



Planning Communicator



A Publication of the Fairfax County Planning Commission

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Commissioners Spotlight

This issue of the Planning Communicator continues our series on current Commissioners. We focus on two outgoing members: John R. Byers, Mount Vernon representative and current Vice Chairman, who has served on the Planning Commission since 1986 and Laurie Frost Wilson, At-Large member since 1999, who will both complete their service as of December 31, 2006.



John Byers resides adjacent to land that was once the Harrelson Tract farm. After he returned from serving in the Vietnam War in 1965 and was elected president of his civic association (the first of four terms), he learned that the property owners planned to develop the farm with high-rise apartments in an area that was zoned as low-density residential. The Planning Commission had denied the application in response to opposition from Byers and his civic association. However, the property owners had discovered “a loophole in the Zoning Ordinance which allowed an eleemosynary (charitable) use to bypass the Planning Commission and go to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for approval,” Byers explained, and the BZA approved the application. Byers’ civic association, composed of 43 homes, sued the BZA in circuit court and won, which was believed to be the first, at that time in Virginia history, that the BZA had been defeated in a court decision. Knowing that the farm would still be developed, the civic association “created a plan for a hospital, government center, fire station, police station, school, library, mental health center and public health facility,” Byers said. Thanks to the support of former Mount Vernon District Supervisor Herb Harris, “nearly all of those facilities are there

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Laurie Frost Wilson has been a Fairfax County resident since 1966 and has lived in Lorton since 1985. Two months after relocating to Lorton, she was informed about a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for 900 acres adjacent to her home. She noted that the original plan was for the development of 1,000 houses in an area that “was planned low-density buffer between the Occoquan and the mid-dense residential districts of Springfield.” Wilson researched the impact that this proposal would have on the area and projected that the new elementary school, for which the developers had donated 13 acres, would be overcrowded the day it opened due to the number of children that would be generated by the proposed development, now known as Crosspointe at Fairfax Station. And her projection was correct. “Within five years, they were up to 29 trailers in the back,” she said. “So, that was my introduction to land use.”



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Land Use Information Advisory Group Completes its Work

As noted in the August issue, on January 26, 2006, the Board of Supervisors appointed At-large Commissioner Walter Alcorn to lead an advisory group of citizens to work with Fairfax County staff to improve the delivery of land use information via the county's Web site. The Advisory Group completed its deliberations in November and anticipates forwarding recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in January 2007.

The **Land Use Information Accessibility Advisory Group** was chartered to: 1) to assist county staff with making land use information that is provided by the Departments of Planning and Zoning, Tax Administration, Information Technology and Public Works and Environmental Services more accessible to average county Web users and 2) to provide the Board of Supervisors with recommendations to help guide the information technology budget investments in the Land Development System's online portal functionality.

As part of its deliberations, the group reviewed new Web pages designed by the Office of Public Affairs, in concert with the various county land use departments, to provide land use information in a more logical, citizen-friendly and accessible format. This newly-formatted information made its debut on the county Web site in August, as well as other enhancements which include:

- * New Web page redesign to reorganize and consolidate the land planning and development information (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/landuse/>);
- * New ability to search the Land Development System **using a County address** to see all nearby land planning and development cases (visually on a map or by listing with drill down capability, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/>);
- * New ability to search the Land Development System **by Magisterial District** to see area land planning and development cases (visually on a map with drill down capability, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/>); and
- * New business process improvements and system enhancements to the Master Address Repository (MAR) as it becomes the new system of record for parcel addressing in the county.

In its final report, the Advisory Group will present 12 guiding principles for the county's land use information and will recommend specific improvements to that information over the next 5 to 10 years. The Group also will recommend continual innovative and incremental improvements as well as longer-term improvements intended to be implemented over a number of years due to cost implications.

Areas focused on for specific improvements will include:

- * Expanded application of land use information tools
- * Improved access to site-specific land use history
- * Further integration of GIS into all county land use information
- * Electronic availability of land use public hearing information
- * Expansion of citizen notification on land use actions through "push" technology
- * Electronic file and permit submission and review
- * Creation of online calendar with all upcoming land use meetings and hearings
- * Collection of approved development plans and visualization files for not yet built major developments
- * Creation of a "digitized" Comprehensive Plan model with GIS layers to show options and alternatives
- * Making Commission hearings available in Channel 16's Video on Demand Library, including downloading capability
- * Placing Commission verbatim excerpts and recommendations online prior to Board scheduled hearings and making enhancements in the Board Auditorium for Web access on the dais and allowing staff and speakers the capability to more easily use electronic media presentations and GIS displays.

