



March 3rd, 2016

Thoughts On the Advertised Tax Rate:

At Tuesday's Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board voted 7-3 to advertise a tax rate for FY 2017 that is a 6% increase in taxes for the average homeowner. If approved, a tax rate of \$1.13 would represent a 26% tax increase over the last five years. I did not support the motion. What frustrates me most is that we knew this was coming for 10 months and the Board chose not to address it.

Teen Job Fair:

I will be holding my 2nd annual Teen Job Fair on March 12th from 1 PM- 3PM in the West Springfield High School cafeteria. If you know a teen looking for summer, after-school, or part-time employment, please click [HERE](#) for further information.

Budget Town Hall:

Join County Executive Ed Long and members of my Citizens' Budget Review Committee at my annual budget town hall on Wednesday, March 23rd. We will have a short presentation on the budget followed by a discussion. I want to hear from you. The meeting will be held Wednesday, March 23rd from 7 PM- 9 PM at my office in West Springfield.

My Thoughts on the FY17 Advertised Tax Rate:



In the coming weeks, I will be sending out a series of newsletters to update you on my thoughts on the budget, the budget process, and the progress that we are making toward a final budget. I start below with a taxpayer's perspective. The budget process kicked off February 16 when the County Executive released his budget. On March 1 the Board authorized the maximum tax rate it can approve for the year. From here, the Board will be holding budget committee meetings and meeting with residents. In early April, the Board will hold public hearings on the budget in order to get input from the community, then hold mark-up sessions and ultimately adopt the FY 2017 budget. Full details on the budget and the timetables can be found [HERE](#).

At Tuesday's Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board voted 7-3 to advertise a tax rate for FY 2017 that is a 6% increase in taxes for the average homeowner. If approved, the advertised tax rate of 1.13 would represent a 26% tax increase over the last five years. I did not support the motion largely because I believe our residents who have seen their wages stagnate, cannot afford a 6% increase in their taxes much less 26% over the last five years. We are literally chasing our taxpaying residents out of the County.

The largest employer in our region is the federal government. Its employees just got the news that their salary increase will be 1.46% this year, which on average is better than the 3.5% cumulative increase over the past five years. How can we ask our residents to absorb a tax increase of 6% for a cumulative increase of 26% over 5 years? A federal worker making \$80,000 would have to use half of his wage increases over the last five years to pay his county tax bill.

Our residents are having to make difficult decisions around their kitchen tables as job and wage growth stagnates. We need to get our economy going and the commercial tax base back up to 25%. Until then, we have to make the same tough choices that our residents are having to make and in the interim, I cannot ask them to absorb a 6% increase this year.

The rate increase should come as no surprise as the County Executive has been forecasting a \$75M shortfall since last April. What frustrates me the most is that ten months ago I asked the Board to invest additional time over the summer and fall to address potential efficiencies, restructuring, pensions and other ideas to prevent us from once again having to balance the budget on the backs of our taxpayers and employees. That request was defeated on a 7-3 party line vote. (The Board did, however, find the time to vote to give itself a raise - which I opposed.) Now we have less than two months to address the budget shortfall or our taxpayers will bear the

brunt once more. Unfortunately, many of the things that need to be done cannot be addressed in a two-month period.

The Effort to Further Raise Homeowner Taxes Implodes Twice:

The way the vote to increase taxes was conducted is disturbing. The original motion was made by Budget Chair Supervisor Jeff McKay who asked for an even higher rate of 5 cents from the current rate of \$1.09 to \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value (a 7% increase in average homeowner taxes). This is a one cent increase over the County Executive's recommendation of a 4 cent increase to \$1.13. A motion was then made by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck to advertise yet an even higher rate of a 6 cent increase to \$1.15 (an 8% one-year increase); it failed on a 7-3 vote with Supervisors Dan Storck, Kathy Smith and John Foust supporting it. Next was a vote on the original motion by Supervisor McKay to increase the advertised tax rate which resulted in a 5-5 tie so the motion failed. The Board then had to vote on the advertised tax rate recommended by the County Executive which passed on a 7-3 vote with Supervisors Kathy Smith and Dan Storck voting with me against the 6% increase in taxes.

What makes the day of increasing taxes on our Fairfax County residents even more confusing and embarrassing was the request to reconsider the tax rate the Board had already voted on earlier in the day. In my two terms on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I have never seen an attempt to reconsider an earlier vote, much less a reconsideration without any additional information to justify it. At the end of the meeting, Supervisor John Foust made a motion to reconsider the Board's earlier vote so that he could propose an increase in the rate. Fortunately, several members of the Board including Supervisors Hudgins and Gross wanted no part of this embarrassing maneuver even though they supported a higher rate. This motion to reconsider failed on principle in a 5-5 vote.

Of course the day of wanting to raise taxes on our residents wouldn't be complete without again bringing up the notion of taxing everyone for eating in our local restaurants. (Ironic that this came up later in the same meeting where the Board declared the following week 'Restaurant Week in Fairfax County' in order to recognize the great support the industry gives our school, non-profit, and community organizations-not to mention first jobs and careers for many residents.) I have made clear that I would not support a meals tax because it hurts families and our businesses. So again, we now we find ourselves studying ways to tax ourselves out of problems that this Board has created. With a looming \$75-100 million projected shortfall in the next fiscal year we better start finding real, long term solutions before we have no one left to tax because they've left the County for places they can afford to live and do business.

I will be presenting more of my thoughts and some solutions over the next few weeks in newsletters and at community meetings. I would be happy to hear your thoughts and ideas.

Teen Job Fair:

Last March, I hosted a Teen Job Fair co-sponsored by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the West Springfield High School SGA. The job fair focused on students and younger job seekers looking for all types of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, or volunteer positions. Over 550 students attended and over 35 employers met with prospective job seekers.



