



LEFT TO RIGHT – SUP. SMYTH, CHAIRMAN MURPHY, CHAIRMAN BULOVA, SUP. HERRITY

# Planning Communicator



February 2014

## Planning Commission Celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The Planning Commission celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a reception at the Waterford Fair Oaks on October 6, 2013. The event was attended by over 100 guests, including current and former Planning Commissioners and staff. Remarks on the Planning Commission's history were made by Chairman Pete Murphy, the Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, the Honorable Sharon Bulova, County Executive Ed Long, and former County Executive Tony Griffin.

Wednesday, July 6, 1938 marked the creation of the Fairfax County Planning Commission. Fairfax County was among the first governing bodies in Virginia to appoint a local planning commission. State law did not require Virginia counties to establish planning commissions until 1976. The Board of Supervisors appointed the following five citizens to staggered initial terms to oversee

future development in the County: James Baldwin of Vienna, for one year; Malcolm Matheson of Wellington, two years; E.R. White of Springfield, for three years; Elizabeth Chilcott of Fairfax, four years; and, Edward W. Talbott of Merrifield, for five years.

Since 1938, the Planning Commission has been served by 125 county citizens, who have seen Fairfax County grow from a rural, dairy-farming agricultural community to the suburban-urban, high-tech area in which we live and work today.

### Barbara Lippa Retires



On June 4, 2013, Barbara Lippa retired as Executive Director of the Planning Commission after 35 years of service.

Lippa began her career with the Planning Commission in 1978 as a Planning Aide. In 1979, she was promoted to Deputy Director and served in that position until she was appointed as Executive Director in 1999 following the retirement of James Wyckoff.

A native of Rochester, New York, Lippa graduated from the State University of New York at Brockport with a B.S. in History and Political Science. She received a Master's degree in Urban Studies and an additional 36 graduate credits in public administration from George Washington University.

In December 1999, Lippa was designated a *Virginia Certified Planning Commissioner*. On July 23, 2010, she was presented with a Team Excellence Award for her work with the Commission's Tysons Committee. In October 2012, Lippa was awarded the *Marge Bleiweis Peace Builder Award* for demonstrating exemplary conflict resolution skills in the workplace or community. For 28 years, Lippa has also been an active member of Zonta International, a service organization of business and professional executives seeking to improve the legal, economic, political, health and educational status of women.

The Planning Commission family is extraordinarily grateful to Barbara Lippa for her years of exceptional service and wishes her well in her retirement.

# Committee Meeting Updates

The Fairfax County Planning Commission maintains two standing committees and several committees covering special topics, which usually meet prior to regularly scheduled Commission meetings. Each committee elects its own Chair, and separate sets of minutes detailing these meetings can be found at

[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/committee\\_minutes.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/committee_minutes.htm).

With the exception of the Personnel and Budget Committee, which meets in closed session, committee meetings are open to the public and listings of members and meeting times can be found online at

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/committee.htm>.

September 12, 2013 – Policy & Procedures (proposed Fairfax Forward evaluation process)

September 19, 2013 – Environment (Stormwater ordinance briefing)

September 25, 2013 – Joint Housing (non-residential policy/revisions, update on ADU contributions, universal design)

October 2, 2013 – Policy & Procedures (Endorsement of staff's preparation for the evaluation for criteria for Fairfax Forward)

October 17, 2013 – Environment (Discuss electric vehicle charging station infrastructure)

November 6, 2013 – Environment (Discussion regarding amendment to the Green Building policy)

November 20, 2013 – RSU (Discuss revisions to proposed ZOA that would prohibit RSUs from low-density residential districts)

December 4, 2013 – Environment (Discussion on comments received regarding electric vehicle charging station infrastructure)

## PLANNING COMMISSION COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEES

Personnel & Budget

Policy & Procedures

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Capital Improvement Program

Environment

Parks

Housing

Land Use Process Review

Schools

Transportation

Tysons Corner

Telecommunications

Public Entertainment Establishment

Residential Studio Units

## PC Roundtable Update

The *Planning Commission Roundtable*, a 30-minute panel discussion on Cox Cable Channel 16, is broadcast every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 10:30 p.m. (when the Commission is not in session or the meeting has finished) and features various "experts" on land use-related issues of interest to Fairfax County residents. A summary of each broadcast is included on the Planning Commission website

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/roundtable.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/roundtable.pdf). Former broadcasts can be viewed at the Planning Commission Office, Suite 330, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035. In addition, since July 2009, DVD copies are available from the Commission Office's "video lending library" and are also available any time via Video on Demand on the Fairfax County's website at: [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/pc\\_roundtable.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/pc_roundtable.htm).