Commissioner John R. Byers

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now,” he noted. Byers became well-known for speaking frequently before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, which led to his appointments to the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) and the Fairfax County Group Residential Facilities Commission (FCGRFC). He was ultimately appointed to the Planning Commission in 1986 by former Mount Vernon District Supervisor Farrell Egge and has been reappointed five times by the current District Supervisor Gerry Hyland.

Serving as Vice Chairman since 1996, Byers believes that the most challenging duties of this role have been “trying to keep the commissioners focused on the issue at hand.” He explains, “There is a tendency of certain commissioners to wander off into unrelated issues or to bore deeply into a vaguely related problem or even to just chatter if the agenda isn't very full. That wastes the Commission's time as well as the public's.” Byers feels that the most rewarding duties have been “watching and learning (and envying) the easy, relaxed, impromptu humor of Chairman Pete Murphy that he uses to defuse tensions, and the graceful approach of Janet Hall who can scold a witness and then send him/her away thinking how gentle and correct she is.” He reveals, “I am constantly in awe of my fellow commissioners who are all smarter, more knowledgeable, and harder working than I am. How can you not be impressed in such company?”

Byers notes that one major change he has witnessed in the Mount Vernon area has been “the redevelopment and improvement of Richmond Highway, much to the credit of the SFDC.” “Richmond Highway, then known as Route 1,” he explains, “was portrayed in the 1960s and 1970s in urban planning textbooks as a classic case of urban blight.” He adds that although “the improvements are significant, there is still much to be done.” The second major change that Byers has witnessed has been “the surging growth in the Lorton area.” “As Lorton was formerly considered the dumping ground for Fairfax County, the closures of both the D.C. prison and the landfill have helped create a remarkably inviting environment for residential development,” he said. “With most of the prison property set aside for nearby park uses, the Laurel Hill developments are on track to be among the most desirable in the county.”

Byers has been active in the revitalization of the Richmond Highway corridor. He recalls initiating an effort with former Lee District Commissioner Carl Sell to develop a method to allocate the 7 1/2 mile commercial strip between Alexandria and Fort Belvoir. He explains that their vision was “to create five commercial nodes along Richmond Highway separated by residential areas. Businesses would be allowed to continue as they were, but could only expand by moving into the nodes, and all new businesses would be directed into the nodes.” Byers and Sell both acknowledged that it could possibly take 50 years to fulfill this vision, but with the collaboration of both the Lee and Mount Vernon communities, new residential developments are now emerging along Richmond Highway.

Noting other emerging issues facing the area, Byers cites “the two most obvious impacts” caused by the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure recommendations “will be on our transportation network and on our school system.” While they are “still somewhat undetermined” he expects there will be considerable costs incurred. An estimated 22,000 jobs will be moved to the southern portion of the county, primarily at the Engineer Proving Ground in Lee District. Byers points out that “some of these commuters already live locally or south and west of Mount Vernon, so their commutes will be shortened but redirected.” Currently, the number of contractors planning to move their offices into the southern portion of the county is unknown, but Byers assumes “that when the military offices relocate, their supporting contractors will be inclined to relocate also.” He also believes “that there will be economic benefits as new

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Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites Now Online



The Inventory of Historic Sites, a listing maintained by the Fairfax County History Commission, has been in existence since 1969, and is now available on the Internet.

Please visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/historic/ihs> to obtain the complete list, which includes approximately 350 sites. These resources range from the internationally-known Mount Vernon to lesser-known churches, bridges, taverns, homes and roadways.

Commissioner John R. Byers

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consumers in the area seek out local businesses to meet their needs.”

Byers believes that “the Mount Vernon community has become far more proactive” with the help of such groups as the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA), the South County Federation and the SFDC, which “are trying to get ahead of the power curve and let the development industry know what the community would like to see.” He adds, “This is especially true in the Richmond Highway corridor, both north and south of Fort Belvoir.” Byers, a charter member of the Board of Directors of the SFDC, also served as Vice President until his appointment to the Planning Commission. Currently, he is the Planning Commission’s representative on the Laurel Hill Task Force.

Byers expresses concern about the overwhelming “shortage of suitable group residential facilities in Fairfax County to care for our less fortunate citizens.” He notes that when the FCGRFC was disestablished, there was a waiting list of over 1,500 people. He does not know how long that list is now, but says that “as an aging parent myself, I can emphasize with other elderly parents who are desperate to find a place for their dependent children.” Byers says, “There is an abysmal lack of knowledge and understanding in our population on the need for and support of group homes” and “ignorance and unreasonable fear” have created “unjustified opposition” from many neighborhoods. As Chair of the FCGRFC for eight years, “I used to advise the neighbors that the Constitution allows you to decide where you want to live as long as you can pay the price,” Byers said, “but what it does not allow you is any right to select your neighbors.”

