



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Spring 2017

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Change is in the air...

Although they are coming up earlier than I can recall, the daffodils are pushing through the ground as a reminder that change is constant. They are a sign that brighter days are ahead, with warm breezes and more flowers to follow.

Our last general membership meeting was much in the same vein. More neighbors joined us in the Washington Mill Elementary School library than in the recent past to hear the Mount Vernon High School (MVHS) principal share his take on life in the MVHS halls. The positive energy he feels at his school is the same felt on the streets of the MVCA. Our civic association is moving in the direction of growth, renewal and, yes, change.

We warmly welcome Lynn Fisher to the MVCA Board. She has offered to serve as our new Education Chair. I know that she will be able to keep us abreast of the many challenges — and successes — that face Fairfax Count Public Schools (FCPS). Most importantly, though, she is our representative at the Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations (MVCCA) to ensure our community's voice concerning the schools are heard.

Thank you, Lynn, for volunteering!

On a more personal note: Change is also afoot for me and my family. My husband, Graham, is retiring from the Marine Corps and has accepted a job with GM starting in April. It's an exciting time for our family as we transition from military to civilian life, and from a home in Virginia to one in Michigan. As happy as we are, we know that the drive north will be a hard one. This community has been a second family to us.



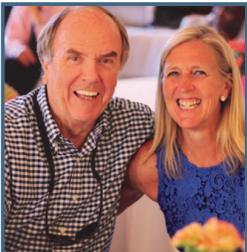
While I will miss you all, I know I'm leaving the civic association in great hands. MVCA Budget and Finance Chair Sean McCarthy, who helped bring me to the organization, will be assuming the president's duties moving forward. He's truly the heartbeat of our neighborhood and he will certainly boost the community's spirit.

Please share this community spirit as we meet for a general membership meeting on Wednesday, March 8. As usual, we will provide pizza and soda starting at 7 p.m., with our regular meeting starting promptly at 7:30 p.m. We are excited to have neighbor Pearl Bea Labier as our guest speaker. Pearl is owner/operator of the Macklin Ct. and Westgate assisted living homes.

Warmly, Louise Sloan

MEMBERSHIP

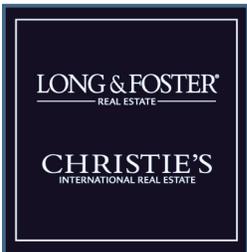
- By now you should have received the 2017 membership renewal letter in your mailbox. Please take special note of the opportunity in the non-professional services section. If you have members of your household that babysit, rake leaves or shovel snow, this is a great place to advertise. It is all part of the service we provide for your \$25 membership fee.
- We are in need of volunteers for the MVCA Board. Our openings include the Chairs of Budget and Finance, and Health and Human Services. The time commitment is a couple of hours per month, plus a report in the quarterly newsletter. Our Board meetings are fun and it is a good way to continue to help improve our great neighborhoods.
- MVCA is encouraging members to reach out to many of our new neighbors. Please help us recruit new members by sharing all the great things we do at the MVCA. Help us to communicate that the MVCA is our voice at the Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations (MVCCA). We regularly have a chance to speak with Dan Storck and Karen Corbett-Sanders on matters that impact our community. Our voices are heard and we can affect change.
- Please remember we are diligently working on the 2017-18 neighborhood directory. We have a great team helping to put this project together. If you have any creative ideas that you would like to see implemented in the new directory, please shoot us an email. Note: as a clarification, we will not be posting emails in the directory.



CHRIS & PEGGY WHITE

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★★★★★ Highly likely to recommend

02/18/2017 - [hirates](#)
Sold a Single Family home in 2017 in Alexandria, VA.

Local knowledge: ★★★★★
Process expertise: ★★★★★
Responsiveness: ★★★★★
Negotiation skills: ★★★★★

Chris White is an exceptional real estate professional. In January 2017, Chris White sold our home three days after he listed it. Our home languished on the market for 6 months from June to December 2016, we made a change in agents, and Chris White sold our home at our full asking price.

He is a consummate professional. We highly recommend using him. We would use him again.[Less](#) ^

★★★★★ Highly likely to recommend

02/01/2017 - [viju nasir dilley](#)
Bought and sold a Single Family home in 2017 for approximately \$4/5K in Alexandria, VA.

