



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Summer 2011

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Belle Rive • Ferry Landing Estates • Ferry Landing Villa • Ferry Point Estates • Mount Vernon Forest • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Westgate • Wycliffe • Yacht Haven

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Speaker

Dan Storck
School Board

Mount Vernon Representative

Subjects

School issues such as full-day kindergarten, discipline, and honors programs

Where and When

Washington Mill Elementary
7:00 PM pizza and soda
7:30 PM program

President's Message

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

I hope this edition of the MVCA newsletter finds you well. It hasn't been a great Spring, but Summer is just around the corner!

We have several great events coming up that I am pleased to share with you. Our next general membership meeting is on May 11th. Dan Storck, Mount Vernon representative on the School Board, will be our guest speaker. Topics of interest may include the FY 2012 budget, staff compensation, full-day kindergarten, discipline, honors programs, and other academic programs. The School Board will approve the final budget on May 26, 2011. This is a great opportunity to

learn more about student education and our school system and let Dan and the School Board know your opinion. Pizza at 7:00, meeting at 7:30 PM in the Washington Mill School cafeteria. See you there.

This Saturday, May 7th will see community members coming together to help beautify our community again this year. Many thanks to Mike Habib for continuing to serve as chair of the Environment and Recreation Committee and head up our Community Clean-up.

Please come out and join in this community event on the 7th.

Our 5th Annual MVCA Community Picnic will be held on Saturday, June 4th from 1-5 PM on the grounds of St. James Episcopal Church at 5614 Old Mill Road. We will have barbecued burgers and brats, cold drinks, live music from Johnny Artis, and a moon bounce! Please plan to come and help make this our best picnic yet! The picnic is open to all residents within the MVCA community and is absolutely free. We do ask you to RSVP and Volunteers are always welcome too! Please call Jeannine Simmons at (703) 360-3613 or email her at mvcapicnic@gmail.com to RSVP and volunteer. We look forward to seeing you on June 4th at St. James! Rain or Shine!

Thanks again to everyone who renewed their Association membership. As you know, this is a Directory year and all members will receive their Directory in the next month. If you haven't sent in your membership dues, it's not too late! Dues are \$20 a year and you can find the membership form on our web site at www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org. Speaking of Membership and Directory, I would like to extend special thanks to Ken Poortinga and Elizabeth Bancroft for their



excellent work managing our membership affairs and producing a first class directory again this year. We are indebted to them and all the wonderful volunteers who serve our community.

I appreciate your support and I hope to see you at our upcoming MVCA events.

*Best wishes,
John Skudlarek*

President, Mount Vernon Civic Association

Transportation Committee

Good things come to those who wait, or so they say. Depending on how one looks at things, some good things are coming, sooner or later. As of this writing, the widening of US Route 1 through Fort Belvoir has commenced. Congressman Moran has obtained the necessary and long sought \$150 million, and Fairfax County has apparently completed most of the design work. Many of you will by now have observed the new bridge spans connecting sections of Fort Belvoir being installed over Richmond Highway, so you have some idea of how the completed project will look.

One of the questions I hear most often is “when will I be able to get to the new Wegmans quickly?” Apart from the fact that Wegmans is not opening any time soon, the access road – the new Mulligan Road cutting through Fort Belvoir – is set to open to traffic some time in 2013, according to a Federal Highway Administration representative who reported this news to the MVCCA Transportation Committee recently.

Finally, at the time of this writing, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has scheduled a hearing to solicit comments about essential rail, transit, transportation demand management, bicycle, pedestrian and highway projects on Wednesday, May 4, 2011. The hearing, focused on the Working Draft of Fiscal Year 2012-2017 Six Year Improvement Plan to be approved by the CTB in June 2011, will likely precede the publication date for the MVCA newsletter, so I will do my best to report on the outcome.

Pete Esser

Neighborhood Watch

Our volunteers report that things are generally quiet. They note that some after dusk dog walkers are not wearing reflector vests or bright clothing. There have been a couple of complaints about dogs barking between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. and mowers and blowers doing their business at times when neighbors are attempting to enjoy weekend rest or dinner.

Higher temperatures usually mean higher rates of petty crime such as thefts from unsecured homes and vehicles. Contractors removing mulch from the Grist Mill Park have been reported to police. Our police department reminds us to be wary of unlicensed door-to-door salesmen. There have been a few daytime house burglaries in adjacent neighborhoods following exploratory daytime knocks on doors. Do not allow people you don't know access to the inside of your home to inspect anything or use the bathroom: they may be scouting the layout or looking for valuables. When they leave, check that the bathroom window is still secured. Burglars are particularly fond of homes with unlocked garages and well-kept gardens. They watch for uncollected newspapers and pizza fliers. Install motion-responsive lights. Keep a can of wasp spray handy: it can repel a human intruder at twenty feet. You can get free professional advice on home security—with many original practical suggestions—at the website <http://www.crimedoctor.com>.