Prior to being elected Vice Chairman of the Commission, Byers served as Vice Chairman of the Policy and Procedures Committee for one year and was then elected Chairman of that committee for the next eight years and currently serves as a member. Byers believes that a significant achievement of that committee has been the revision of the procedures for reviewing and updating the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. “It’s particularly important to keep the people involved throughout the process,” he notes, “because it is really their plan for what they, the people, want to see happen in their community. I believe Fairfax County now has one of the best systems in Virginia for keeping its Comprehensive Plan up to date.” Byers also serves as a regular member of the Personnel and Budget, Environment, Capital Improvement Program, Redevelopment and Housing, Parks and School Facilities Committees and as an alternate member on the Planning Commission’s Seminar and Transportation Committees.

As a member of the Planning and Zoning Committee of the MVCCA for more than 35 years, Byers observes that “the Mount Vernon citizens have always been very interested in development and do not take kindly to learning decisions have been made without their input. They are much more proactive now and want to start developing plans for their neighborhoods ahead of any applicant’s request for a rezoning.” The MVCCA honored Byers by naming him 1995 Citizen of the Year.

Byers served as a military officer in the U.S. Army during War World II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and received numerous decorations. He enlisted in 1944 and served in the 1st Cavalry Division. After War World II, he was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and spent the majority of his career in armored cavalry units. Byers considers the highlights of his military career to be his command time. “There is no greater and rewarding activity than having the opportunity to lead men, to train them into professionals, to see a group of individuals become a coherent and skilled team. I was lucky enough to lead five different troops, an armored cavalry squadron and a five-battalion armored brigade,” he explains. His 31-year career in the Army included service with “the 82d Airborne, 2d Infantry Division, 3d Cavalry Regiment, the Armor School staff and faculty, Combat Developments Command, 2d Cavalry Regiment, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 1st and 4th Armored Divisions and finally Chief of Armor Branch.” He retired at the rank of colonel.

Byers began his second career at Data-Design Laboratories in 1975 as a project leader developing computer-based training for submarine crews. Later in his career, he was the quality control project leader who evaluated work done for the Navy by other contractors and became involved with the Trident base in Bremerton, Washington and subsequently with the new Trident base in St. Mary’s, Florida. In 1984, Byers became manager of the Washington, D.C. offices where he was involved in all ongoing projects and managing the staff. In addition to this position, he was already a Planning

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Commissioner John R. Byers

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Commissioner and a partner in an art gallery. After arriving home exhausted at 4:00 a.m. from a late Commission meeting, Byers decided that at age 60, his “health was more important.” So, he retired again in 1986 and began his current career as Vice President and Director of The Prince Royal Gallery in Old Town Alexandria where he selects the artists’ work to display, arranges the monthly exhibits, coordinates with other galleries and judges art competitions in other galleries or art societies. Byers notes, “As a worker bee, I also do custom conservation framing and have built up quite a clientele over the years. If my health holds up, I hope to be there when I’m 90.”

Byers considers one of his major accomplishments on the Planning Commission as “convincing the other commissioners that the Comprehensive Plan is the people’s plan, not ours and not the Board’s, but the people’s.” He points out that “while [the Plan] is technically only a guide, it represents the voice of the people telling us exactly what they want, and it must be respected as such.” Byers believes that another one of his accomplishments is making people aware that verbal agreements mean very little and that they must be written in explicit language, which also applies to proffers and development conditions. He notes that he has reiterated his opinion on these two issues so frequently that he is often “quoted by other commissioners.”

Supervisor Hyland announced at the October 23, 2006 Board meeting that Byers planned to retire at the end of December and said that Byers was “the embodiment of a public servant” who would be sorely missed on the Commission. He explained, “John Byers has dedicated his life to public service. His retirement is a great loss to Mount Vernon. I and the rest of the Mount Vernon District owe him a great debt of thanks for his service. He has seen this district change and has been a great driving force behind the revitalization of the Richmond Highway Corridor. I personally admire his devotion and his leadership over the 19 years I have served with him. If I could conscript his continued service or change his mind, I would. I wish him and his family well.”

On December 4, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to commend Byers for his dedication and devotion during 21 years of service on the Planning Commission and more than 40 years of public service to the Mount Vernon District and Fairfax County.

Byers shares the following advice and words of wisdom with the new Mount Vernon District Commissioner: “Read the staff reports and ask tough questions before the public hearings on anything you don’t clearly understand; listen carefully to the community, especially those most affected by a proposed change; learn all the facts by visiting sites and then vote your conscience. We don’t work for Republicans or Democrats, but for the citizens of Mount Vernon. Politics and favoritism have no place in the Planning Commission. Do your work carefully and you can be sure your recommendations won’t embarrass you 10 years from now.”



On December 4, the Board of Supervisors honored John R. Byers (second from left), Mount Vernon District Commissioner.