Local knowledge: ★★★★★
Process expertise: ★★★★★
Responsiveness: ★★★★★
Negotiation skills: ★★★★★

Chris and his team are simply the best! We talked to Chris back in November about making an offer on a house and getting our current house sold. Last week we settled on both properties and it would not have been possible without Chris. Anyone who knows the Mount Vernon area is familiar with the pages of properties The White Team is credited with selling in the weekly Gazette. Knowing how busy he is, everyday time we communicated with Chris either via email or phone we always felt as if we were his only customer, knowing full well he was very busy. He worked tirelessly on our behalf, negotiating with the other realtors and always had our best interests in mind. We have two small children and two dogs and would try to make showings as convenient and stress-free as possible. We have referred many friends to Chris who are looking to buy and sell just as we did. The Whites are the best realtors around, we could not have asked for better agents![Less](#) ^

Your home is your most valuable asset! When it is time to sell, don't take a chance—
always call CHRIS & PEGGY WHITE — THE AREA'S PROVEN LEADERS!

CHRIS & PEGGY WHITE ● (703) 283-9028 ● Chris.White@longandfoster.com

TRANSPORTATION

I attended the February meeting of MVCCA Transportation Committee (more on this committee below) to seek support and assistance on items of concern for our specific area. Our “to-do” list includes the following:

- White stop bar and stop sign repositioning at the west end of Robertson Blvd. Cars tend to fail to stop when curving onto Forrest Haven.
- Trimming back of vegetation on east side of Old Mt. Vernon Rd. in vicinity of Presidential Drive to improve visibility for left-turning cars to oncoming vehicles.
- Improved speed control and school pavement marking on Cherry Tree Dr. for school traffic.
- Extended green traffic light signal for traffic crossing or turning at Old Mt. Vernon Road. Frequently, vehicles in queue must stop again and wait for next light cycle.
- Improved crosswalk marking on Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy. for pedestrians crossing to park, bus stops and residential areas.

The only suggestion I received from the MVCCA chair was to prepare a memo on these issues to the district supervisor and perhaps a personal visit. Some of these items have already been submitted to VDOT without any response.

The MVATC meeting also addressed items not of particular direct interest to our area. They included safety at the Metro parking garages; crosswalk marking on Pole Road near the ball fields; motel traffic entering Richmond Hwy. near the Jeff Todd-MVMH intersection with traffic cutting through the Exxon Gas Station driveway; improved street name signs on the Fairfax Parkway; improved or new bus pullout lanes at all bus stops at area bus stops and more.

Finally, I’ve continued to report failed street lights to VEPCO, and missing or twisted and damaged street name signs to the Fairfax County Sign Shop.

If you have any transportation issues you would like to bring to my attention, please call or email 703-780-4824 or reiser@verizon.net.

John Reiser, Transportation Chair

SIGNS OF SPRING

Spring is just around the corner and it’s a great time to begin sprucing up our neighborhood signs.

Neighbor Kate Offringa is leading the efforts for the Mount Vernon Forest signs at the corners of Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy and Cherrytree Dr.

Please email kate_offringa@hotmail.com to let her know how you can help make our community’s front door a welcoming place to all who enter.

IT’S ALMOST PICNIC TIME!

Mark your calendars for the 11th Annual MVCA Picnic on June 3. This year, we’ll have a special treat as neighbors Adam Roca and Chris Pegher cook a BBQ pig, Cuban style. We look forward to spending a relaxing day with friends over tasty BBQ and cool beverages.

The picnic also will feature the 2nd Annual Cornhole Championship, along with a live band. Thank you to all of the hard-working volunteers who make this event happen each year.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

The 2018 Fairfax County (FC), full year, budget was released in February. Here are the highlights:

- The 2018 FC budget cycle runs from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The proposed General Funds budget is \$4.10 billion and is an increase of about \$77.2 billion (1.9 percent) over 2017.
- The new budget keeps our taxes steady and is balanced at \$1.13 per 100 of assessed value. The advertised tax rate will not be released until February 28. The average household tax bill will increase about \$40.69. The value of one penny of real estate tax for full year 2018 is \$23.75 million.
- The school transfer is receiving a bit of an increase to 2.7 percent or \$51.69 million. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) represent 52.8 percent of the budget, up from 52.7 percent last year. The proposed County General Fund transfer is \$2.17 billion. However, there is a gap of \$61 million between the advertised transfer and the request from the school board.
- County Executive Long has advised that not only is growth weak in residential real estate values, but FC office vacancy rates remains at historically high levels. The vacancy rate is about 16.5 percent. There is approximately 20 million square feet of vacant office space. Also, 73 percent of the County's office space is obsolete.
- He advised that the County's needs are greater than its resources. He noted that many important needs are not going to be funded. Some of these needs include: employee market rate adjustments; police department improvements; the popular diversion first program; and, maintenance to public parks and trails.
- State revenues are problematic and expected to be down about \$1.2 billion dollars over FY 2017 and FY 2018. How this impacts the local government has yet to play out. We expect to

have more clarity in early March when the state of Virginia finalizes its budget.

