



HERRITY REPORT



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March 2008 “A Month in Review”

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Leading the Effort for a South County Middle School

I have been working very hard over the last couple of months in coordination with the South County Middle School Solutions Group www.southcountymiddleschool.org and other elected officials to build a South County Middle School (SCMS). South County is the fastest growing area of Fairfax County and the newly built high school (currently used as Secondary school) is already well beyond capacity. After the 2007 boundary study was completed, the Fairfax County School Board asked the community to be innovative and find alternative, outside the box funding solutions to build the school in a way that would not impact the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

I am pleased to announce that after a lot of hard work from community activists and elected officials, a private company has proposed a partnership that will contribute in excess of \$10 million towards the building of the SCMS and also provide other amenities to not only those residents in South County but the residents of Fairfax County as a whole. This innovative partnership to fund the school would involve the swapping of land in the immediate vicinity of the current secondary school and would allow the school

system to save money and accelerate other projects in the CIP. Most importantly, if approved, it will get the middle school built in time to prevent another boundary study. It is very important for all to understand that this funding solution will not have any impact to funding levels for any other schools in Fairfax County on the CIP list. (See Superintendent Domenech quote in my WSHS article).

Other advantages to this innovative partnership include building a separate SCMS on a 16-18 acre parcel that sits adjacent to the South County Secondary School, allowing the schools to be built as a campus and to share fields. It also allows the Fairfax County Park Authority to receive land and funding that is more suitable to its needs in the South County area. Over 200 acres of land located northeast of Silverbrook Road was transferred as part of the second land transfer from the federal government to Fairfax County and later 116 acres were transferred by the Federal Government at no cost for middle and high school sites. This proposal will meet those needs and requirements of the land transfer by providing an elementary, middle and high school for the South County area.

A second public private partnership has also surfaced and is receiving a lot of initial support. If approved it could bring an additional \$10 million to the middle school in 2 years when the middle school project would be approved. It would also make the first phase of the planned Sportsplex a reality bringing more than a handful of desperately needed fields to South County, provide a site for large tournaments, and a benefit the residents of the county. I believe this proposal is complimentary to the initial public-private partnership and has a lot of merit and should be actively pursued and investigated.

In addition Delegate Dave Albo and Senator George Barker were able to secure an additional \$1.74 million in funding in the General Assembly session this year.

As you can imagine, a lot of hard work, countless hours and dedication is needed for a proposal such as this to become a reality. Many individuals in the community, including Christine Morin and others, have never given up on making certain this school is built. Many elected officials have also shown unwavering support for the construction of a middle school. Congressman Tom Davis, Supervisor Gerry Hyland, Delegate Dave Albo and School Board members Dan Stork and Liz Bradsher have been there supporting this effort every step of the way. There is still a lot of hard work to be done to make sure the middle school becomes a reality. I am proud to be an active member of the team of leaders that will get this accomplished.

Standing up for Fiscal Responsibility

At the March 10th meeting of the Board of Supervisors the Board voted to advertise a 3 cent tax rate increase even though the County Executive had delivered a balanced budget at last years tax rate of 89 cents. Before the 92 cent rate was adopted I made a motion to advertise last year's rate of 89 cents which if adopted would provide a tax break to most of the county's taxpayers. My motion failed 8-2 with myself and Supervisor Michael

Frey being the only ones voting in favor of fiscal responsibility. Unfortunately eight of my colleagues on the board, including the Chairman, were not up to making the tough decisions on the budget and instead they opted to increase the heavy burden that our taxpayers already bear. Taxes have doubled over the last 5-7 years and the budget has grown by over \$1 billion over the rate of inflation and population growth. Click here to see me talking about the proposed 3 cent tax rate increase:

<http://video.nbc4.com/player/?id=228038>

What's Going on with the Budget?

Things are moving fast with the FY 2009 budget. We just finished the public hearings and by the time you receive the next "Herrity Report" we will have begun marking up the FY 2009 budget. It has been extremely helpful for me to hear from the hundreds of citizens who testified at the public hearings as well as everyone who has contacted our office with their thoughts. Please keep them coming. I plan to send another budget update with my latest comments on the budget in the next few weeks.