Retirements



Lynn Tadlock, Director of the Planning and Development Division, retired on October 2 after more than 28 years of dedicated service to the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Patrick Taves, Deputy County Attorney, retired on October 27 after 28 years of dedicated service to the County Attorney’s Office.

Kul Sandhu, Planner II, Proffer Interpretation Branch, Zoning Evaluation Division, retired on October 27 after 26 years of dedicated service to the Department of Planning and Zoning.

The Planning Commission and staff wish them well in their new endeavors.

Land Use Actions

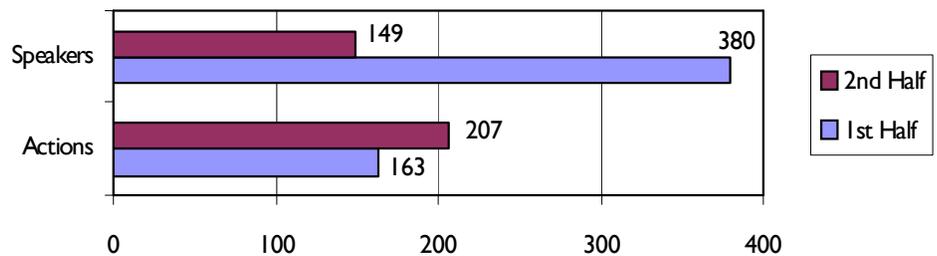
Overview of 2006 Third & Fourth Quarter Actions

The Planning Commission held 24 regular meetings and took action on 207 land use applications during the second half of 2006, as shown below.

2006: Third & Fourth Quarter Data			
	3rd Quarter July - September	4th Quarter October - December	Totals
Meetings	10	14	24
Speakers	31	118	149
Actions	125	82	207

As illustrated in the chart to the right, there was a significant difference in the number of speakers and the actions taken by the Planning Commission during the first and second halves of the years, both attributable to the 2005-2006 South County Area Plans Review (APR) Process. Public hearings on South County APR nominations were held during the first half of the year while the mark-up session, at which the

Comparison of Total Speakers and Actions during the First and Second Halves of 2006

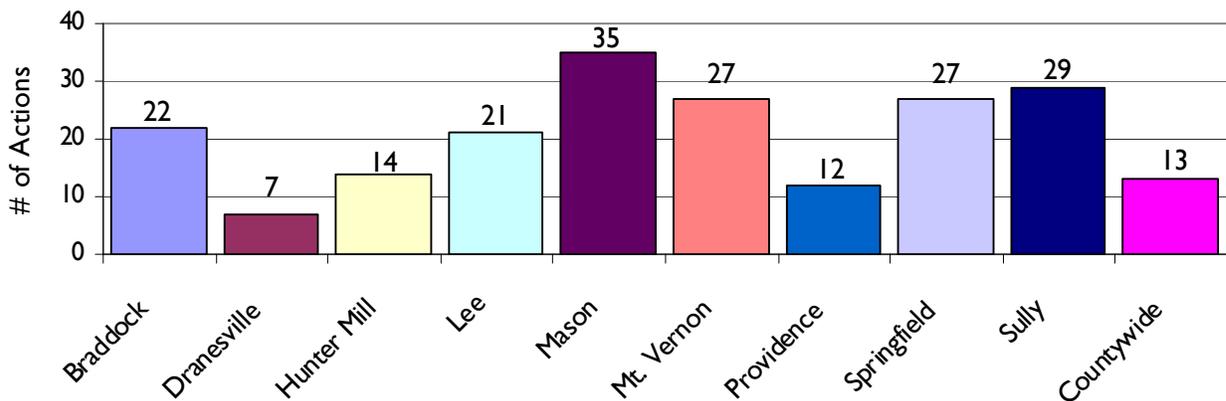


Commission took action on the nominations, occurred during the second half of the year.

District Breakdown

During the second half of 2006, the Planning Commission took actions on more land use applications located in the Mason District than in other districts. The figure below depicts land use activity for each district for July through December.

3rd and 4th Quarter 2006 Actions by District



Commissioner Laurie Frost Wilson

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Wilson became involved in the Federation of Lorton Communities because at the time, with the exception of Crosspointe, the remaining residences were single-family detached houses that did not belong to a homeowners or civic association. In 1986, Wilson and the Federation of Lorton Communities led an effort to prevent the construction of an incinerator on the former Lorton prison property, now known as the I-95 Energy Resource Recovery Facility. Their main objection was based on past studies which demonstrated that the heavy metals emitted fell within the first half mile radius of the incinerator which, in this case, would apply to the residences in the immediate area. The Federation sued the District of Columbia and Fairfax County but the case was dismissed. During this time, Wilson was practicing law as both a maritime and environmental lawyer and became involved at the appellate stage, conducting almost all of the research for the case. The case was heard at the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond and was denied again. Wilson did not have the opportunity to argue the case but believes that she would have won. Consequently, she became "more heavily involved with what was going on in the Federation" and wrote its bylaws, aided by her knowledge of lobbying and dealing with government bureaucracies, and became the Federation's president and counsel.