Fun Fact

The County is hiring one person in the Department of Code Compliance to support the growing workload of the illegal signs and advertising in the Right-of-Way program. However, they do expect the revenues collected to offset the cost of the hiring. For all of you posting signs on the side of the road and telephone poles, please review the regulation. The County is making an effort to clean up the illegal and/or long-term posting of temporary signs.



Looking Ahead

There are many significant budgeting variables in play regarding the new Federal administration. The Federal hiring freeze has impacted some of us already. In addition, the new administration's attempt to "drain the swamp" could put a further chill on the local economy. Changes to the "Affordable Care Act," immigration and global trade are also areas of concern. We have to watch how these play out as FC is greatly affected by all three of these variables.

However, there could be light at the end of the tunnel. Once we get through the first 100 days, things may settle down. Increases in military and infrastructure spending could easily reignite local growth. And a long-term compromise on health care could help alleviate budgeting/planning headaches.

Our leaders will have their work cut out for them at the local, state and federal levels. The 2017 budget documents can be found online at Fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/.

Public hearings are April 4, 5 and 6. As always, please feel free to email me at mclucid@verizon.net.

Sean McCarthy, Budget and Finance Chair

MANY THANKS!

Over the last 20 years, MVCA board members have come and gone, but Pam DePena has steadily edited our newsletter—despite moving away from the area 15 years ago. Through the years, Pam has offered sage advice, and her presence will be greatly missed. Thank you, Pam, for helping us communicate with our neighbors. Your years of resident knowledge have been priceless in more ways than one.

Pam continues to offer guidance to our incoming newsletter director, Lisa Dunn. Lisa lives in our community with her husband, Dennis, and three kids. When she's not active helping at Washington Mill Elementary School, volunteering for The Make-A-Wish Foundation or supporting Dennis at Woodlawn Little League (he is the President of the League), Lisa is a professional writer. Her expertise will ensure our newsletter will remain a communication link between the MVCA and you. Welcome to the team, Lisa!

Epiphany Weekday School
5521 Old Mill Rd. Alex. VA. 22309

Our preschool offers an early childhood program for children 2-5 yrs of age. A half day program with extended day options.

Call 703-780-3852

Epiphany Lutheran Church

Worship service 9:30 Sunday mornings



Spring Is In the Air!

- On and off cold, but no heavy snows. Be ready for snow, unexpected ice on cars and icy spots on roads; stay clear of VDOT and contract plows and trucks; don't drive with snow or ice-obscured windows; keep fire hydrants accessible.
- Outside lighting is a good deterrent to crime; motion activation saves electricity.
- Report burned-out street lights to Dominion at: 1-866 366 4357 and burned-out traffic signal lights to VDOT at: 1-800 367-7623.
- Check fire extinguishers' pressure gauges; be sure all occupants know how to operate.



- Be extremely careful with fireplace ashes; push test button on smoke detectors; replace batteries if necessary.
- Keep battery-powered and hand-crank flashlights handy in case power goes out.
- Be visible when walking or jogging; wear reflective outerwear and carry or wear lights, carry whistle and/or cell phone.

Most importantly, enjoy and be safe!

Your neighbor, John A. Hurley

EDUCATION

The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) budget has been in the news a lot lately. This month's article will attempt to explain some of the basic details and challenges that our local school system faces.

The Fairfax County School Board adopted a proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Budget of \$2.8 billion, an increase of 5 percent from the FY 2017 approved budget. The proposed budget increase focuses on two key areas: employee compensation and classroom resources. The majority of the increase is directly tied to compensation: \$33M to increase teacher salaries so the County can continue its effort to make salaries competitive with neighboring school districts; \$44M for a step increase for eligible employees; and, \$46M for anticipated increases in health insurance and retirement contribution costs. The FCPS system dedicates 90 percent of its operating budget to compensation and the remaining 10 percent for overhead such as utilities, school bus repairs, textbooks and more.

Unfortunately, because the meals tax referendum (which would have resulted in an additional \$70M for the County) did not succeed and the County has other projected deficits, the full budget request is unlikely to be adopted. According to a Feb. 15 *Washington Post* article, the County Executive will likely grant FCPS only 55 percent of the requested increase.

