

Minutes
Springfield Civic Association Meeting
September 20, 2011
Crestwood Elementary School

OPENING: President Bruce Waggoner opened the meeting at 7:30 PM following the 7:00 social.

Executive Committee Members Present (Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and Two Immediate Past Presidents):

President Bruce Waggoner	Hospitality Chair Sandy Frieswyk
1 st Vice President Michele Duell	Past President Rick Renninger
2d Vice President Merry Macke	
Secretary Alice Merrill	
Treasurer Rich Duffy	
Director at Large Gail Nittle	
Director at Large Bonnie Pritchard	

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 66, an estimate of how many of the 70 chairs were filled.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Director at Large Bonnie Pritchard announced tonight's door prizes, then asked members if they could spare some time, even an hour a month, to help with SCA operational needs. She said you might think you don't have an hour to spare, but neither do we, yet we do it, so please reconsider. You could help with taking photos or writing articles for the newsletter, assembling it for mailing, or soliciting ads; managing yard signs; soliciting door prizes; joining a Neighborhood Watch team; holding a National Night Out event; or other tasks. Think about it and come see her following the meeting. (Post-meeting note: Eight members volunteered tonight.)

Jennifer Palmer, Crestwood Elementary School's PTA President, asked members to see her after the meeting to join the PTA, to register their Giant Store cards to benefit Crestwood, or to volunteer to walk a group of kids to school at 7:45 AM on Safe Walk to School Day October 5th. Also please save your Box Tops for Education for Crestwood; they can redeem them for \$.10 each.

TREASURER'S REPORT. When Treasurer Rich Duffy assumed office in May, SCA's bank balance was \$3267.32. Since then, we've had income of \$435 and expenses of \$451.25, for a balance remaining of \$3251.07. See him for a copy if desired.

NEW BUSINESS. The President welcomed the guest speakers to Candidates Night and explained the ground rules: Each candidate will have three minutes to address the members followed by five minutes of Q&A time. Time will be strictly kept with a time-keeper raising a 30 Seconds sign indicating time remaining and a Stop sign indicating allotted time has expired. Incumbents and opposing candidates chose coin toss to determine which would speak first.

For Virginia Senate, District 35: Incumbent Richard Saslaw (D) and Candidate Robert Sarvis (R).

a. Remarks by Mr. Sarvis: He described his personal and professional background and said he's running to represent us because he doesn't feel he's getting adequate representation at either the State or Federal level. He feels that fresh ideas and new blood are needed in Richmond. In canvassing our area, he's heard about the problems we face with roads, transportation, loose wires hanging from poles, taxes forcing the elderly out of the area, jobs, and the economy. He believes excessive government regulation has led to many of our economic problems, saying there needs to be better judgment about which regulations are truly needed and which should be eliminated to get government out of the way of economic recovery and growth. He also said that:

Yes, he supports a woman's right to choose in cases of rape, incest and saving the life of the mother.

In looking for ways to fund the transportation needs, he believes we need to take a look at its gas tax. He sees it as out-dated, saying that fuel efficiency is up, there are more cars on the road, yet revenue is down. He would also look at congestion pricing, seeing that as a more efficient and effective way in the long run to pay for roads.

To get our fiscal house in order, he believes we need State employee pension reform that moves to a defined contribution pension plan like a 401(k). He noted that Governor McDonnell's proposal for that was killed in the Senate thanks to Senator Saslaw and his party.

b. Remarks by Senator Saslaw: He said he represented us years ago and is happy to be doing so again since the latest re-districting. He noted that two newspapers called him the most effective senator in Richmond so he must be doing something right. He's the Majority Leader in the Virginia Senate and said he didn't get there by being ineffective. He said that Virginia would look like Mississippi if the Republicans took over, and that he's killed bills to prevent that. He related that he pushed the legislation for three strikes and you're out, the penalty for use of a gun in the commission of a crime, creation of drug-free school zones and reinstate-

ment of the death penalty, and that he's been a consistent advocate for transportation and education funding – a good record, he said. He also said that:

He believes a woman's choice on abortion is not the government's business, regardless of her reason for it; it's her body. He added that he supports embryonic stem cell research, too.

Regarding the need to find effective ways to fund transportation, he reported that the State plans to set up a toll authority to establish two toll booths on I-95 south of Fredericksburg which, to win federal approval, necessitates the cost of an environmental review among other requirements. He said a one and a quarter penny added to the gas tax would accomplish the same thing and noted that every state around us has a higher gas tax than Virginia.

He disagrees with going to a defined pension plan for state employees, saying that if we'd made a contribution over the past 15 years, it would be no problem. He said Fairfax County does, but the State doesn't. As for fiscal responsibility, he said it's the Republicans who borrowed \$500M from the Virginia Retirement System last year to create a budget surplus, not the Democrats, but that \$500M is not surplus money; it's money owed the state employees' retirement fund.