This year, I am again teaming up with the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the West Springfield High School SGA to host the 2nd Annual Teen Job Fair. The Job Fair will take place on Saturday, March 12 from 1pm- 3pm in the cafeteria of West Springfield High School. It is open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment. West Springfield High School is located at 6100 Rolling Road in Springfield.

Budget Town Hall:

I will be hosting my annual budget town hall meeting on Wednesday, March 23rd (snow date March 30th) from 7 PM- 9 PM at the West Springfield Government Center, located at 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield. At this town hall, you will be given a better understanding of how the budget process works in Fairfax County and how it directly affects you. However, the town hall is not about me, but rather you, and I want to hear your suggestions and recommendations on the budget. County Executive Ed Long and representatives from the Department of Management and Budget will also be available to answer any questions. In addition, members of my Citizens' Budget Review Committee will also be in attendance to listen to residents' comments and address questions.



Upcoming Community Events & News

Leadership Fairfax:



LEADERSHIP FAIRFAX

Applications are now being accepted for all programs of Leadership Fairfax. Leadership Fairfax has helped train individuals become outstanding leaders in the community since 1987. If you are interested in being a part of this great experience, please click [HERE](#) for a link to the application; the dates and locations of each information session are listed below:

- Wednesday, March 2, 2016 - 5:30 pm (Insterstate Moving, Relocation, Logistics, 5801 Rolling Rd, Springfield)
- Wednesday, April 6, 2016 - 5:30 pm (Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax)
- Thursday, April 14, 2016 - 8:00 am (Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, 3901 Centerview Dr. Chantilly)

Human Trafficking - Parent & Community Awareness Night:

The West Springfield Spartans are taking on an instrumental role in ending teen sex trafficking in Fairfax County and Northern Virginia. In conjunction with JustAskVA and the FCPS Family Life Department, West Springfield High School will be hosting a parent and community awareness night focused on teen trafficking for all of FCPS region 4 on Wednesday, March 16th at 7 PM. Human trafficking in our region is a very serious issue and I would highly encourage you to attend. See the attached flyer [HERE](#).

3rd Annual STEM Symposium:

Be sure to attend the 3rd annual STEM symposium at the Nysmith School located at 13625 EDS Drive in Herndon. The STEM symposium brings together over 3,000 students, teachers, parents and STEM advocates with 25 exhibitors for a FREE, hands-on, all day program. It is a K-12 program and an educational collaboration between government, industry, non-profits, and academia to exchange ideas on STEM

in the DC region. I attended this event last year and it was outstanding - hope to see you there this year. See the flyer for additional information on this event [HERE](#).

Transform I-66 inside the Beltway:

There will be three public meetings regarding the future of I-66 inside the beltway and I highly encourage you to attend one of these meetings to voice your opinion. The dates, times and locations of the meetings are listed as below:

- March 7th, 6 PM- 8 PM at Washington-Lee High School (1301 N Stafford St, Arlington)
- March 8th, 6 PM- 8 PM at Eagle Ridge Middle School (42901 Waxpool Rd, Ashburn)
- March 9th, 6 PM- 8 PM at VDOT Northern Virginia (4975 Alliance Dr. Fairfax)

N2N Effort - 50+ Initiative:

The Neighbor to Neighbor effort, an initiative of the Fairfax Area 50+ Community Action Plan, seeks to give you the tools to create a caring community. The key is to offer people the opportunity to connect and communicate, whether in-person, by phone or email, or through a digital communication tool such as NextDoor.com. A member of the Neighbor to Neighbor planning group can speak to you and your organization or simply provide information to get you started. Learn about the various types of neighborhood organizations that are found in Fairfax County and see how you and a small group of people can move forward to create a real community in your neighborhood. Call Patricia Rohrer, 703-246-8656 for more information or to schedule a speaker.

3rd Annual 50 + Job Fair:

The third annual 50+ Job Fair will be held on Monday, April 18 at the Tysons Sheraton. It is being hosted by the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) in partnership with the County, AARP, and a few other organizations. Registration is free so be sure to go if you are looking for a job! For more information, visit the JCA website for this event [HERE](#).

Master Plan Update for Lake Accotink Park:

This spring, the Park Authority will begin the process of updating the master plan for Lake Accotink Park. A park master plan establishes a long-range vision of future park uses and features. The Lake Accotink Park Master Plan, first approved in 1964, has been revised several times over the years, most recently in 1993. The 1993 Conceptual Development Plan reflected the existing marina and concessions stand and planned for additional space devoted for family picnics, restrooms, and expanded parking. The

carousel was planned to remain with the addition of a new playground and expanded mini-golf in the lakefront area. These facilities have been added while some, such as a boat landing on the west side of the lake and a ball field, have not been constructed. Additional improvements have also been made to enhance accessibility.

As we well know, Fairfax County as well as the park have changed since 1993. The county's population has increased by 37% between 1993 and 2015 and is predicted to grow by another 12% by the year 2030. That population growth is associated with changes in the average age of the park user, facility preferences, and an increasing demand for park space. Some of the existing park facilities that have served the community for a long time are showing their age. At the same time, the lake itself has experienced a continual and increasing flow of sediment from upstream, impacting the health and recreational value of the lake. Revisiting the master plan for Lake Accotink Park will provide an opportunity to consider options to improve the sustainability of the land and enhance enjoyment of the park by its many visitors.

A key element in the park planning process is hearing the voice of the community. Want to be part of that process? The Park Authority invites you to a public meeting on March 14th, 2016 at Cardinal Forest Elementary School (8600 Forrester Blvd., Springfield) from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Park Authority staff will share some background about the park and then open the floor to listen to community preferences and desires for Lake Accotink Park. For more information, click [HERE](#).