



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Spring 2012

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,
March 14, 2012

Speakers

Captain Randy Joyce,
Commander of FCPD Mount
Vernon Police District

and

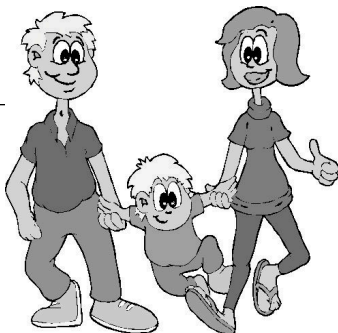
Master Police Officer
Greg Kottemann, Crime
Prevention and
Community Outreach Officer

Subject

Public Safety

Where and When

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



President's Message

On behalf of the directors, officers and committee chairpersons of MVCA, I want to welcome all of our neighbors into the new year and share with you the dedication of the Board's efforts in helping to keep our community one of the best livable communities in the Washington DC metro region. I am honored to serve as the MVCA President and look forward to working with the Board and our community members during the next two years to maintain our community's character. Together we will work to confront the challenges and welcome the opportunities presented before us. I wish to thank our past President, John Skudlarek, for his dedication and tireless commitment of working on our behalf during his five year term and wish him the best in his future endeavors (John has agreed to continue his involvement with MVCA by serving as our Second Vice-President).

Some of the issues in which we are currently involved include traffic calming measures for Cherry Tree Drive, street conditions within the

community and the continued monitoring of crime in our neighborhoods. A task force was established to deal with vehicular speeding along Cherry Tree Drive, especially in the immediate vicinity of Washington Mill Elementary School. To date, the task force has engaged our county supervisor who in turn has alerted county staff to provide our community with options to deal with this safety issue. Many of our community streets remain in need of repair and through the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations we continue to advocate for VDOT action. The MVCA neighborhood watch program continues to monitor our community through the volunteer work of more than sixty of our neighbors. Reports of crime and prevention efforts are shared at our community meetings, Board meetings and on the MVCA website. All of these programs are staffed by our neighbors and we invite you to contact the committee chairpersons if you encounter a problem or wish to volunteer as a member of a committee.

Our Annual Community Picnic has been scheduled for Saturday, June 9 at St. James' Episcopal Church. We invite all in our community to join us for great food, live music and family fun. Other dates of interest to our community include the 50th Birthday Grand Celebration for Whitman Middle School to be held on March 22 at the school (alumni students, staff, and families and current students, staff and families are encouraged to attend and enjoy the festivities), and the Mount Vernon High School Mulch sale which will occur April 21 (please contact mvhsmulchsale2012@gmail.com or call (571)214-4348 to place your order).

The next MVCA general membership meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 14 at Washington Mill Elementary School. In addition to our speaker, we will provide you with committee reports, current issues affecting our community, and invite those present to offer questions or comments for the community's consideration. We look forward to seeing you there. The annual membership dues letter was mailed last month. We ask that you continue your membership (or join if not a member) and your support by completing the annual membership form and mailing it with your dues at your earliest opportunity so that you may enjoy all that MVCA has to offer.

Thank you and feel free to contact me if we can be of service to you.

*Paul Schray, President
Mount Vernon Civic Association*

Budget and Finance Committee

2012 Fairfax County Budget

The 2013 budget discussions are in full swing. Here are some important dates to keep in mind over the next couple of months. The 2013 Fairfax County full year advertised budget plan is released on February 28th 2012. The advertised tax rate should be announced at this time as well. Last year's advertised tax rate was \$1.09 and the adopted and (current rate) was \$1.07.

March 6th the Board of Supervisors will meet to discuss 2012 3rd quarter budget. The actual revenue results and perceived trends regarding consumer spending, vehicle purchases and real estate values may affect the 2013 budget discussions and final mark-up.

On April 10th, 11th and 12th, the Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the 2013 budget at the Government Center. On April 24th, the FY 2013 Board marks up the budget with May 1st being the formal adoption of 2013 Fairfax County budget and school transfer.



Hot topics

The Fairfax County FY 2013 budget is projected to have a shortfall of \$114 million. Closing this gap by reducing expenses or increasing revenues (taxes) will be a difficult task.

On the revenue side, a meals tax is one of many suggestions that continues to be discussed. Additionally, increasing the real estate tax to help cover the cost of public schools is another idea that has support.