From 1989 to 1991, Wilson opposed a 456 application to expand the I-95 Landfill by 500 acres, a portion of which would have been adjacent to her home. She helped organize all the citizens in opposition to the proposal, including U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Justice Department employees, environmental and hazardous waste specialists and civil engineers. Wilson wrote speaker statements that covered financial aspects, population projections, construction projections and the legality of the landfill's industrial development bonds. Having investigated the entire record of the landfill's operation, she learned that it had been originally built by the District of Columbia, with a lack of methane controls, vents and other safety measures. She also learned that five explosions had occurred at the former Lorton prison due to escaping methane gas that had been trapped under the landfill and as a result, had significantly injured some inmates. She contacted the attorneys who represented the injured inmates; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provided studies about fish caught in the Occoquan River that had cancerous and canker sores due to leaks from the landfill; citizens living near the Occoquan who smelled the landfill due to prevailing winds and every reporter in the area to gain their support. She also gave countless television interviews.

Wilson recalls planning to bring to the Planning Commission hearing huge bags of trash and stack them up along the wall of the former meeting room in the Massey Building, so that the Commission knew what it would "look like to live next to a whole bunch of trash." The hearing ended at 3:30 a.m., and to her surprise, the Commission voted against the application. "As a result of that fight and winning that battle, that's how I won the 1991 Citizen of the Year Award [from the Springfield District Council]," she said. Wilson had won the award jointly with two others who had helped organize the effort. Thanks to her outreach, she had met every county land use organization and environmental group and had become fairly well-known for frequently speaking out on behalf of the southeastern portion of Fairfax County.

In 1993, Wilson ran for the Virginia House of Delegates for the 42nd District against Dave Albo and lost by only a couple hundred votes. She notes that she had "raised more money that year than any other delegate had ever raised" due to contributions from attorneys she knew at the international law firm where she worked and many county land use and environmental groups.

In 1998, Kate Hanley, former Chair of the Board of Supervisors, asked Wilson if she would like to be appointed as the At-Large Commissioner to replace John Hunter, noting that she would be the first At-Large Commissioner to reside in the southeastern portion of the county. Although she was very interested in the role, Wilson informed Hanley that she would only commit to two years since she was unsure whether she could devote the necessary time since she would frequently be traveling due to work. "So I stayed on and I ended up loving it, absolutely loving it," she noted. "I finally got to put my money where my mouth was. All the things that I'd been complaining about over the years, land use and development and everything like that, I now got a chance to do something about." Wilson was reappointed by Hanley in 2002.

Wilson recalls that at her first meeting with Hanley and Commissioner Alcorn, "I came prepared with a whole laundry list of things I wanted to accomplish while I was on the Planning Commission." She admits that she had not gone over that

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Commissioner Laurie Frost Wilson

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list recently but out of 25 items, she believes that she has only accomplished three, noting that the remaining items have been battles that she continues to fight. “During the first couple of years that I was on the Planning Commission, I was known as the young upstart,” Wilson explained. “I think Walter Alcorn was the only one who was younger than I was on the Commission. I was the loudmouth. I talked too much. I was the troublemaker. So, that was my reputation. Has it changed? No.” She says that she learned to pick her battles and realized that some issues are not worth fighting over, although she will still provide input.

Wilson says that the role of an At-Large Commissioner differs substantially from the role of a District Commissioner because At-Large Commissioners look at issues from the big picture, while District Commissioners have a constituency. “The job of At-Large Commissioners, above and beyond Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Public Facilities Manual Amendments and the like, is to look at the land use applications from a much broader perspective,” she explained.

Wilson also became well-known for collaborating with other citizens to preserve the historic district surrounding the former Lorton prison. In 1996, she was appointed as Co-Chair of the Lower Potomac Land Use Citizens Advisory Committee and served for approximately two years until she resigned due to the demands of her private law practice.

Wilson discussed the history of the former Lorton prison site. The prison had officially opened in 1910 and it was not until the 1950s that the District of Columbia had acquired all 3,000 acres. The prison was the first in the country to have innovative, dormitory-style buildings without fences and was commonly referred to as a “prison without walls.” The prison complex included the Lorton Reformatory for more serious offenders and the Occoquan Workhouse for less serious offenders to work and learn trades. Prisoners ran the dairy farm, poultry ranch and slaughterhouse; harvested the crops; performed other farming activities and manufactured bricks at the kiln complex located on the banks of the Occoquan River. Many buildings in Washington, D.C., including the Smithsonian Castle, were made with these bricks, which traveled on barges along the Occoquan River to the Potomac River. Wilson noted that the brick terrace located at the rear of her house had also been made with bricks from the prison.

