



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Fall 2016

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Belle Rive • Ferry Landing Estates • Ferry Landing Villa • Ferry Point Estates • Mount Vernon Forest • Mount Vernon Grove • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverbend • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Washington Woods • Westgate • Wycliffe on the Potomac • Yacht Haven Estates

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer weather has finally given way to fall. Even though this marks the three-quarter mark of 2016's passing, there is a sense of renewal in the air. School has resumed, vacation tans are hidden underneath work clothes, and the Mount Vernon Civic Association is preparing for the final meeting of 2016.

We enjoyed a wonderful time at our annual community picnic and party in May. Weather could not dampen the fun nor stop Sean McCarthy and Adam Rocca from winning the First Annual MVCA Cornhole Championship. Only nine months remain until they defend their title—I encourage others to start preparing!

Although the general membership has not met since May, your civic association has been working behind the scenes to stay on top of issues that affect our community. Our Budget and Finance Chair has been watching the developments with the upcoming Meals Tax Referendum on the November ballot. His newsletter article explains the pros and cons to the issue. I encourage you to enter the conversation with your elected officials and to vote in the upcoming election. This, along with bond measures affecting transportation and the park's authority, require citizens' inputs to ensure we are taking care of our community in a manner we see fit.

In addition to this contested issue, you'll find useful community information inside our newsletter. We have feedback on the trash survey, ways to get involved in our community, and information on a change in our neighborhood watch. While this

newsletter is helpful in keeping you informed of community activities, it's only one of many ways to keep in touch. Remember you can call an association chairperson, contact board members through our www.mountvernoncivicassociation.org website, or be on the lookout for updates on NextDoor. NextDoor is an on-line community building website and application. Once you are signed in, you'll receive notices that are pertinent to our neighborhood and beyond. It's a great way to keep abreast community happenings.

You are cordially invited to our next general membership meeting on Wednesday, October 12th at 7:30PM. We will begin earlier at 7:00PM with pizza, soda, and society to begin our meeting, which will again be held at the Washington Mill Elementary School Library. Our speaker will be Mike Rioux, the Mount Vernon District representative to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. MWAA formed a working group to study the effects of changing airplane routes and the associated noise that goes along with these changes. Mike is knowledgeable about how commercial aviation affects us and can help us understand how our concerns are heard at MWAA. We hope to see you at the meeting!

Thank you for being a part of our home and for allowing me to serve our community—

Louise Sloan
President, MVCA

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Ted Thompson recently became the MVCA Neighborhood Watch coordinator. We extend our sincere thanks Coilin Owens for his many years of dedicated and proactive service in making our neighborhood watch a visible and vibrant community service, recognized by the Fairfax County Police as one of the best and most active in the County.

Ted has met several times with Master Police Officer Robert (Buba) Urps, the FCP Neighborhood Watch Liaison, updated the neighborhood watch list of participants and set up a dedicated email address for neighborhood watch communications; MVCANeighborhoodWatch@gmail.com.

Ted reports that we have lost 40% of our watch participants through attrition and moves out of the area. While we still have a dedicated team where the participants are sanding a “watch” and conducting patrols of the neighborhood approximately once every four months, we are actively seeking to expand the team with new volunteers.

In partnership with the Fairfax County Police Department, Mount Vernon District Station, the purpose of the MVCA Neighborhood Watch is, simply put, to use citizen observers to deter crime in our neighborhood by keeping a watchful eye on our neighbor’s homes and reporting to the police any noted suspicious activities or crimes to the police. Our physical patrols, at varying times at least once a day, serve as a visible notice to would be criminals and others, that residents are concerned about crime, will call the police when we detect unusual or suspicious activity, and that we take an active part in protecting our homes.

We encourage you to become involved as a member of our neighborhood watch team!

TRASH SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you all who participated in the Trash Survey. I have compiled the results and posted them on the MVCA website.

Here are some takeaways from the comments section of the survey:

- Competition is great!
- Same problem exists with the lawn companies...
- I would support a consolidated vendor if level of service and costs remain the same.