The County also faces numerous structural challenges, most of which are long-standing and not easily solved without additional funding:

Teacher Pay: If the proposed budget increase is not approved in full, the multi-year plan to bring Fairfax County teacher salaries in line with neighboring jurisdictions will be hit particularly hard, because the increased retirement and health insurance costs are unavoidable. For our County, this means increased challenges in recruiting and retaining the best teachers. Mount Vernon High School Principal Dr.

Anthony Terrell noted at our last MVCA meeting that this issue is one of his greatest concerns.

Growing Population: The FCPS student population is expected to grow by 2,000 students in FY 2018, while property taxes rates will be held at current levels. Hopefully the anticipated rise in property values will help to cover some of the increased costs of the additional students. The FY 2018 proposed budget also includes plans for a new elementary school for the northern Route 1 corridor.

Increasing Student Services Needs: FCPS faces increased pressures from the student population, particularly those with special needs. The average cost of a "general population" student in FY 2017 was \$14,400. Five percent of the student population requires assistive services that cost an additional \$8,000 per student. Another 5 percent requires full-day services at a cost of \$25,000 per student. And nine percent of the population requires even more intensive services at a cost of \$35,900 per student. Federal funding is supposed to cover 40 percent of the additional special education costs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (You may have heard discussions of IDEA during the Betsy DeVos nomination hearings). However, federal funding currently covers only 10.5 percent of FCPS' costs, a shortfall of more than \$76.6M in FY 2018, and county taxpayers make up the difference.

State Funding: There are two separate issues at play here. First, Virginia ranks 41st in the nation in state per-pupil funding. Second, of that limited funding, Fairfax County does not receive a proportionate share of school funding as neighboring counties. Fairfax County taxpayers fund 72 percent of total revenue for schools, compared to an average of 54 percent in other Virginia jurisdictions. Lottery funds are also being used to supplant rather than supplement state school funding.



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Education from page 6

Federal Impact Aid Funding: Under the Impact Aid formulation, the federal government pays Fairfax County for students whose parents live on federal property, which does not generate the residential property tax revenues that are the key source of FCPS funds. Fairfax County fully funds the operations of schools on Fort Belvoir, and Belvoir students also attend Mount Vernon District Schools. A separate calculation also provides a minimal amount for students whose parents work on federal property, which does not generate commercial property tax revenue for the county. However, similar to state funding, the federal government is not fully funding its obligations to Fairfax County. In FY 2018 the federal government is projected to pay Fairfax County a total of \$3.2M or just over 10 percent of the basic support payment – in Impact Aid. Currently, FCPS receives only \$198 per “federally connected” student. If Impact Aid were fully funded, FCPS would receive an additional \$22M in funding in FY 2018.

What’s Next?

Mount Vernon’s School Board member Karen Corbett Sanders notes that if the federal government fully funded IDEA and Impact Aid, FCPS would not have a budget shortfall. We will invite Fairfax County school board members to one of our future MVCA meetings to explain these issues in further detail.

The FY 2018 Virginia State budget will be finalized in March and FCPS will recommend adjustments once it is set.

If you’d like to learn more about the budget, you can find it online at <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/pdf/FY-2018-Proposed-Budget.pdf>.

Lynn Fisher, Education Chair

Note: Lynn has been a Mount Vernon resident since 2002. She recently joined the MVCA as the Education Chair.

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Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

MVCA Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Washington Mill Elementary School
7 p.m. pizza and soda; 7:30 p.m. program

Speaker:

Pearl Bea Labier

Neighborhood resident Pearl Bea Labier is owner/operator of the Macklin Ct. and Westgate assisted living homes. During her presentation, Pearl Bea will share information about the facilities and services she provides.

Officers

President: Louise Sloan703-360-6038
1st Vice President: Sean McCarthy703-360-0372
2nd Vice President: Ron Leffler.....703-593-4149
Secretary: Lisa Faustlin.....303-396-5164
Treasurer: Jessica Mazur.....703-517-8468

Directors

Terry Enright..... 202-299-7459
Dan Rinzel 703-360-4627
Paul Schray 703-619-9377

Committee Chairs

Budget and Finance: Sean McCarthy.....703 360-0372
Consumer Affairs: Vacant
Education: Lynn Fisher.....703-360-7091
Environment & Recreation: Terry Enright.....202-299-7459
Health & Human Services: Vacant
Membership/Directory: Ron Leffler.....703-593-4149
Neighborhood Watch: Ted Thompson703-780-1972
Planning & Zoning: Karan Cerutti703-778-4442
Public Safety: John Hurley703-799-9353
Transportation: John Reiser703-780-4824