The original Comprehensive Plan for the former Lorton prison site would have removed the prison buildings to construct thousands of residential units with neighborhood-serving retail uses, and Wilson indicated that, “The surrounding residents did not want the same type of residential development found throughout the county.” Following the Board’s approval, Wilson and other citizens collaborated with Congressman Tom Davis, Virginia’s 11th District, to negotiate with Congress “to not only get the prison closed but to put limits on what the county could do with the land once the prison was closed.” As a result of the negotiations, the Lorton Technical Corrections Act was passed by Congress in October 1998, which allowed the transfer of the land to the county with the requirements that the county develop a Reuse Plan

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Planning Commission Roundtable Update



The **October Roundtable** featured Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy hosting Deputy County Executive David Molchany, GIS & Mapping Branch Manager Tom Conry and Commissioner Walter Alcorn, At-Large representative and Chairman of the Countywide Advisory Group, as they discussed changes underway or planned to make land use information more accessible and “citizen-friendly,” including expansions of the “My Neighborhood” feature.

The **November-December** broadcast features Chairman Pete Murphy hosting Clark Tyler, Chair, Tysons Corner Task Force; Janyce Hedetniemi, Chair, Consulting Services Subcommittee and Kohann Whitney, Chair, Communications Subcommittee, discussing the focus and mission of the Board-appointed Tyson’s Corner Task Force and how the group envisions that the area will evolve into a more livable, walkable and enjoyable place to live, work and play.

The *PC Roundtable* can be viewed via live video streaming during the scheduled Channel 16 broadcast or anytime through Video on Demand at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/pc_roundtable.htm. For more information on previous Planning Commission Roundtable programs, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/roundtable.pdf.

Commissioner Laurie Frost Wilson

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that would maximize the use of land for open space, parkland or recreation, except for public facilities, and if the county disposed of any land to a private entity, the county had to repay the federal government the fair market value of the land. In February 1999, the Board of Supervisors established the Laurel Hill Citizens Advisory Task Force to develop a reuse plan, and Wilson was appointed by the Board to serve.

Wilson conveys, "The battle over Laurel Hill was and still is, I think, one of the most notable land use cases that I've worked on." She is committed to continuing the fight to preserve the historical character of the area, noting that "this is everybody's heritage and you don't have the right to tear down these buildings when for the most part, the public wants to keep them." She admits, "Frankly, one of the detriments of being on the Planning Commission is that I haven't been able to necessarily speak out and advocate as much as I would have liked to because I had to be diplomatic about things."

Wilson recalled that at its October 19, 2005 meeting, the Planning Commission approved the 2232 application for the Laurel Hill Park General Management and Conceptual Development Plan for the long-term development and reuse of the park lands and facilities at the former Lorton prison site. She noted that South County Secondary School "was built in record time under the first public-private partnerships established in Virginia under State Legislation that allowed it to happen." In addition, new roads have been built in the area. "We got so many things done to advance the whole idea of Laurel Hill as a world-class park with a world-class golf course and it's really beautiful," she said.

In her role as an At-Large member, Wilson has dealt with many controversial amendments, including the Zoning Ordinance Amendments on Places of Worship and Plant Nurseries and the Public Facilities Manual Amendment on Drainage Divides and Adequate Outfalls. She considers her most noteworthy accomplishment as the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, noting that she "can see it being implemented on a daily basis." Wilson says that she is also proud of her collaboration with fellow At-Large Commissioner James Hart on restricting the number of trail waivers that are given to applicants. She cites another accomplishment as her perseverance to encourage developers to construct sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Wilson has practiced law privately for 23 years, including 11 at one of the biggest international law firms based out of New York, five at her own private firm and one year for another big international law firm based out of Minneapolis. Following her Commission retirement, she plans to return to practicing law on her own since she had been forced to take a break due to health problems caused by stress and tension. "Frankly, I'm sorry that I'm leaving," Wilson conveyed. "I wish I didn't have to. I really do. I would love to stay on as long as Pete Murphy and Suzanne Harsel."

Congratulations



Earl Flanagan, the current Mount Vernon representative on the Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission, was appointed by the Board of Supervisors at its December 4 meeting, to replace John Byers as the Mount Vernon District Commissioner.

Timothy Sargeant, former Chairman of the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Plan Advisory Committee, was also appointed by the Board of Supervisors at that meeting, to replace Laurie Frost Wilson as the At-Large Commissioner.