### **Stormwater Management Ordinance – Broadcast January/February 2014**

This edition of the *Planning Commission Roundtable* features discussion on the County's proposed Stormwater Management Ordinance. Joining Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy are his guests: Jim Hart, At-Large Planning Commissioner, and member of the Board of Zoning Appeals and Bruce McGranahan, Engineer with the Land Development Services Division of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, as they discuss the importance of good stormwater practices, and how citizens can be informed on what they need to do in order to comply with the proposed ordinance.

### **Residential Studios – Broadcast November/December 2013**

This edition of the *Planning Commission Roundtable* featured discussion on the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment on Residential Studio Units (RSUs). Joining Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy were his guests: Donna Pesto of the Zoning Administration Division and Planning Commissioner Tim Sargeant, as they discussed the purpose and specifics of the proposed amendment.

### **Tysons Implementation – Broadcast October 2013**

This edition of the *Planning Commission Roundtable* featured discussion on the implementation of the new Planned Tysons Corner Urban (PTC) District. Joining Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy were his guests: Tracy Strunk, Deputy Director and Tysons Coordinator of the Office of Community Revitalization, and William Marsh, Tysons Urban Center Coordinator of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Land Development Services, as they discussed the implementation of the new PTC District, recent Tysons development, and lessons already learned about implementation.

### **Planning Commission's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Broadcast August/September 2013**

This edition of the *Planning Commission Roundtable* featured discussion from the developer's perspective as this entity celebrated its 75th Anniversary. Joining Planning Commission Chairman Pete Murphy were his guests: Frank McDermott, Partner, Hunton & Williams LLP in McLean; Tony Calabrese, Partner, Cooley LLP in Reston; and Lynne Strobel, Partner, Walsh Colucci Lubeley Emrich & Walsh PC in Arlington as they discussed the history of the Planning Commission and its land use process and the crucial role played by the development industry.

# Land Use Actions

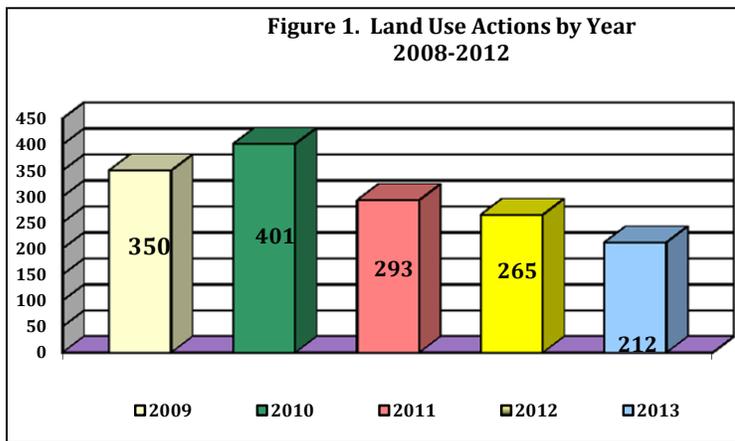
## Three-Year Quarterly Comparison

As documented in Table 1 below, the Planning Commission experienced an unusually higher number of meetings in the third quarter. Additionally, statistics reveal that public interest in Land Use Applications is on the rise; 262 citizens spoke during the public comment portion of the Planning Commission meetings versus 134 in 2012 and 223 in 2011.