On the expense side, the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) transfer is over half the county budget. FCPS's has requested an 8.4% increase. The Fairfax County FY budget included a 5% increase. A 3.4% difference could be difficult to fund in light of the current shortfall.

External factors that could impact us locally are the continued National budget discussions. Significant cuts within the military budget could have a disproportionate affect on Fairfax County.

I look forward to reporting the advertised tax rate at our next meeting and any further developments in the FY 2013 budget process. The link to the Fairfax County budget page is www.FairfaxCounty.gov/dmb/.

*Sean McCarthy
Budget and Finance Chair*

Environment and Recreation

Annual MVCA Spring Cleanup: Saturday, May 5

Please join your neighbors and participate in the annual MVCA Spring Cleanup. We will meet at 9am at the Mansion Hill 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.

The Challenge of Invasive Exotic Plants

Not all of the green you see while driving down the George Washington Memorial Parkway or in your backyard is

a good thing. It includes invasive exotic plants such as English ivy, bush honeysuckle and porcelain berry. These plants, from other parts of the world, can take over local natural areas, killing trees and squeezing out native plants and wildlife that depend on them. This is exactly what is happening along the GW parkway and the associated bike trail.

Saturday, March 24,
10AM – noon

American Horticultural
Society's River Farm

7931 East Boulevard Drive,
Alexandria, Va. 22308

Join National Park Service ecologist Erik Oberg and Audubon Society of Northern Virginia naturalist Cliff Fairweather to discuss the challenge of invasive exotic plants. Learn how you can help stem the invasion and plant beautiful native plants that will create a sanctuary for birds and butterflies and improve your own yard.

To attend, RSVP to chair.er@mvcca.org by March 21 or call 703-360-0691.

*Mike Habib, Chairman
Environment and Recreation*



Planning and Zoning

Neal McBride gave a preliminary briefing on an upcoming housing project in Lorton by the Prison. Initially, the plan was to have 155 condos and apartments. This did not include the need for a school. Recently, the plan was changed to include single family homes in a sufficient number to warrant the need for a school. The land is currently government owned. There was discussion that the privately owned development company would acquire the land at minimal cost – about \$1800 an acre – and have it tax free. Earl Flannigan pointed out that the Mount Vernon Hospital and some private corporations close to the hospital, and the government

center are currently tax free entities. No vote was required.

The President of the Gum Springs Association, Queenie Cox, briefed the Planning and Zoning and Transportation Committees on the County's desire to build a transit center at the corner of Fordson Road and Richmond Highway. This would essentially close Fordson Road to all but bus traffic limiting access to and from Gum Springs. The 30 to 40 buses per day passing through the center would also bus patients and visitors to and from the hospital. Security to the water towers close to the site was brought up as an issue. Mr. Hyland opposes this site for the transit center. The County's Comprehensive Plan

outlines 16 sites to look at for the transit center in Lee-Mount Vernon areas. Ms. Cox reported that the public meetings are scheduled for the next few months. She recommended the committees support her resolution opposing the project. The Transportation Committee voted to table the resolution until they were briefed by the County transportation office. The Planning and Zoning Committee voted to support her resolution – with modifications – opposing the transit center location at Fordson Rd and Richmond Hwy.

*Karan Cerutti
Planning and Zoning
Committee Chair*

Neighborhood Watch

The police department compliments the MVCA on our engagement in the nightly watch service: each night of the week, two of the sixty-plus volunteers patrol our neighborhood. This is by far the highest level of engagement and participation the region. These patrols are a sign that we are not taking our security for granted. Things can change for the worse: they have before. It devolves upon each one of us—dog-walkers, strollers, cyclists, drivers--to be one another's eyes and ears.

At the induction of our dozen new volunteers, Officer Kottemann reminded us that 80% of thefts occur as a result of unsecured properties,

vehicles or homes. As we move into spring and summer, we need to be vigilant about locking our property and vehicles even when outside for a short time, but especially at night. We should keep all valuables—especially laptops, cell phones, and navigation devices—out of sight. We don't want to find our missing camera on Craigslist. It is a good idea to tag and photograph any items that are especially expensive—jewelry, furnishings, electronic devices, equipment.