Overall, the majority of respondents felt loyalty and/or satisfaction to their trash company. I would like to note that speed and reckless driving was mentioned multiple times in the comment section. As a homeowner living on a street with no sidewalk, I have reached out to our trash company mentioning that we are very satisfied with their services but would like them to be more mindful of the speed limits in our neighborhood. They were very receptive and appreciative to the feedback. It’s not a fix but a small effort on my part to address the issue.

I wish you all an enjoyable fall season! If you would like to advertise in our newsletter, please let us know! We offer great rates and it will be listed in print and online. Please email mountvernoncivicassociation@gmail.com for more information.

Jessica Mazur, Treasurer

Please call Ted or Lynn Thompson to learn more about this important Association activity and to join our dedicated team. Phone: 703-780-1972.

TRANSPORTATION

The MVCCA Transportation Committee has recommended that the National Park Service change the yield sign to a stop sign in Mount Vernon Circle. This will help unfamiliar drivers to navigate the circle safely. Additionally, the committee has requested the Mount Vernon estate provide traffic guards during events to manage both the visitors and vehicular traffic.

The committee approved a resolution to change the timing of the lights at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/Jeff Todd Way and to allow the center lane go straight to Jeff Todd Way. This should stem the traffic wishing to turn right from cutting through the Exxon parking lot. Additionally, this intersection will be seeing higher than normal use because of Pence Gate's (Ft Belvoir's main gate) closure for the next six weeks.

Other areas that I am working to improve closer to home:

- The section of Old Mount Vernon Road between Robertson and Cherrytree is prone to vegetation creeping in on the roadway and sidewalks. I've requested road crews prune the trees and ask homeowners to also help in the effort to keep our roads and sidewalks clear for the public.

- Robertson and Forrest Haven Intersection—drivers fail to properly stop and this could result in a collision. The suggestion has been made to move the stop sign to Forrest Haven. I would appreciate comments on this.
- The "No Turn On Red" signs on Old Mount Vernon's intersection with Mount Vernon Memorial Highway are not always heeded. I'm requesting pruning of vegetation to increase sign visibility.
- Mount Vernon Memorial Highway is seeing an increase in traffic, but the crosswalks remain poorly marked. I will propose to the MVCCA and VDOT that we work to rectify this situation for the safety of pedestrians in our community.
- Please report street light outages to Fairfax County so they can be fixed to maintain safe visibility on our streets.

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

LINK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS

NextDoor is a social website that helps neighbors stay in touch. It's much like an on-line bulletin board that allows neighbors to post events, items for sale, or to learn about the community. Our civic association is going to test this platform to help keep you informed of news in between our quarterly newsletters.

To support this effort, the Mount Vernon Civic Association now has its own private group within the Union Farm community. Once you've established an account on NextDoor, follow the instructions to join the MVCA group.

To join a group on a web browser:

From the menu on the left of [your neighborhood newsfeed](#), select **Browse groups** under "GROUPS." Click the group you'd like to join.

The MVCA group is **private**. Click **REQUEST TO JOIN**. The moderator of the group will be alerted that you're trying to join, and then will approve or decline your membership.

NextDoor is also available on iPhone and Android.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

I hope everyone had a fun summer and a great start to the new school year. I have a few items that will impact everyone's future budget and finances. We have a big decision on the November ballot regarding whether we should have a meals tax of 4%. Also, tax revenues are down in Richmond.

Meals Tax

I have reported on this over the last couple of years and it's finally here. I have had the pleasure to attend the Meals Tax discussion on September 28th at the South County building, attend a discussion with Delegates Dave Albo and Vivian Watts at our budget and finance meeting, attend many budget and finance meetings with elements of this tax discussed and read many of the articles in the *Gazette* and *The Washington Post* over the last couple of years.

There is a lot of passion on this subject. Here is a brief breakdown on the pros and cons of the Meals Tax as I understand it. In the interest of full disclosure, I've owned fast food franchises, but am no longer in the business. I also have three children in the Fairfax County Public School system.

The Meals Tax is a 4% targeted sales tax increase on an important industry in our County. The tax applies to eating out in restaurants, ready to eat meals in grocery stores and convenience stores, and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Many jurisdictions like Old Towne Alexandria, Washington, DC and Arlington County already have a similar food tax. An open question regarding this tax is whether it will affect shopping patterns and reduce the actual amount of spending in these establishments.