Quarters	2011		2012		2013	
	1st & 2nd (Jan. - June)	3rd & 4th (July - Dec.)	1st & 2nd (Jan. - June)	3rd & 4th (July - Dec.)	1st & 2nd (Jan. - June)	3rd & 4th (July - Dec.)
Meetings	21	16	17	15	22	20
Speakers	132	91	79	55	145	117
Actions	153	140	156	109	113	99

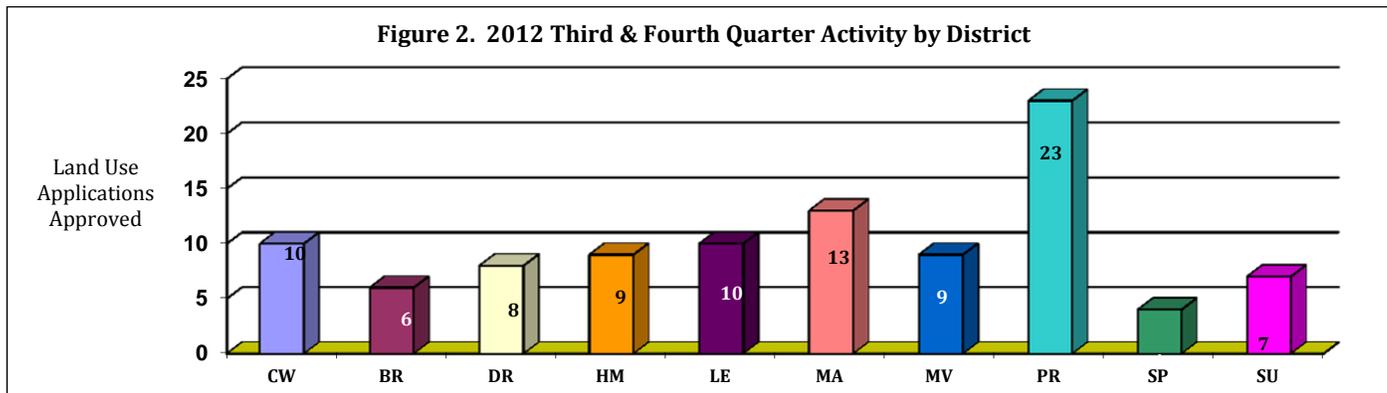
## Five-Year Comparison of Land-Use Actions

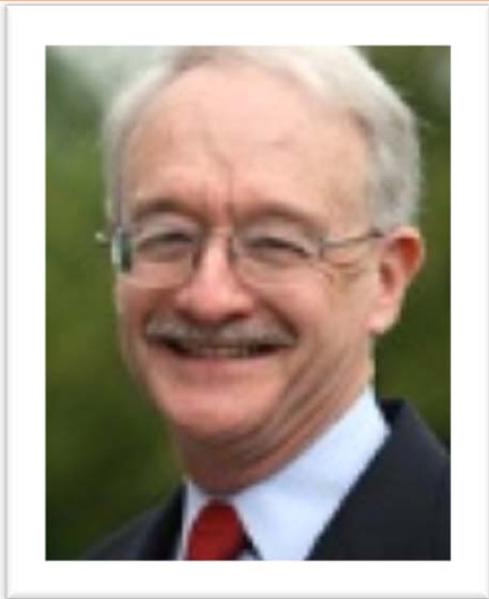
Fewer speakers are generally expected as a result of fewer meetings during the second half of each year; however, an increase or decrease in the number of actions taken by the Planning Commission during any given time period cannot be consistently predicted due to deferrals of scheduled public hearings and/or the volume of public facility applications



## July - December 2013 District Activity

Figure 2 below depicts land-use applications approved by the Planning Commission for each district during the second half of 2013. Providence had the most applications approved during this period; almost double that of the next highest number reflected in the Mason District





## Farewell to Jay Donahue

During the six years I served on the Fairfax County Planning Commission I took many questions from many people on many topics. But the question I heard more frequently than any other was: "Why do you do this? You guys spend countless hours and endless nights on commission business. It can't be the money. What makes you stick with it?" It's true, of course. Precious few commissioners (or Supervisors, I expect) serve for the money. That's just not what public service is all about. There has to be something else that creates the incentive to attend all the late night meetings and pour over technical staff reports. I believe what really flows the juices of most Fairfax County Planning Commissioners is the conviction that they are participating in a highly meaningful and successful enterprise called Fairfax County. And, if done correctly, the planning and land use exercise will result in high returns on investment in the form of enhanced quality of life for the County and the people who live and work here.

