man for added intrigue. He expressed eagerness to receive feedback on updates and encouraged people to introduce new attendees to the workhouse.

Mr. Gordon concluded by inviting anyone with questions, suggestions, or a desire to meet for coffee to reach out. His door, email, and phone are always open, and he welcomes the opportunity to connect.

Legislative Updates

Kathy Tran- 18th District, Virginia State Delegate | Mr. Ben Hermerding, Chief of Staff

Mr. Hermerding began his update by addressing several important matters. He informed Nick Firth that he was still resolving his issue with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Although he did not have an update at that time, he was actively engaging with them and anticipated being able to provide a more precise response the following month. He also reminded everyone that early voting was currently underway and would continue until November 2nd. Mr. Hermerding encouraged anyone who had not yet cast their vote to take advantage of the numerous early voting locations available throughout Fairfax County, with further updates to be shared soon. He emphasized that the voter registration deadline was October 15th and urged those who had not registered to do so promptly. Additionally, he mentioned that same-day registration was an option, allowing individuals to cast provisional ballots, subject to verification of their information. He reminded everyone that the deadline for absentee ballot requests was October 25th, underscoring the importance of these dates.

Mr. Hermerding expressed gratitude to all who attended the 44th Veterans Town Hall, which saw an impressive turnout of 176 participants. Regarding recent activities, Mr. Hermerding reported that a legislative tour had taken place at three waste management facilities, where legislators from across the region were welcomed to witness the operations of the state-of-the-art waste-to-energy facility. This visit allowed attendees to observe the massive furnace and cranes used for waste incineration. Furthermore, he noted that Delegate Tran represented their team at the Virginia Works Summit in Richmond, a significant workforce event organized by the



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Governor. She spoke before the lunch break, which was a challenging time slot, but she delivered an excellent presentation.

Mr. Hermerding also reiterated the importance of the House Page Program, which is currently accepting applications. He encouraged anyone who knew of individuals aged 13 to 14 interested in engaging with the General Assembly or learning more about state governance to share this opportunity with them. He offered to provide additional information or connect interested parties with Delegate Tran for further discussions.

Lastly, Mr. Hermerding discussed a significant constitutional amendment on this year's ballot, which stems from three years of work. Sponsored by Delegate Tran, the amendment aims to provide property tax exemptions for military service members who die in the line of duty. Currently, only those killed in action or deemed 100% disabled qualify for the exemption, leaving some service members—such as those who die due to mechanical failures—excluded. Mr. Hermerding emphasized the need to address this issue to ensure that the surviving spouses of all service members are eligible for the exemption.

Committee Reports

Land Use- Mr. Nick Firth and Mr. Keith F. Shovlin, Co-Chairs

Mr. Firth reported that October is a busy month for local development. The county will be attending to provide a general update on the Single Site Plan Amendment (SSPA). Additionally, Costco in Newington will be present to discuss their proposal for a gas station. At the same time, the Shops of Lorton Valley have an applicant looking to build a standalone pad site. This proposal was originally part of the previous SSPA process, initially suggesting a drive-through restaurant. However, there are now indications that a bank with a drive-through is being considered, which is unusual since a Capital One branch operated there for years before closing a few years ago. Furthermore, the development staff will attend to discuss the comprehensive plan amendment related to the single-family home development on Ox Road. The federation supported this amendment, but the aspect of rezoning received no support.

In other updates, Mr. Shovlin mentioned that Planet Fitness is continuing construction and running about a month behind schedule. They are still hopeful of opening before the end of the year and have posted pictures of the ongoing interior work to showcase their progress. Additionally, it was noted that Angry Joe's Hot Chicken is now open. Following last month's meeting, it was revealed that South County Church is working on converting the old Lorton Reformatory Chapel into Liberty Chapel. They are scheduled to present their plans to the Architectural Review Board on Thursday, October 10th, to discuss recommendations for minor upgrades outlined in their architectural package. Preparing the building for regular services is expected to take a few months.



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Environmental & Parks- Mr. Larry Clark and Mr. Dale Rumberger, Co-Chairs

Mr. Clark began the update by conveying his concerns regarding the county staff's approach to program management. He expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness and professionalism exhibited in the management of the Overlook Ridge Park project, remarking that it fell short of expectations. Nevertheless, he stated his intention to contact Jennifer Josiah to ascertain whether the site plan had been approved and if waste management had submitted it to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Upon receiving confirmation that the documentation has been forwarded to the DEQ, he and Mr. Rumberger intend to convene with Richard Doucette to deliberate on potential timelines and subsequent steps.

