

# Bulova Byline

## Chairman's Monthly Report

### July 2010



## The Transformation of Tysons

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment to guide **“The Transformation” or redevelopment of Tysons Corner** was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The new Plan orients future growth into eight separate districts around four Metrorail stations on the new Silver line.

With a planning horizon of 20 years, the Plan calls for a “new downtown” for Fairfax County; a downtown where future growth can be accommodated in a denser, transit-oriented, more compact development pattern. Parks, public spaces, public art, and vibrant residential mixed use elements are called for in the new Plan.

Adoption of the Plan marks the end of a unique collaborative planning process that has taken place over the past five years. The Tysons Task Force, chaired by Clark Tyler, worked for four and a half years (beginning in the summer of 2005) to produce a Vision for the Transformation of Tysons in anticipation of the new Metro Stations. The Vision is exciting and forward thinking. The thirty-six member Task Force consisted of representatives from throughout the County, including land owners, major employers, and community organizations.

In September 2008, the Task Force presented its Vision to the Board of Supervisors. Our Board, chaired at the time by Gerry Connolly, voted unanimously to refer it to the Planning Commission for the development of detailed Comprehensive Plan text.

The Planning Commission's Tysons Committee, chaired by Commissioner Walter Alcorn, has worked for almost two years to bring us to this point. All together, close to two hundred community meetings and workshops have been hosted. The process has been one of inclusiveness, transparency and creativity and I am impressed with the recommendations that have resulted from it.

While adoption of the plan marked the end of one process, it is also a beginning. With adoption of the Plan, Fairfax County is moving forward on a long term strategy for accommodating future growth in Fairfax County; a Smart Growth pattern of development that is transit-oriented, walkable and environmentally sensitive. The Tysons Plan language is not the end of the process – it represents a new lifestyle choice. The Plan is a long range tool for guiding change in Tysons. It will also be a demonstration to guide other redeveloping areas of the County that can be served by transit.

## Fairfax County's Asian Sisters

From June 14<sup>th</sup> through June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010, I visited Fairfax County's Sister City, **Harbin, in northern China.**

Harbin became our Sister last year as part of a National Association of Counties trip to the Washington Metropolitan area. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland suggested the partnership when the District of Columbia, upon learning that Harbin is not a capital city, declined at the last minute to sign on to an agreement. Harbin is known as The Ice City, and hosts a famous Ice Festival, with intricate ice carvings, during the winter months. Costs for this trip were covered by the Harbin government and Visit Fairfax, which is funded entirely through a portion of revenue from hotel taxes. I covered my own airfare.

Harbin is an up-and-coming city of ten million people in northern China, near Russia and Mongolia. They have begun ambitious plans to redevelop a large area of the city north of the Songhua River. Plans include Research and Development parks for IT, aviation, aerospace, navigation, automobiles and rail transport. Members of our delegation included Supervisor Gerry Hyland and Visit Fairfax CEO Barry Biggar. We were impressed that the Harbin government is building six bridges across the river – in three short years.



Harbin has thirty other Sisters, which means Fairfax County has gained many cousins throughout the world in addition to our Sister City in **Songpa-gu, Seoul, Korea.** **Future plans** call for the establishment of **teacher and student exchanges** between our two Sisters. A first group of three Fairfax County teachers are expected to be leaving to teach in Songpa-gu, Korea this summer. All expenses for their trip will be paid for by the Songpa-gu government. Teachers from Songpa-gu will gain teaching experience in Fairfax County schools this winter and will be hosted in Fairfax County homes.

**President of Visit Fairfax, Barry Biggar, with our guide, Cathy, looking at revitalization plans for Harbin.**

## Historic Bell Garden Ground Breaking Meadowlark Gardens

With over 35,000 residents of Korean descent, Fairfax County has one of the largest Korean-American populations in the United States. The Korean-American community has made great contributions to Fairfax County in many ways. With the creation of a Korean Bell Garden at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, we all will have a place where we can learn and appreciate more about Korean culture.

This will be the first Korean Bell pavilion on the East Coast and the only Bell Garden in North America. We owe the success of this effort to Ms Jeung Hwa Elmejjad-Yi, the Chair of the Korean-American Cultural Committee (KACC). KACC had a vision for this place about five years ago and started looking around Fairfax County for the right location. Supervisor Penny Gross played a critical role in introducing KACC to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.



On Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, I was joined by Supervisors Cathy Hudgins and Penny Gross as we broke ground for the traditional pavilion that will hold the large bell. The pavilion is being built at the garden by carpenters from Korea who are trained in building traditional structures. The pavilion, with its traditional loop roof design and hand carvings, will be in place within a few months. The Bell is also being handcrafted by a bell maker in Korea and is considered a national treasure. With images of herons, dogwoods and other natural flora and fauna that are present both in Virginia and Korea, this bell and

pavilion will highlight the natural connections between Korea and Virginia. This kind of massive bell has been crafted on the Korean peninsula since 700 A.D.

In addition to the bell and pavilion, this site provides the perfect place to build a traditional Korean garden around the bell, much like something you would find in an ancient Korean palace. The terraced rocks, scenic views of the lake, meandering trails, and trees native to the Korean peninsula like maples and red pines, are all elements that would be common in a Korean garden.

The planning for this garden has attracted the help of some of the best artistic minds in the world. Professor David Chung of the University of Michigan designed the bell and pavilion. Professor Young-Sun Chung of Seoul University, an expert landscape architect, is currently working to refine the plans for the garden.

In addition to the artistic talent this project attracted, it has also enjoyed financial support from many in our community, without whom the project would not be possible. And, we are deeply honored that the Republic of Korea has also contributed greatly to the success of this project that will symbolize the partnership between our two countries.

## **Community Spotlight on Great Falls Citizens Association Cool Communities Project**

One of the reasons I am proud to represent Fairfax County is the engaged and innovative people who live here. There are many fine examples of what Fairfax residents can achieve and this month, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the work being done by the Great Falls Citizens Association to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions from their homes and businesses.

For the past several months, the Cool Communities Carbon Reduction Project team has been researching techniques and solutions to improve energy efficiency. It can be difficult for people to sort through all the information out there, but the program the Cool Community has created is straightforward and provides clear suggestions about what homeowners can do to reduce their energy consumption, and even it includes information about incentives to help get you started. Once a property has scored 20 or more points on the Cool Communities checklist, it becomes a “Cool Neighbor”. Reducing energy consumption also reduces energy bills for homeowners and businesses.

There are already over 200 households participating in this program, and the Great Falls Citizens Association hopes that more of their neighbors will continue to join to create a truly Cool Community. The positive impact will continue to grow with each additional household that participates. For more information you can call Mark Thomas in my office at (703) 324-2321.