The work and effort expended by the Commission's Committee on Tysons Corner is a good example. No commissioner I know will receive anything approaching a fair market rate or even minimum wage for the hours spent attending Tysons committee hearings

and reviewing documents and materials. But high levels of remuneration were not the objective. The importance of obtaining and evaluating public input, from a highly knowledgeable and educated citizenry, during each step of the Tysons process, was the overriding goal of the Tysons Committee. We all fully understood that Tysons done right would pay dividends into the unforeseeable future. While Tysons done wrong would squander an incomparable opportunity. Conducting comprehensive outreach to an intensely interested public constituency brought an input well worth the hours spent.

Six years as the Dranesville commissioner taught me the uniqueness of a planning commissioner's job in the overall structure of Fairfax County Government. It is worthwhile to note that the planning commission is primarily an advisory body and makes very few final decisions. On certain limited category of applications that need only a determination on conformance with the comprehensive plan, the commission approves or denies whether a proposal will proceed. And even those decisions are appealable to the Board of Supervisors. On most of the items heard, the Commission, after research and guidance supplied by a hardworking and enormously talented Fairfax County staff, provides the supervisors with only a recommendation on which the Board will take final action by majority vote. And yet, it is fair to say that Fairfax County stakeholders understand the critical nature of the commission's recommendations and the undeniable faith the Board ascribes to them when making a decision on the merits. The main reasons for this show of respect is the seriousness with which the commission takes its work and the high degree to which it respects the need to stay within the limits of its authority in carrying out its mission.

The commission will continue to play a vital role as Fairfax County revitalizes and redefines itself. As the County trends inexorably from a suburban to an urban environment, land use and planning practices will be critical to control and direct impacts on transportation, schools, recreation facilities, revenue and expense considerations and a host of additional challenges. Sensible development and growth policies will strengthen the County's health and vitality by bringing valuable new enterprise and jobs for talented job seekers. A new class of highly educated, knowledgeable, diverse young residents will come. So will additional challenges such as balancing growth with the need to protect a fragile environment and ensuring that the interests of current and long term residents will continue to be respected in the face of new residential and commercial projects.

As I leave the commission, people ask me what I'll miss the most and what advice I'd offer my successor. I will dearly miss the camaraderie and give and take of the entire planning and land use community, most of all my fellow commissioners, but also staff, applicants and Board. The challenges of building consensus behind individual projects as well as major plan amendments like Tysons Corners were highlights of my time on the commission. And regarding advice, when one has a successor as highly qualified and capable as John Ulfelder the only appropriate advice is: "Go do it!" By the way, John's contact information is....no, I better not. Thanks to one and all for the fun and experience of the last six years.

### FAST FACTS

Pete Murphy serves on the Celebrate Fairfax Board of Directors

The longest PC meeting in 2013 was March 27<sup>th</sup> ending at 1:05 a.m.

There were 25,768 visits to the Planning Commission web pages in 2013.



*Chairmans Bulova and Murphy at the Planning Commission 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*



*Barbara Lipka and Pete Murphy at Barbara Lipka's Retirement Party*

## Congratulations

### OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARDEE

Jeanette Nord, the deputy clerk to the Planning Commission, assumed her supervisor's duties when there was a sudden vacancy to include attending a committee meeting that same evening. During the following three months, Jeanette assumed all the clerk's duties including FOCUS HR, procurement and finance roles. With minimal FOCUS experience, she worked to ensure the office continued as efficiently as possible. During this period, the Planning Commission filled four vacancies, all of which needed special processing in the FOCUS HR module. Jeanette also maintained a hectic Planning Commission schedule, attending all committee meetings and many of the scheduled public hearings. Jeanette worked tirelessly to ensure continuity of operations within the office.