Additional Board actions included the reappointments of **Janet Hall** as the Mason District Commissioner and **Peter Murphy, Jr.** as the Springfield District Commissioner. This will be Hall's fourth consecutive term and Murphy's seventh consecutive term on the Commission.

Each member will be sworn in at the Planning Commission first 2007 meeting on January 10, 2007, by Clerk of the Circuit Court, John Frey.

Congratulations are also extended to **Henri Stein McCartney**, former Management Analyst II, on her new position as Consumer Specialist with the Fairfax County Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection, which she began on September 5.

Committee Meetings: September - December 2006



Housing Committee

Rodney Lusk, Chair
 Members: John Byers, Frank de la Fe, Ron Koch, Suzanne Harsel
 Alternate: Nancy Hopkins

The committee met on October 25 with members of the Redevelopment and Housing Authority and their staff to discuss the potential loss of mobile home parks and its impact on the availability of affordable housing units in Fairfax County.

Parks Committee

Frank de la Fe, Chair
 Members: John Byers, Rodney Lusk
 Alternates: Suzanne Harsel, Jim Hart, Ron Koch, Laurie Frost Wilson

The committee met on October 26 with members of the Park Authority and their staff to discuss an update to the parks contribution formula and a proposed schedule for the Area Plans inventory of parks.

Policy and Procedures Committee

Janet Hall, Chair
 Members: Walter Alcorn, John Byers, Suzanne Harsel, Jim Hart
 Alternate: Nancy Hopkins, Ken Lawrence, Rodney Lusk, Laurie Frost Wilson

The committee met on September 20 with staff from the Department of Planning and Zoning to discuss a proposal for handling possible BRAC-related impacts to the Comprehensive Plan.

Schools Facilities Committee

Suzanne Harsel, Chair
 Members: Walter Alcorn, John Byers, Laurie Frost Wilson
 Alternates: Frank de la Fe, Rodney Lusk

The committee met on November 30 with members of the School Board and staff from Fairfax County Public Schools to discuss the site review process for school renovations. The discussion will continue in January 2007.

Transportation Committee

Frank de la Fe, Chair
 Members: Jim Hart, Ron Koch, Ken Lawrence, Laurie Frost Wilson
 Alternates: John Byers, Rodney Lusk

On September 21 and October 18, the committee met with members of the Transportation Advisory Commission and staff from the Department of Transportation to discuss the Phase II draft recommendations for changes to the Area Plans to insure that language/maps match recent revisions to the Policy Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The committee also met on November 29 to receive a briefing on the Metro proposals for the Dulles Rail extension, the first of which was heard by the Commission in December. Additionally, the committee met on December 7 to receive a briefing from the Office of Transportation staff on the proposed scope of the Transportation Demand Management parking study.

Transit-Oriented Development Committee

Walter Alcorn, Chair
 Members: John Byers, Frank de la Fe, Ken Lawrence, Rodney Lusk
 Alternates: Suzanne Harsel, Nancy Hopkins

This committee met on September 7, September 27, October 4, October 12, November 1 and November 15 to continue discussions with the community on proposed guidance for transit-oriented development projects in the county. The committee completed its draft straw man recommendations at its last meeting in November and has asked staff to begin to draft language for possible inclusion in the Policy Plan. The Board of Supervisors will be requested to authorize a possible amendment to the Policy Plan volume of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, which will be subject to public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in early 2007. The Commission will also hold a public workshop on the draft recommendations on Wednesday, January 17, at 8:15 p.m. in the Board Auditorium. For information on the specific recommendations, visit the Commission's Web site at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/tod.htm>.

Tysons Land Use Task Force Adopts Planning Principles

The Tysons Land Use Task Force has been charged by the Board of Supervisors with soliciting community input and making recommendations to update the 1994 Tysons Corner Comprehensive Plan to reflect the planned construction of four Metro stations. The 35-member task force, representing residents, businesses and community and civic organizations, is working to create a new vision for Tysons Corner.

The Tysons Land Use Task Force adopted eight planning principles at its September 25 meeting. These guiding principles are designed to provide clear and fundamental direction for the identification, development and evaluation of land use, transportation and other infrastructure improvements for Tysons Corner.