Everyone should be alert for strange or unusually parked vehicles. The most frequent complaint from our police is that they don't get enough reports of suspicious activities. Thanks, again, to our thoughtful volunteers—all fifty of them—who are the official eyes and ears of the neighborhood. If you would like to help—it requires about 35 minutes per night for one week every six months--let me know.

*Cóilín Owens
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
cowens7@gmu.edu*

.....
: Can you help out with the neighborhood picnic? :
: We can use set-up and clean-up helpers, :
: bartenders, and grillers. Call Jeannine or Dave :
: Simmons at 703-360-3613. Call now! It's fun! :
:.....

Neighborhood Picnic

Celebrate summer and your neighborhood in a lovely outdoor setting. Food, drink, and entertainment will be provided, so all you need to do is show up and have a good time.



**Door prizes!
Moon Bounce**

**Bratwurst, burgers, hot dogs,
potato salad, cole slaw, pasta
salad, soft drinks, cake**

Live music by Johnny Artis

Saturday, June 4,
1:00 - 5:00 pm
St. James Episcopal
Church
5614 Old Mill Rd

Public Safety

In the wake of the close calls from late April storms of various types this is a good time to review our readiness and resiliency. In particular we need to review how we can get warnings of unusual and even dangerous weather. Sources include but are not limited to : radio, TV, Weather Channel on cable and the official U.S. Government weather reporting. It is highly useful to have at least 1 hand-crank and/or battery radio to receive AM and FM broadcasts. In an emergency you could use your car radio if your home electricity is "out" There also are radios that can carry weather alerts and sound an alarm.

Fairfax County participates in the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) program which is open and free to all.. Full information is provided at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alert/faq/php and www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean.

Fairfax County no longer has the external warning Civil Defense-type siren system and there has been some discussion re : setting up a "reverse 911 system" and/or installation of GIANT VOICE type loudspeakers such as recently installed at Fort Belvoir.

On the crime prevention front, hats off to the Neighborhood Watch folk. Remember to keep cars locked when parked and consider adding exterior lighting to your homes such as motion-activated lights which respond to motion in the hours of darkness.

Safety-wise warmer weather, longer daylight hours and school vacations bring much more pedestrian, jogger and bicyclist traffic in our neighborhoods. Consider carrying a cell phone, ID and flashlight and have some visibility-enhancing and/or reflective vests and/or arm- and leg bands.

Call 911 for Police, Fire and Rescue/Ambulance emergencies.

Have a great and safe summer.

*Your Neighbor,
John Hurley*

Planning to join the fun?
Please RSVP for the picnic at
mvcapicnic@gmail.com.

Education

Kindergarten Orientation and Registration

Will your child be five years old by September 2011? If so, contact your child's school to make arrangements for kindergarten enrollment. Most schools begin getting information together in late March or early April for parents of incoming kindergartners, and many host an orientation or open house. Please note that most kindergarten orientations are usually scheduled between mid-March and the end of June. It's best to check the school's web page or to contact the school directly for any specific information about kindergarten in 2011-12.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Approvals

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved a level transfer of funds to FCPS for FY 2012, but has agreed to provide additional funds to help FCPS complete the rollout of full-day kindergarten over the next three years. The School Board will hold public hearings on May 17 and 18 and adopt an approved FY 2012 budget on May 26. For more FY 2012 budget information go to <http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2012.htm>.

Budget Facts

On finance, the Commonwealth of Virginia ranks 7th in per capita income, but 38th in support for K-12 education. Virginia has reduced state support for K-12 education by nearly \$1 billion since FY 2009.

FCPS is seeing a sharp increase in the numbers of students with greater challenges, including being more impoverished and increasingly diverse. For example, over five years, FCPS went from 20 percent (1 in 5) students eligible for free and reduced-priced meals to today's 25 percent. In addition, students who receive English for Speakers of Other Languages services are increasing by 15 percent. The explanation is that it takes more resources to educate a more challenged population, but class sizes will not change.

Enrichment Opportunities

Registration is under way for summer 2011 classes offered by Adult and Community Education (ACE). The course catalog, ACE Classes, has been mailed to residents and is also available at Fairfax County

public libraries and ACE registration centers. Course offerings may be viewed at www.fcps.edu/aceclasses, and classes may also be registered for online. Take a look at the new courses being offered this term by going to http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses/Whats_New.htm.

Online Campus—Open to students currently in grades 8-11 who meet prerequisite and technical requirements. Scheduled for July 5 through August 3. For more information, call 571-423-4622 or visit <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/Summer/hsonlinecampus2.html>.

Tech Adventure Camp—Offers students currently in grades 5-6 the opportunity to explore careers and technology in eight areas, including automotive technology, culinary arts, gaming, robotics, and webpage design. Scheduled for July 18-29. For more information, visit <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OCTE/events/TechCamp.htm>.

Chocolate Milk Returns to FCPS Elementary Schools

Effective Monday, May 2, Fairfax County Public Schools will once again have chocolate milk available in elementary schools. Shenandoah Dairy has developed a new, low-fat chocolate milk that meets the district's request to eliminate high fructose corn syrup without adding extra sugar. The new chocolate milk has been taste-tested by FCPS students.