Mr. Clark emphasized that Supervisor Storck expressed his desire not to hold additional meetings. While Mr. Clark understands the legal complexities involved, he raised concerns about the frequent shifts in timelines from March to May to August within a short period. He highlighted the need for more transparent communication regarding these changes. Although he appreciates the hard work of everyone involved, he finds the pace of progress somewhat disheartening.

During the recent briefing and tour, Mr. Clark provided an overall positive assessment of the experience offered by the park authorities and county staff, who provided valuable one-on-one assistance. However, he remarked that the process has felt slow over time. He recognized that these issues had been discussed previously, which might lead some to question the need for ongoing conversations. Nevertheless, he remains confident in the park's potential as a hidden gem and looks forward to fulfilling that potential.

Public Safety- Mr. Jonathan Kiell, Chair

In Mr. Kiell's absence, Mr. Shovlin provided an update. He announced that Neighborhood Watch training will be at the Lorton District Police Station on October 30th, the evening before Halloween, at 6:30 PM. Officers from the West Springfield district will lead the training session. While these sessions typically occur every two months at West Springfield, they are being brought to Lorton this time. Interested individuals are encouraged to attend the training to learn how to monitor their neighborhoods effectively.

Additionally, Mr. Shovlin highlighted that it is Fire Prevention Week. All fire departments in Fairfax County will host an open house this Saturday, welcoming residents and children of all ages to explore the fire stations and vehicles and meet local firefighters. He strongly encourages everyone to participate. Lastly, Mr. Shovlin thanked all participants for the September 21st Adopt-a-Highway cleanup. Volunteers successfully collected bags of garbage along Lorton Road and a few more oversized items. Plans for another cleanup will be established.

Transportation- Mr. Dale Rumberger and Mr. Peter Weyland, Co-Chairs

Mr. Rumberger reported that, based on discussions and follow-ups with Delegates, they are currently awaiting updates regarding funding for sidewalk projects and other allocations commonly referred to as "pork chop" funding. While some information has been hinted at, precise details about the status of these funds are lacking. He expressed his concerns to senior



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staff in the Mount Vernon district regarding the poor condition of the roads. Specifically, he emphasized the urgent need for street sweeping and cleanup from Workhouse Road down to the Gunston Plaza, particularly at major intersections. In response, the staff indicated that any proposed enhancements, including beautification efforts under the underpass, would depend on the review of land use recommendations from the 2040 task force. This assessment would determine any subsequent actions or allocation of funds for improvements in that area.

Education- Ms. Wendy Henley, Chair

Ms. Henley reported that she had provided the links to the Fairfax County public schools' cell phone policy in the chat box, which includes details about a cell phone storage pilot program for select participating schools. She urged others to download those links when they have the opportunity. This initiative is in response to Governor Youngkin's Executive Order 33 concerning cell phone use in public schools. Notably, Fairfax County had been proactive in this area, having already developed a plan that aligns with the guidance issued by the governor.

Friends of Fairfax County Animal Shelter- Ms. Gina Lynch, President

Ms. Lynch shared inspiring stories about the Fairfax County Animal Shelter that she wanted to communicate. First, the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter organized their annual golf event, which raises funds to support the shelter's operations. This year, the event raised over \$90,000, showcasing the community's and local golfers' tremendous support. Additionally, the shelter hosts low-cost vaccination clinics twice a month—one on a Friday at the Lorton campus and another on the following Monday at the Fairfax West Ox Road campus. During these clinics, pet owners can receive essential vaccinations at an affordable price. For just \$60, they can get a rabies shot, a distemper shot, or a microchip for their pets, offering significant savings for everyone involved. Recently, the vaccination clinic at the West Ox Road campus served over 156 pets and administered more than 200 vaccines that day.

Meeting adjourned- Ms. Henley emphasized that anyone with comments, questions, or concerns regarding the South County region should feel encouraged to contact the South County Federation. The goal of this group is to collaborate and find meaningful solutions to the challenges faced by the community. While many of these issues may take time to resolve, it was encouraging to see several knowledgeable residents in attendance, each with a deep understanding of their community. Their insights will help trace the origins of specific situations and work towards practical solutions.

Ms. Henley announced that the next meeting is scheduled for November 12th. She thanked everyone for their participation and support before adjourning the meeting at 8:41 p.m.