Through 20 community dialogues held earlier this year, in addition to a public comment period this summer on the draft principles, the task force received extensive input on key values and concerns for the future of Tysons Corner, which are reflected in the eight guiding planning principles below:

- ☞ Move Tysons Corner forward within its existing boundaries as the employment and commercial economic engine of the region and an expanding contributor to the tax base of Fairfax County.
- ☞ Retain compatible transitions at the edges to adjacent neighborhoods through a combination of use, intensity, scale and/or building heights.
- ☞ Transform Tysons Corner from a suburban office park and activity center into a 24/7 urban center marked by the diversity of residents and workers; a wide range of ideas, opportunities and activities; the quality of buildings and aesthetics and open spaces and connections and accessibility for all.
- ☞ Reduce the time, cost and inconvenience of accessing and moving within Tysons Corner by promoting a functional and accessible system of pedestrian walkways, trails, shuttles, bike routes, a grid of streets, transit connections and standard principles of trip reduction.
- ☞ Reduce the suburban focus on isolated buildings, surface parking and moving vehicles through Tysons Corner to somewhere else and connect new buildings, urban parks, structured parking and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations to form engaging streetscapes and connected neighborhoods.
- ☞ Attract mixed-use transit-oriented development and private investment to Metrorail station areas and transit connection locations throughout Tysons Corner, including increased housing supply, choice, and price points, service opportunities and office space.
- ☞ Engage people, communities, institutions and the private sector with government to include in Tysons Corner the distinctive architecture, civic focal points, cultural and educational institutions, places of worship, medical facilities, entertainment and recreation, libraries and public safety facilities that mark environmentally sound, safe and inclusive urban communities.
- ☞ Respect the unique natural features and topography of Tysons Corner in all plans, expand usable and publicly accessible open space and improve the existing natural environment.

At its October 23 meeting, the Board of Supervisors authorized staff to award a contract to the PB PlaceMaking team to provide consultant services to assist the Tysons Land Use Task Force in its mission to recommend changes to the 1994 Comprehensive Plan for Tysons Corner by applying the best possible Transit Oriented Development and urban design planning strategies for the future growth of the Tysons Corner Urban Center.

The Task Force is working with the PB PlaceMaking team to outline a plan for planning activities and associated opportunities to engage the public in generating concepts for the future of Tysons Corner, including visualizing different alternatives. The public will be kept informed about opportunities to provide such input. This plan should be completed by the end of 2006, at which time it will be made public so that local stakeholders can take the opportunities for involvement.

Meeting schedules, presentations, timelines and additional resources can be found online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner>. To sign up for e-mail or printed mail updates or to provide comments, input or questions, visit the Web page, call the information line at 703-324-1344, TTY 711, e-mail tysonscornerspecialstudy@fairfaxcounty.gov or mail to Tysons Corner Special Study, Department of Planning and Zoning, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 730, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.



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The following staff
contributed to this issue of
the *Planning Communicator*:

- ✓ Kara DeArrastia
- ✓ Sara Robin Hardy
- ✓ Barbara Lippa
- ✓ Christopher Remer
- ✓ Windy Rowland

December 2006

Employees Recognized for Performance



Special kudos extended to **Linda Rodeffer**, Clerk to the Planning Commission, for her recent Outstanding Performance Award. This was merited for handling the additional workload due to a staff vacancy in her branch, finalizing a new employee training manual and attending each Transit-Oriented Development Committee meeting and composing the required minutes in a very tight timeframe for the use of all participants.

Congratulations also are extended to the following Department of Planning and Zoning recipients who merited recent Outstanding Performance Awards:

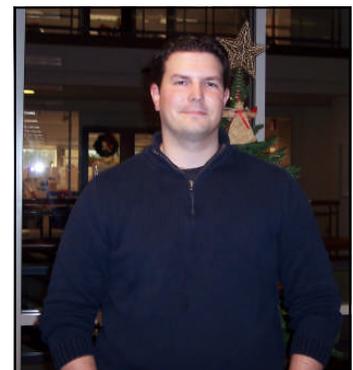
- ☛ Peter Braham, Planner III
- ☛ Carolyn Holmes, Administrative Assistant II
- ☛ Cathy Lewis, Planner III
- ☛ Marsha Weatherly, Administrative Assistant II
- ☛ Daniel White, Planning Technician I



Welcome



The Planning Commission staff welcomes **Windy Rowland**, who began work as the new Associate Clerk on September 18. Windy previously worked as Operating Room Secretary for Inova Fairfax Hospital and a Scheduler/Billing Specialist for the Operating Room at Inova Alexandria Hospital. Previously, Windy had 13 years of active military service with the United States Army as a photo lithographer, executive administrative assistant and a German linguist, serving two overseas tours in Yongsan, Korea and Wiesbaden, Germany.



The Planning Commission staff also welcomes **Christopher Remer**, who recently started as the new Management Analyst II effective November 27. Chris is a long-time resident of Northern Virginia and grew up in nearby Prince William County. He is a graduate of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA and has experience in media relations, customer service and information technology management.

Do you have a great story idea for the Planning Communicator? If so, please send your ideas to Kara DeArrastia at kara.dearrastia@fairfaxcounty.gov, or to Christopher Remer at christopher.remer@fairfaxcounty.gov.



This publication will be made available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 703-324-2865 (V), 703-324-7951 (TTY). Please allow seven days for the preparation of material.