If you missed my initial thoughts on the budget newsletter please click here to read it: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/pdf_files/herrity_report/budget_edition_2008.pdf

Protecting Children from Sex Offenders

One item worth mentioning at this time is full and dedicated funding for the Protecting Children Against Sex Offenders Program (P'CASO). Since FY 2004, 6 Fairfax County Police Officers have been funded by ChildSafeNet via grant dollars received from a FY 2004 Congressional earmark obtained by Congressman Frank Wolf. These officers working with the P'CASO program have been responsible for detecting and apprehending predators who initiate inappropriate conversations with children online and then seek to meet them face-to-face. Officers dedicated to the P'CASO Program also monitor convicted sex offenders when they are released back into the community to ensure they abide by the terms of their release.

Unfortunately those grant dollars are no longer available to Fairfax County and now we must decide whether or not to fund the program ourselves or to let it die. It is absolutely imperative that we do whatever it takes to fund this important program. The number of known registered sex offenders in the County varies from 350-400 at any one time, with most classified as violent sex offenders. It should be noted that in 2005 the officers working the P'CASO Program found that 34.8 percent of known sex offenders in Fairfax County were not in compliance with registration requirements. Thanks to the P'CASO Program the department has been successful in reducing the out of compliance rate to 22 percent. We absolutely can not let the P'CASO Program die and I for one will be championing this cause. Supervisor Hyland has proposed a budget item to fully fund this program and I will be supporting his proposal.

Aging in Place in Fairfax County

As the Board of Supervisor Chair for the Committee on Aging, I am happy to bring you a program on an important senior resource initiative called Aging In Place. This concept is about not having to move from your home in order to secure the necessary support services you need to continue to live in your home. Many communities across the United States are exploring ways to better serve seniors by developing plans that address their future needs. I have been meeting with the leaders of CFS-TIPS (*Clifton/Fairfax Station-Transition in Place Services*), an aging in place initiative right here in Springfield District (See <http://www.cfs-tips.org>). CFS-TIPS plans to help member senior citizens obtain services they need to remain in their homes, provide information on reliable contractors, and promote wellness and social and cultural activities that are important to seniors. As Fairfax County's number of older citizens continues to grow, this type of initiative will be critical in aiding our communities.

Exploring a Springfield District Wide Community Parking District

On March 10th the Board of Supervisors, amended Fairfax County Code to allow for the establishment of Large Area Community Parking Districts ("CPDs"). CPDs restrict the parking of watercraft, motor homes, campers, trailers, vehicles with 3 or more axles, vehicles weighing 12,000 pounds or more, and vehicles transporting 16 or more passengers (except school buses) on public roads and residential areas. Previously, communities could request the Board establish CPDs on roadways within their neighborhoods via a petition process – which more often than not would become an arduous, time-consuming, and costly process. This recent code change will allow for the creation of a large CPD that would encapsulate a majority of the magisterial district, and thereby eliminate the petition process and the fees that we associate with it. The expansion of the CPD will allow for better, more cost-efficient enforcement of law, while also helping to alleviate the much reported problem of large vehicles occupying expansive areas of our residential communities and public streets. This amendment is not without flexibility though; we have left open the possibility for areas to opt out of this new program if they feel it is not within their interest.

Having only been your Supervisor for the last three months I was surprised at the volume of complaints from constituents regarding boats, RV's, and large trucks being parked in the places that **you** live; it seemed as if at least once or twice a week someone was unhappy with these obstructive and intrusive vehicles being left on public land, instead of stowed away on private property.

I will be working with the Springfield District Council (a council of our district's civic associations) on if, how, and when to implement a district wide CPD in Springfield District. I will also be looking for comments from residents and will hold an informal public meeting to get additional feedback. As required, there will also be a Public Notice and a formal Public Hearing before the Board of Supervisors before final approval.

Please send your thoughts to my Legislative Aide Peyton Onks at **703-451-8873**, or peyton.onks@fairfaxcounty.gov. Furthermore, if you would like to see the County's proposal for the new CPD please follow this [link](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm) (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm).