Keep the non-emergency number beside your telephone: (703) 691-2131. Add it to your cell phone list of automatic numbers. Use it to report

suspicious activity including attempted scams. Do not tolerate eyesores and nuisances—long-term dumpsters, illegally parked vehicles, uncollected refuse, and persistent dog-barking. Be sure to give time, place, and description of the vehicle or persons. Advise strollers at dusk to wear reflective or at least bright clothes.

Our patrol schedule will be renewed at the end of March. New volunteers welcome (703) 780-5218 or covens7@gmu.edu. A special thanks to our volunteers for your time, vehicle, and vigilance.

Cóilín Owens
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

Public Safety

Spring is just around the corner, which means longer days and more outside activities. Use caution—carry your address, phone number, cell phone, whistle, and in the early morning or evening carry a flashlight. Many stores sell easily installed bike wheel reflectors. Front (white) and rear (red) battery-powered bike lights are available.

At home, lighting and fire prevention are key. Some lighting comes with motion sensors. If smoke detector batteries were not changed in the fall, do so now. Consider installing a carbon monoxide detector. Check the charging

gauge on your fire extinguisher and have a designated rendezvous spot outside the house in case of fire.

If you need immediate Police and/or Fire Department and/or EMS/Ambulance/Rescue assistance call 911—be sure the correct address is provided to the 911 operator. If your call relates to a crime, be sure to give the 911 operator information of the involved vehicles, such as make, color, type, license plates, number of occupants, and distinguishing marks.

John A. Hurley,
Public Safety Chair

The FCPD has added a new channel for sharing public information:
Twitter (@fairfaxpolice).
Initially, the agency will tweet news releases, updates to the website, information on public meetings, and other information that may be of interest to the county's one-million-plus residents. General questions will be answered during office hours, 7:30 a.m. through 5:30 p.m.
Do not use Twitter to report crimes. Call 911 for emergencies or 703-691-2131 for non-emergencies.

Transportation

“Good things come to those who wait”, or so they tell us. Well, I for one have been waiting patiently for Route 1 (or, as Mr. Hyland prefers, “Richmond Highway”) to lose some of the more charmless institutions flanking it in favor of the odd business or two we’d all like to patronize. I’ve been waiting for Ferry Landing and adjacent roads to be paved, rather than endlessly patched. I’ve been waiting for Mulligan Road to happen. I’ve been waiting for the winners and losers in the last round of elections to hump through the muck and brush along both sides of Route 235 to retrieve the sad remnants of their campaign signs.

Good thing I held out: Route 1 is now graced with fine new establishments including a car title loan shoppe occupying the old “Mikes Ristorante.” As to repaving, we’ll just have to bide our time a wee bit more, as the well has apparently run rather dry in terms of available funding (please refer to <http://mountvernon.patch.com/articles/vdot-no-major-secondary-road-maintenance-in-nova-for-two-years> for information on this issue more current than that issued by VDOT). We may not have to hold our breath much longer with regard to Mulligan Road; the word is that the once-projected late 2012 completion date may will not be far from the actual mark; a bid protest

that had in part been responsible for delays with regard to the project, landed in the circular file in late December. The key delays, according to a courteous and knowledgeable project manager with the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration are connections towards the back end of the route, where hilly terrain leading to Telegraph Road and as-yet incomplete improvements to Telegraph must be dealt with. So polish up those hubcaps and that chrome (no rush, though) for the opening day parade. For those interested in how the final traffic reconfiguration at the intersection of Mulligan Road with Route 1 may ultimately play out, there are excellent renderings dating from 2010 available at http://www.efl.fhwa.dot.gov/files/projects/rhtrc/Southern_Int_Concept.pdf.

Lastly, many of you have asked about how the “improvements” to Richmond Highway (I remain cautiously optimistic

that the road will one day merit that designation) will impact established businesses at the 235/Old Mill Road/Mulligan Road/Route 1 intersection. This is where things get interesting. While it seems we’ll still have the opportunity to pump gas, buy live bait, and dash across four or six lanes of traffic for fried chicken and Hershey’s ice cream and a tour of the Usonian Pope-Leighey House, there is a chance that the Woodlawn Stable operation could be impacted severely. Various alternatives have been proposed that would mitigate the expanded roadway’s probably impingement on the National Historic Trust property south of Route 1 (Sorry, Woodlawn Plantation, seems you’ll be losing out either way), but one plan still in the works calls for Route 1 northbound to dip past the barns and stables through a pasture before curving back west to join the “regular” roadway. A horrific (for those of you who watch this for my language, yes, I know it should be “an” horrific) prospect, if you ask me, and one that I will be sure to find out more about and report on to you all.