*Valerie Schalk-Day
Education Representative*



Environment

Annual MVCA Spring Cleanup Saturday, May 7

Please join your neighbors and participate in the annual MVCA Spring Cleanup. We will meet at 9am at the Mansion House parking lot. We will provide free supplies, including hats, safety vests, gloves and bags. The cleanup will last until noon. Any questions? Please call Mike Habib at 703-360-7742.

Removing Invasives from our Neighborhood and the Mt. Vernon Trail

The National Park Service will offer a half-day training program for folks who wish to help remove the invasives (English Ivy, honeysuckle, etc.) which are destroying trees along the bike trail and the GW Parkway. The training will take place at the Park

Service's headquarters at Turkey Run on the GW Parkway. The next class will likely be held in early June. Once taking the class you can work on your own or join groups of volunteers, who are focused largely on removing invasives at Dyke Marsh.

Anyone interested in signing up for the training should contact Erik Oberg of the National Park Service. He can be reached at 703-289-2542 or at erik_oberg@nps.gov.

Mike Habib



Planning and Zoning

There are several ongoing actions. One is the North Hill project. Early March 2011, Supervisor Hyland requested MVCCA consider a higher residential density than originally proposed for the project. There was much hesitation, for several reasons, to consider any of the scenarios, but the motion to dissuade Supervisor Hyland from pursuing the higher density concept failed.

A second action concerned the proposed Costco at the old Multiplex theater site. The building, with some 'green' features, will be at the southeast corner of the property facing north (toward Walmart). The developers will fund the traffic improvements as part of the project. Specifically, the northbound left turn lane will be lengthened and widened to two lanes. They will also add an additional southbound lane. The Planning and Zoning committee conditionally supported the project providing: increased FC approved tree plantings in parking lot islands, preservation of the large tree in the southeast corner, and a pedestrian connection/walk-way between Costco and Walmart.

Another land use case was the expansion of Inova Mt. Vernon Hospital. MVCA membership received a briefing from MVH personnel at a previous meeting. Essentially, the expansion would double the floor space and is to take up to ten years to complete. There would be two new 'bed towers' with expanded

emergency facility and outpatient surgery unit. Increased traffic is still a concern.

Another land use briefing was for the rezoning on the old Dairy Queen site on 6925 Richmond Highway – just south of Beacon Mill Mall. The property owner requested a down zoning of the development to C8 due to the small size and shallowness of the property. This would allow a 6,000 square foot retail entity that could be either one structure or two similar sized buildings. The space would be used, under the proposed amendment, as a small restaurant, bakery, or coffee shop. The proposed amendment would have the building would be on the rear of the property with parking in front. The Comprehensive Plan has the parking on the side and rear of the property.

The last land use issue is known as Summit Oaks Section 2 on the Engleside Baptist Church property. Initially, the site was approved for a church with a private school and four townhouse units for pastoral housing. It will match density, layout, architecture and building style as Summit Oaks nearby. The Summit Oaks HOA agreed to incorporate the 30 additional single family homes into their HOA rules and regulations. The proposed amendment will preserve substantial tree area and will be common open space belonging to the HOA.

Karan Cerutti

Budget and Finance

Taxes and Home Values

I have good news and great news to report to all our MVCA homeowners. The good news is that the Board of Supervisors voted to reduce the advertised tax rate from \$1.09 to \$1.07 per 100. The great news is that, on average, Fairfax County home values have gone up! Somehow, advertising a tax increase this way, make it all seem better.

On average, homeowners will see a slight uptick (\$22.00) in real estate taxes. The \$30.25 million balance reported in the advertised budget plus additional savings and spending deferrals (totaling over \$41 million dollars) were used to fund this reduced, advertised tax rate.

County Fees

In addition to real estate tax gains, the County raised fees in some areas. These fee increases include sewage fees up from \$5.27 per 1000 gallons to \$6.01, fees charged by land development services and zoning filing fees. Perhaps one of our contractors in the MVCA can advise us on the full effects of these increased fees at our next neighborhood meeting. The personal property tax rate will remain at \$4.57 per 100.

Although the 2012 Budget does not include a county employee pay increase for the third year in a row, the County Executive is directed to look at available balances in the 2011 Budget at the end of 2011. The Board of Supervisors has approved a market rate adjustment of 1.12% if 2011 funds are available.

School Board Money

If the School Board determines they too have money available at the end of 2011 they may also adjust employee compensation. The Board of Supervisors has urged "the School Board to treat compensation adjustments for school employees in a manner that is equitable to general county employee compensation adjustments."


A reserve fund is to be set aside in the amount of \$2.3 million dollars to hedge against potential state and federal reductions. For our veterans, fully disabled veterans will now pay .01 per 100 on their car tax. This is in addition to the real estate tax exemption for fully disabled veterans.

Lastly, the Board of Supervisors has kept the school transfer at 2011 levels with the exception that they fully support the integration of full day kindergarten. Savings of \$500,000 from the SAAC program do to the implementation of FDK will be made available in the transfer. Additional cable funding of \$641,904 will also be made available for FDK.

Sean McCarthy



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