Working for West Springfield High School Renovations

Recently many constituents have emailed me with their concerns about the current condition of WSHS. As a 1978 graduate of WSHS and proud alum, I too am concerned about its current condition. In fact, I recently toured the school and was dismayed at what I witnessed while walking the halls. Broken windows and tiles, mold, leaking pipes, and an aging and dangerous electrical system are just a few of the many unacceptable conditions that I encountered during my tour. I also testified before the Fairfax County School Board at its Capital Improvement Program public hearings about WSHS's current state and advocating it to be put onto and moved up on the CIP. As you know WSHS was built in 1966 and has gone without any major renovations for almost 42 years while other newer schools have seen such renovations in recent years. Liz Bradsher (your Springfield District School Board member) and I are committed to making certain that WSHS renovations occur as soon as possible. Thanks to the hard work of Liz Bradsher (and perhaps in a very small part due to my testimony) WSHS will be evaluated to be placed on the CIP and will be the subject of a special review in the next year.

I have heard from many of you regarding my proactive efforts to build the much needed South County Middle School and the potential financial impacts such a proposal may have on WSHS renovations and the CIP. I can assure you there will not be a negative impact. The funding for the SCMS will come from an innovative financing scheme through a public private partnership that involves a land swap in the immediate vicinity of South County. The public private partnership that built the South County Secondary School actually moved other school projects up on the CIP.

On December 2, 2003, School Superintendent Domenech stated "South County opened 3 years earlier and saved the school system \$25.5 million as a result of development proffers and reduced construction costs...Cost savings from the South County High School project enabled the school system to reduce its FY2005-2009 CIP total cost by \$14.8 million and moved up the other school projects. Project start dates have been moved up for the following schools Mosby Woods ES, Franklin Sherman ES, Woodburn ES, Sleepy Hollow ES, Freedom Hill ES, Great Falls ES, Vienna ES, Graham Road ES, Mount Eagle ES, and Edison HS. Project completion dates have been moved up for renovations at Hutchison, Wolftrap, Greenbriar West, and Navy Elementary Schools and at South lakes High School". The effort I am pushing for South County Middle School will actually benefit WSHS.

In closing, as your newly elected Springfield District Supervisor and a graduate of WSHS I remain committed to seeing that renovations are made at the high school as soon as possible. It is a little known fact that WSHS has graduated five of Fairfax County's

current elected officials including Delegate Dave Albo, Clerk of the Circuit Court John Frey, Sheriff Stan Barry and Commonwealth's Attorney Ray Morrogh in addition to Supervisor Mike May in Prince William County. I am reaching out to these elected officials plus other community leaders that have graduated from this fine school in an effort to raise awareness, raise funds, and fix the problems.

Upgrading the Pedestrian Signals in Fairfax County

VDOT has begun the upgrade of the displays on existing pedestrian signals to the new countdown pedestrian signal displays. Some of these signals are being upgraded as a matter of routine maintenance and others are being upgraded at intersections in highly urbanized areas. These countdown signals improve pedestrian safety by showing the remaining seconds available to cross the street before the signal changes.

This initiative continues a program originally started by the Board of Supervisors who allocated funds for an initial phase of this project in years past. The current changes are now being made by VDOT using its maintenance and operations funds. The upgrade of all existing signals in Fairfax County should be completed by the end of Fall of this year. All new pedestrian signals that are being built in Fairfax County will already be equipped with countdown displays.

Upcoming Events and Information Items

Come and Share Your Thoughts on Fairfax County Parks

On April 22nd the Park Authority will be holding a "Great Parks, Great Communities" workshop and open house for the Springfield District. The purpose of this workshop is to give citizens the opportunity to discuss the future of our park system with Park Authority staff. This is your opportunity to let the Park Authority know how parks enhance your quality of life and more importantly to let them know what you would like to see our park system look like in the future. I will be there and I plan to talk about the County's serious lack of athletic fields and what steps we should take in the future to ensure that we have enough fields to meet the demand. I encourage you to come out and talk about any park issues that are important to you. See you there!

Springfield District Park Authority Public Workshop

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

7 PM

West Springfield High School Cafeteria (6100 Rolling Road Springfield, VA 22152)

Attention Homeowner and Civic Associations

I would be more than happy to speak at any homeowner or civic association meeting. If you would like me to address your group please call or email John Nolan of my staff at 703-451-8873 or john.nolan@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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