### EXCELLENT SERVICE THROUGH PEOPLE AWARDEE

Beginning in January of 2013, and for the next 7 months, the BZA branch was extremely short staffed. John Cooper, who had only been in the Deputy Clerk position for seven months, stepped up and handled the all duties of the Deputy Clerk with skill and proficiency. He surpassed all expectations and did it with a smile on his face. At one point, John had to attend seven BZA meetings in a row, completing all the resolutions, minutes, and related documentation without missing a beat. His dedication and competence did not go without notice - he was promoted to Clerk to the Planning Commission.



# New Dranesville Commissioner



He served on the board of the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) from 1991 to 2003, as well as serving as president of the GFCA from 1997 to 2000 and chairing the Land Use and Zoning Committee from 2001 to 2005. He served on the board of the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Mid-Atlantic (ANS) from 2000 to 2006. He has served on the boards of the McLean Project for the Arts (MPA), the McLean Orchestra, the INOVA Health System Foundation, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) Foundation and Great Falls Heritage Inc. He is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of WETA, Washington D.C.'s local public television and radio station, and chair's WETA's Finance and

Mr. Ulfelder retired in 2010 as a Senior Vice President and partner from WEST\*GROUP, a large real estate development and management firm based in Tysons Corner, after WEST\*GROUP completed the sale of its entire portfolio of properties. Prior to joining WEST\*GROUP in 1989, he worked at the U. S.

Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. for thirteen years as an attorney in the Office of Enforcement, the Office of General Counsel and as a Special Assistant to the Administrator of EPA and Executive Assistant to the Deputy Administrator of EPA. He worked at the Smithsonian Institution from 1973-75 and the General Counsel's Office of the United States Commission on Civil Rights from 1967 to 1972.

Mr. Ulfelder received a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1964 and an LL.B. from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law in 1967. He has been a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia since 1968.

Mr. Ulfelder has been active with a number of local community groups and non-profit organizations.

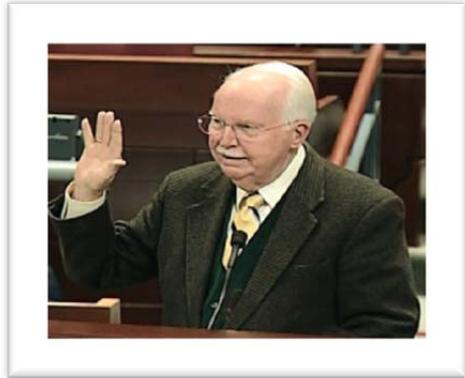
Budget Committee. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia chapter of The Nature Conservancy and serves as the chapter's representative on the Conservancy's Trustee Council as well as co-chair of the Conservancy's Global Ambassador program.

Mr. Ulfelder served on the last four Dranesville District Area Plan Review (APR) Task Forces and served as chairman during the two most recent reviews (2004 and 2008). He served as chairman of the Hunter Mill Road Area Special Study in 2005 and 2006. He served on the Dranesville District Budget Review Task Forces for FY's 2012, 2013 and 2014 (Chairman for FY 2014). Most recently he served on the Rt. 28 Station ("Innovation") South Working Group.

STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSLETTER MADE BY:

KIM BASSARAB  
 JACOB CAPORALETTI  
 JILL COOPER  
 REGINA STEWART

## TWO REAPPOINTMENTS MADE TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION



**Earl Flanagan**  
 Mount Vernon District



**Frank de la Fe**  
 Hunter Mill District

### 2014 Planning Commission

**Peter F. Murphy**, Chairman, Springfield  
**Frank A. de la Fe**, Vice Chairman, Hunter Mill  
**Janet R. Hall**, Secretary, Mason  
**James R. Hart**, Parliamentarian, At-Large  
**John C. Ulfelder**, Dranesville  
**Earl L. Flanagan**, Mount Vernon  
**Janyce N. Hedetniemi**, At-Large  
**Ellen J. "Nell" Hurley**, Braddock  
**Kenneth A. Lawrence**, Providence  
**John L. Litzenberger, Jr.**, Sully  
**James T. Migliaccio**, Lee  
**Timothy J. Sargeant**, At-Large