He said that Virginia has been recognized as the best state in which to do business for seven of the past nine years, so how over-regulated can we be?

For State Delegate, District 39th District: Delegate Vivian Watts (D) running unopposed. Her remarks: She said her tack tonight will be a little different than it would be if there were candidates running against her. She said a key governing rule for her has always been to get things done. She's enjoyed working with SCA on our issues over the years and working with our District Supervisor, Jeff McKay, regarding good urban planning for the BRAC relocations, transportation and redevelopment of Springfield. She also said that:

She's involved in long-term serious efforts to get more slots for in-state students at VA colleges and that funding for 350 more slots was included in this year's budget.

There's a public information meeting at the Waterford on Sep 28th about the I-95/395 HOT lanes. Since these lanes will have a big impact on the Springfield area, she urged us to attend.

Since the latest redistricting, she now represents areas as far north as Landmark so she's involved in a lot of the big transportation issues in this area. How those are carried out is critically important, but funding them is a serious problem. She said that funds are eaten up by maintenance, yet many maintenance problems remain, like inadequate storm culverts as we so recently saw, inability to see signage because tree limbs haven't been cut, and more. Yet we haven't touched the gas tax in 25 years while the cost of living has increased 100%, she said.

For Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: Incumbent Sharon Bulova (D) and Candidate A. Will Radle, Jr. (I). Candidate Mike (Spike) Williams (R) who planned to be here was unable to attend.

a. Remarks by Chairman Bulova: She said came up through civic associations and local government before reaching her current position. On winning this seat two years ago in a very difficult economic time, she said she immediately had to address how to reduce costs while keeping the same quality of life that includes schools in the 5th percentile, one of the safest jurisdictions in the US, high-quality parks and libraries, and compassionate human services for those in need. She also said that:

Her goals as Chairman are to continue to look for ways to improve the economy by attracting new industry, like the hospitality industry, and to redevelop older community assets like Springfield Mall.

How we avoid a budget crisis like DC's from happening here is through balanced budgets, a system that she said is much better than DC's. Beyond that, she noted that a Montgomery County Council study showed that Fairfax County compared more favorably than Montgomery County in almost every category because we are good fiscal stewards. She said that by engaging the community, we've been able to make hard decisions, making over \$200M in reductions to keep the budget balanced while maintaining our quality of life.

She noted that the Fortune 500 companies that moved in the past 5 years moved to Fairfax County and said it's our quality of life that attracts them. Citing Northrop Grumman as an example, she said they looked all over the US, including VA, MD and DC. The latter two jurisdictions offered them tax breaks and other incentives. In Virginia, Arlington and Alexandria did the same, whereas Fairfax County offered, not money, but our quality of life, and they chose us. Right now, she said another company that's interested in relocating is looking at Fairfax County, and she'll keep working to bring them here.

b. Remarks by Mr. Radle: He said that with more than 20 years of service on state, regional and local public committees and non-profit boards, including service on the Lee District Land Use and Transportation Committee since 2004, he remains focused on developing effective, sustainable solutions to community challenges. To do so, he said he attends community meetings across the county, notably unattended by his opponents, to ensure the people are heard. He also said that:

His opponents were present in the Board Auditorium on March 29 when he presented a plan to increase Richmond's investment in Fairfax County Public Schools by over \$501 million. He said his plan will lower real estate taxes from \$1.07 to \$0.93

while increasing county net revenues by \$273 million and that it directly benefits 135 of 136 Virginia localities. He said that because the incumbent has not taken action, he's running as an Independent candidate for chairman, noting that both Democrat and Republican officials helped put him on the November ballot.

He explained that the General Assembly has a state mandate for basic education that costs \$6.316 billion annually with portions carried by state and local governments, and he proposes to transfer \$1.750 billion of that \$6.316 billion cost to Richmond. Since some view this plan as utopian, his back-up "Plan B" increases county revenues by \$80 million while reducing real estate taxes more modestly. He said that either plan provides local governments additional funds to address local priorities.

He reported that he plans to attend the annual Virginia Association of Counties Conference in November to gain support for this plan in order to change the win-lose approach that Fairfax County politicians have been pursuing with southern Virginia for decades.

He said because neither of his major-party opponents has shown interest in acting on his plan to save over half a billion dollars annually, he's running for Chairman as an Independent candidate.

To recruit more businesses, he said he would lower taxes and invest in education and the quality of life services that attract both families and employers to Fairfax County, the same services he said the incumbent has been cutting.

For Fairfax County Sheriff: Incumbent Stan Barry (D). Candidate Bill Cooper (R) was unable to attend.

