



June 7, 2016

Fairfax Moves to Tax All Prepared Food at 10%

I have been consistent in my position against the meals tax referendum and it became even clearer coming on the heels of a 7% tax increase last year. The meals tax targets a specific industry - an industry that contributes so much to our schools and the community already. This prepared foods tax is not the answer to Fairfax County's spending problems and I do not support it.

Second Heroin & Prescription Drug Abuse Town Hall

Supervisor Kathy Smith, School Board Member Jeanette Hough, and I are hosting a second **Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse Town Hall** on **Tuesday, June 14th at 7:00 pm**, in the **Centreville High School Auditorium** (6001 Union Mill Road, Clifton). The town hall will raise awareness on the dangers of heroin and prescription drug abuse, discuss the steps being taken to address the crisis, and the practical steps that can be taken by our citizens and their families to reduce the growing epidemic. See below for more information.

Stringfellow Road Speed Limit To Increase

By July 2016, the speed limit on a two-mile stretch of Stringfellow Road from Route 50 to Fair Lakes Parkway will increase from 35 to 40 miles per hour. Raising the speed limit reflects the safety and capacity improvements made along Stringfellow Road last year. Please read below for more information.

Fairfax Moves to Tax All Prepared Food at 10%

Today, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted 8-2 to place a Meals Tax Referendum on the November 2016 ballot. If approved by voters, the tax on prepared foods in the county would go to 10% - a 4% meals tax in addition to the 6% state sales tax already levied. If approved, all prepared foods and beverages, whether

purchased at grocery stores, restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias, coffee shops, cafes, taverns, delis, push carts, or food trucks will be taxed at 10%.

At today's meeting, I asked the Board to include a simple clarification that the tax was an additional tax. The motion, seconded by Supervisor Cook, to add the words "an additional" failed on a vote of 7-3. Thank you to Supervisors Cook and Smyth.

I have been consistent in my position against the meals tax referendum and it became even clearer coming on the heels of a 7% tax increase last year (26% over the last 5 years). The meal tax targets a specific industry - an industry that does so much for our schools and the community. While a small portion of the tax will be paid by non-county residents, the vast majority will be paid by county residents. It is a regressive tax and will impact those that can afford it the least. This prepared foods tax is not the answer to Fairfax County's spending problems and I do not support it.

Over the past two years alone, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has voted to increase property tax rates, storm water taxes, Sewer Service charges, and youth athletic fees all while voting to raise their own pay by 27%. I could give many examples of our spending problems, but let me leave it with this - as long as we continue to give our NEW (and let me reiterate new not existing) general county and school employees a second pension benefit that no other jurisdiction in the area offers, then we have a spending problem.

During the discussion period, Supervisor McKay simplified the pro-meals tax argument into this point: do we pass a meals tax or do we raise real estate tax rates again? I'd say that it is not necessary to do either. Instead, how about we meet earlier in the year to discuss our spending problems, instead of cramming the entire budget discussion into two months just like we did this year under Budget Chairman Supervisor McKay?

I will be providing additional information on the meals tax referendum in the near future.

Second Heroin & Prescription Drug Abuse Town Hall

Heroin and prescription drug abuse is in our neighborhood - it is occurring countywide and not just in "bad" neighborhoods. It typically affects young adults - including many high school aged students. Education and public awareness are important parts of combating this growing crisis. **Seventy percent of heroin addicts reportedly start with prescription drugs.**

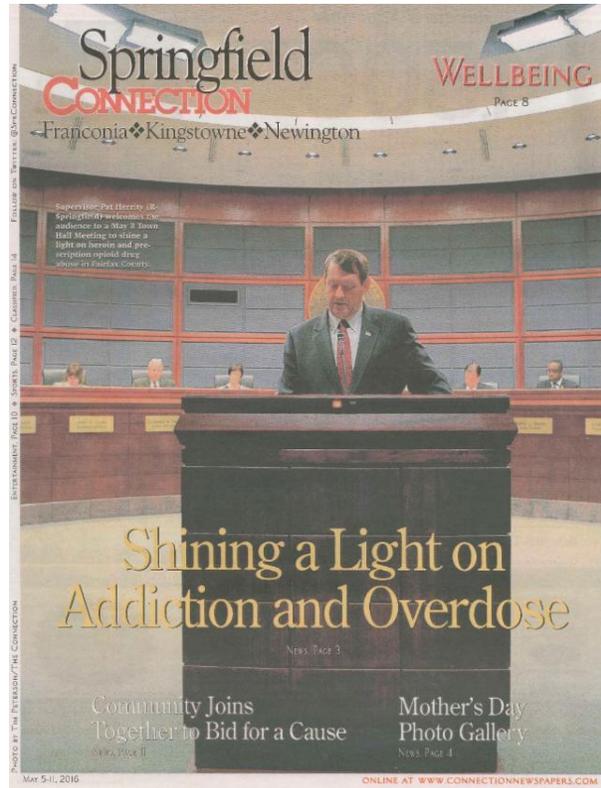
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There will be presentations by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on what they are seeing at the national level including the warning signs to watch out for, Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) on what we are seeing in our community and their response, Community Services Board (CSB) on how to get help, including their life saving REVIVE! Program, and Substance Abuse & Addiction Recovery Alliance's (SAARA) Nick Yacoub, and Ginny Lovitt with The Chris Atwood Foundation with personal perspectives on addiction, as well as brief updates from the Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County and Congresswoman Barbara Comstock's office. We will wrap up the night with a discussion period where the audience can ask questions and make comments.

Stringfellow Road Speed Limit To Increase

By July 2016, the speed limit on a two-mile stretch of Stringfellow Road from Route 50 to Fair Lakes Parkway will increase from 35 to 40 miles per hour. Raising the speed limit reflects the safety and capacity improvements made along Stringfellow Road last year.

Prior to the project, Stringfellow Road was a narrow, two-lane undivided road that experienced severe congestion.



A new speed study included traffic data collected at five points along Stringfellow Road, and considered traffic patterns, speeds and volumes, and road characteristics such as alignment, spacing of intersections, and crash history.

The new speed limit reflects public input following the improvements, coupled with the speed study. It is a more appropriate speed for drivers along the corridor, while maintaining safety for those who walk and bike to the schools, library, park and many other locations along this road.

The new speed signs should be in place by end of July 2016, once those new signs are posted, the new speed limit will be enforceable by Fairfax County Police. The speed limit south of Fair Lakes Parkway to Route 29 is already 45 mph. Stringfellow Road carries about 23,000 vehicles per day, and is expected to increase to 33,000 in 2034.

Visit the VDOT page for more background on the [Stringfellow Road widening project](#), which included the two-mile widening, as well as adding sidewalk and a shared-use path, a new bridge over Rocky Run, drainage, landscaping, a new left-turn lane northbound to Route 50, and modifying the southbound approach to Route 50 to improve traffic flow.