Those in favor of the tax believe it's silly to think that someone would change their minds about eating out based on a tax this small. They see this as "free money" and about 28% of the money raised would be paid by tourists and folks who live outside of Fairfax County.

Others with some knowledge of economics and consumption taxes argue that higher taxes result in

reduced consumption; it's just a matter of how much. They believe that just because something is hard to measure, doesn't mean it doesn't have an effect. This is why the business community, and specifically the restaurant industry, is opposed to the tax.

The majority of this tax increase, 70%, will go towards the FCPS system, or about \$70 million a year. The Full Year 2017 General Funds Disbursements Budget is \$3,988,246,875. Of this amount, \$2,082,878,044 or 52.2% goes to the FCPS.

So, if I've done my math correctly, \$70 million will be about a 1.8% increase to the school system's budget. Our politicians are promising that, by law, 70% of the Meals Tax referendum money has to go to FCPS. However, they make no promise that the 52.2% number will stay the same. Measuring the effects of the meals tax on the school system transfer budget year in and year out may prove to be disappointing.

Many of those in favor of the Meals Tax point out that FCPS is underfunded and that teacher salaries are no longer competitive with surrounding districts. We are losing good teachers to surrounding districts simply because surrounding districts pay more. Thus, if we want a top school system, we need to make funds available. Therefore, by most metrics, we are moving in the wrong direction. The Meals Tax will help stem the slide.

Opponents of the meals tax argue that we are not getting our fair share of tax dollars from Richmond due to the unfair school funding formula, also known as the Local Composite Index (LCI). We are receiving about 23 cents on the dollar back from Virginia's Capitol.

Increasing this amount by ten or twelve cents would go a long way to closing the underfunding gap. Those tax opponents argue that we need to fight harder and articulate a plan for getting more of our money back before raising more taxes.

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Lastly, a potential benefit of the meals tax is that it will help diversify our tax base. One penny on the real estate tax rate equals \$23.31 million, so this tax represents about four cents of the real estate tax.

The State Budget

State Delegates Dave Albo and Vivian Watts joined our September MVCCA budget and finance meeting in which we discussed state budget and revenue projections. The budget passed last year was off by \$266 million. We are projected to have an additional \$850 million dollar shortfall this year and \$630 million deficit the year after.

Our Delegates discussed the budgeting process briefly. They each advised that due to the 45 day state legislature meeting schedule, many important budget questions and reviews are simplified so much that incredibly complicated matters are considered and decided in minutes. However, each of our Delegates were very polite and did appear to be representing their constituents to the best of their

abilities. It was an educational exchange that was appreciated by each group.

So, we have challenges. The Commonwealth continues to move away from its traditional agrarian roots and is heavily reliant on the Federal Government for revenue. This creates friction in Richmond as the contrast in the economies of Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads grow.

Wrap ups

The Meal Tax referendum will be on the November ballot. Overall, money is tight due to the lingering effects of Sequestration at the state and local levels. As always, please feel free to email me at mclucid@verizon.net. The 2016 budget discussion documents can be found online at fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/.

Sean McCarthy, Budget and Finance Chair

Autumn Safety

Fall and soon winter bring: longer hours of darkness, fog/rain/snow, slippery streets, school buses operating in

darker weather, snow removal vehicles- please drive carefully.

Pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers—wear high visibility vests, gloves, helmets (bicyclists); install extra reflectors and lights on bikes; carry a whistle, cell phone, ID, flashlight.

Install motion-sensitive external lights on residence and garage.

Sign up for FREE Fairfax County Alerts, Police Blotter and other Public Safety messages online.

Have a family emergency plan and meeting place.

Have a plan for what to do if electric power is out.

Do not leave car unlocked when parked.

Keep garage doors closed and locked.

Install fresh batteries in smoke detectors. FCFD will assist you if needed.

Call 911 for EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Report suspicious vehicles and persons.

Consider joining the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team. CERT enables you to act responsibly and safely in the first 72 hours after a disaster or major incident. FREE CERT training program is typically 7 or 8 three-hour sessions. You must be 16 or over to participate. Equipment is provided for training and after graduation. Go to www.fairfaxcountycert.org for more information.