Sheriff Barry's remarks: He said the sheriff's job is not primary law enforcement but rather managing the detention center, court security and the civil process and that we're doing that job well in this county. He reported that we passed the American Correctional Association's very tough audit for accreditation with flying colors, achieving a 98% score; the same for civil enforcement. He noted that the county's police officers, deputy sheriffs, and firefighters who know the job he's been doing have endorsed him for reelection. He also said:

Why should we vote for him? He said because of his 32 years' experience, 12 years as Sheriff, during which he's built relationships of trust at the federal, state and local levels. He said a vote for him is a vote on his track record, a vote to continue the same level of exceptional public safety service that we've received in the past 12 years. Yes, he took some budget cuts but said he applied them to non-essential services, so the office remains fully staffed for core operations -- a huge operation with a \$60M budget and 575 deputies. He said the bulk of those funds come from the State, plus city funds and fees from the courts. He also said that:

The Sheriff's Office is not really a partisan office, but listing party affiliation lets people identify candidates by their party's views.

His current challenges include implementing greater use of technology to perform functions that can free-up staff, such as electronic surveillance vs. eyes on prisoners, and email delivery vs. sending deputies to deliver records to attorneys.

Visitors to the detention center comment on how quiet it is. He said he looked at the US Marine Corps brig and patterned the detention center after that, saying his philosophy is be strict, but no abuse.

Asked if evictions are dangerous, he said not often, but some can be, you never know, and that it's a very long process, sometimes taking 5-6 months to get people out.

For Lee District Supervisor, Fairfax County: Supervisor Jeff McKay (D) running unopposed. His remarks: Having served 12 years as Chief of Staff to Supervisor Dana Kaufman, he said he's gratified to have independent validation of his work as supervisor by the many who have endorsed his reelection. He said the achievement he's most proud of is the Board of Supervisors' work on the budget because, with the big downturn in the real estate market and the resulting reduction in revenue, they worked really hard to find the cuts necessary to balance the budget without sacrificing core services in education, public safety, and human services to the needy. He also said:

That to support the transportation impact on Springfield of the BRAC redevelopment of the Engineer Proving Grounds, new and modified Fairfax Connector bus routes went operational this month.

That Zoning Code Compliance efforts are more successful than ever since the Strike team, police, fire and sheriff's departments, and county attorney's office are all working together on code enforcement issues like boarding houses and other violations. He said he's proud of today's Code Enforcement Team.

That he works to eliminate every loophole he finds, but federal, state and local laws complicate the boarding house issue because of difficulty with the constitutionality of defining what is "family". Faced with that, he said they've found creative ways to prosecute offenders by proving beyond reasonable doubt to a judge in court that what's going on in the house is illegal. For example, having coin-operated laundry machines in a single-family home is reasonable evidence that the occupants are boarders, but proving that can take a long time since it requires lots of documentation, like showing rent money changing hands. He said the most successful cases are those with active participation of neighbors who make reports that contain as many specifics as possible, such as reports that say look for this happening at that time and place, or to talk to this person about that matter.

As for why he has no opposition in this election, he credited the hard work of his outstanding staff, saying people are proud of that.

CLOSING.

The President thanked our speakers and asked them to draw the names of tonight's door prizes winners who are:

Margaret P. and Grace O. – \$10 gift certificate each from Hard Times Café.

Sandy F. and Kim K. -- \$20 gift certificate each from Metro Run & Walk.

Betty M and Barb B. – two tickets each for a Choralis concert at Falls Church Presbyterian Church.

Miller H. – gift certificate for a complimentary weekend stay at Springfield's TownePlace Suites hotel.

Asked by President Waggoner whether he could stay to update us on a few Land Use questions, Supervisor McKay provided the following information:

Springfield Mall's redevelopment was approved two years ago, but Vornado didn't own the property until last December. They found a lot of asbestos and have started removing it in non-public areas but can't get to the public areas until after February because the Mall's lease prevents any work that would disrupt holiday shopping from November through February. The ball is in Vornado's court to show progress but, like everyone else, they're suffering from the economy. His office calls them weekly for status reports and he hopes to see them break ground next year.

The site previously occupied by the Tokyo Inn restaurant next to the Outback Steakhouse on Backlick Road has been approved for a new restaurant. It may become the home of a Chik-Fil-A or fast-food place but not a drive-thru.

The site of the former Shoney's restaurant on Old Keene Mill Road will see by-right development of a restaurant next to the hotel going up on the old Chi-Chi's restaurant site. The gas station across the road will add more gas pumps in the space previously occupied by the Long John Silver restaurant. He met with the owners of all these properties and is gratified that Springfield's downtown blight has been removed and new development is underway. .

ADJOURNMENT. After thanking Supervisor McKay for the extra time and information, The President adjourned the meeting at 8:50PM. Next meeting is November 15th.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Alice Merrill
Secretary