Safe driving and happy trails.

Pete Esser
Transportation Committee Chair



MVCA Member Information

Mount Vernon Civic Association, P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, Virginia 22121

Support the Mount Vernon Civic Association. Your annual dues make it all happen!

Mail this form with your check for \$20 (payable to MVCA) to:
MVCA, P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

Name: _____
First name Last name

Name: _____
First name Last name

Street Address: _____ Telephone: _____ unlisted

Email address(es): _____

Your email address will *not* be published nor will it be sold or shared with other persons or businesses. It is only used to provide your Board a way to communicate with you about matters of importance in our community.

If you are a new resident, please check here to receive a copy of the 2011-2012 MVCA Directory.

Move-in date: ____ / ____

We welcome and encourage all members to volunteer.

Please check any of the following activities in which you would be willing to assist the MVCA:

- Block Captain Neighborhood Watch Social Activities
- Welcoming Newcomers Education Matters Public Safety
- Recreation and Environment Community Beautification Newsletter
- Consumer Affairs Area Health and Human Services
- Area Traffic and Transportation Planning and Zoning Matters
- Local Government, Including Budget & Finance
- Membership & Directory

Advertise with your Mount Vernon Civic Association.

Check here if you would you like us to contact you about placing an ad in the quarterly newsletter or the membership directory.

Note: Our MVCA directories are produced every other year; our next MVCA directory is scheduled to be produced next spring. The current directory is the 2011-2012 edition, which was distributed last spring.

Membership

We're pleased that we have received many members' MVCA annual renewal forms with their membership dues. Thank you for your continued support of the Mount Vernon Civic Association! We encourage those who have not yet returned their annual membership form and dues to do so very soon. Your membership is needed to help the MVCA provide support to the community and to represent the interests of our community at the district and county level.

We invite you to attend our quarterly meetings where our guest speakers discuss topics of local interest and community advocacy. And don't forget we have free pizza and soda before the meetings. We are also planning our 6th Annual Neighborhood Picnic with food, drinks, music and a chance to meet your neighbors from our great community. The picnic is planned for June 9th - details coming soon.

If you haven't yet returned your membership renewal for this year or have misplaced it, please

use the form on the previous page. You can also download the membership form from the MVCA website: www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org. Please send your form along with your check for \$20 made payable to MVCA and mail to: MVCA, P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

Thank you for your support.

Elizabeth Bancroft 703.360.4206

Ken Poortinga 703.360.7740

Membership Co-Chairs

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**Upcoming Events in
Mount Vernon**

- March 14 MVCA General Membership Meeting
Washington Mill Elementary School
7:00pm (Pizza) 7:30pm Meeting
- March 22 50th Birthday Grand Celebration of
Walt Whitman Middle School
Walt Whitman Middle School
7:00pm - 8:30pm
- April 21 Mount Vernon High School Mulch Sale
Call (571) 214-4348 for information
- May 5 Annual MVCA Community Spring
Cleanup. See page 3 for information.
- May 9 MVCA General Membership Meeting
Washington Mill Elementary School
7:00pm (Pizza) 7:30pm Meeting
- June 9 MVCA Annual Community Picnic
St. James' Episcopal Church

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Officers

- President: Paul Schray(703) 619-9377
- 1st Vice President: Pete Esser.....(703) 799-5150
- 2nd Vice President: John Skudlarek(703) 704-5213
- Secretary: Karan Cerutti(703) 360-9559
- Treasurer: Tom Cleary(703) 360-3903

Directors

- Mike Habib.....(703) 360-7742
- Ron Neitzke(703) 360-3807
- Dan Rinzel(703) 360-4627

Committee Chairs

- Budget and Finance: Sean McCarthy(703) 360-0372
- Education: Vacant
- Environment & Recreation: Mike Habib(703) 360-7742
- Health & Human Services: Vacant
- Membership/Directory Co-Chair:
Elizabeth Bancroft(703) 360-4206
- Membership/Directory Co-Chair:
Ken Poortinga(703) 360-7740
- Neighborhood Watch: Coilin Owens(703) 780-5218
- Planning & Zoning: Karan Cerutti(703) 360-9559
- Public Safety: John Hurley.....(703) 799-9353
- Transportation: Pete Esser(703) 799-5150