Be careful of holiday candles. Do not throw holiday gift wrappings into the fireplace. Never store coals or ashes under a deck or in a garage.

Best wishes,

Your neighbor, John A. Hurley

PLANNING & ZONING

The first project discussed was the Lennar at Huntington. It's located south of Cameron Run and north of Huntington Avenue – generally between Metroview Parkway and Fenwick Drive. It does require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and rezoning. The development is six stories with approximately 363 units. There is a planned linear park connecting the development to Huntington Ave. The Resolution that was passed: 1) limits a certain area of the development to only offices, with an option of residential in the future, 2) Opposes any changes to height at east end, and 3) limits the height in future development. The developers and residents of Huntington Community Association have a good working relationship and have been involved in the planning of the development since the onset.

The 2d project is Novas King's Crossing at Penn Daw. It's located on the east side of Richmond Highway and North Fairview Drive. It also requires both a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and rezoning. It's a mixed use development with first floor retail and a maximum of 375 units. The Springbank Community, the community east and southeast of the proposed development supports the development. They will continue their discussion with the developers through the remaining process.

Earl Flannigan, our Planning Commissioner, briefed Embark – the effort to widen Route One from Napper Road to Woodlawn and increase density that will in turn enable a metro stop further south than Huntington and a Bus Rapid Transit system. The effort includes six business centers along the Route One corridor. Basically, the business centers are where the current shopping centers are. The Eisenhower Avenue Metro stop has a density ration of 37. Beacon Hill has a density ration of 19 so is far short of required density. There are monthly schedule meetings. The website for the Embark project is <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news2/embarking-on-the-future-of-richmond-highway/>.

The last project discussed was the North Hill Project. It is a 30 plus acre parcel of land the county intends

CAN YOU HELP?

Grounds Beautification at Washington Mill Elementary School, Sunday, October 16 1-3 PM (weather permitting)

The PTA is hosting its Fall Beautification and you are invited to help with the work. Work will include trimming trees, raking any down leaves, and general yard work to keep our local school looking its best. If you're unable to attend, consider beautifying your own yard to promote a more beautiful Mount Vernon community.

Scouting for Food, Saturdays, Nov. 5 and 12

On Saturday, November 5, Cub Scout Pack 1503 will be placing bags on the door handles of houses in our community. They will return to pick up the bags the following Saturday. All donated food items will be taken to UCM for distribution. Additionally, if you have any American flags to be retired, you may include them with your donation. The Scouts will hold a retirement ceremony at their spring campout.

on using to increase affordable housing for the Mount Vernon area. The project is time sensitive. The committee asked for more time for our review and subsequent comments. The web page www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/north_hill has more details. Basically, there will be a mixture of affordable housing (for those with income 10-60% of area income) and market value town homes for sale. The total number of units for both affordable housing (apartments) and townhomes will be approximately 279. The County estimates 177 elementary age children for the project. Eleven acres of the development will be a public park. There was much discussion about location of the park in relation to the residents, parking for residents and visitors to the park, and the mix of rental units to townhomes.

One of the topics for the next meeting's agenda is the Short Term Rental Resolution.

Karan Cerutti, Planning and Zoning

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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



SUPPORT WMES STUDENTS

If you're coming to the October MVCA membership meeting, consider dropping off non-perishable food items to support the WMES Food for Thought Program, just inside the doors of WMES. This program provides food to deserving children so their stomachs remain full through the weekend. Canned fruits and vegetables, along with items high in protein, are especially helpful. Providing meals helps to promote healthy living—and learning!

If you have Box Tops for education, Louise Sloan will collect and pass on to the no-cost fundraising chair at the WMES PTA. Labels may only be worth ten cents each, but our school raises over \$1,000 annually with this program. This money helps boost the PTA budget, which in turn helps with after school enrichment, field trips, and school supplies.

**MVCA
Membership Meeting**

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

Washington Mill Elementary

7:00 PM pizza and soda 7:30 PM program

Speaker

Mike Rioux

Mount Vernon District representative to the
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority



**METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY**

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

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