



# The Braddock Beacon

## **Ten Years In Review**

(2009-2019)

This is my last Braddock Beacon. I want to thank all of you, the great people of the Braddock District, for the tremendous honor and privilege you provided me to be your representative in local government. It truly has been the highlight of my professional career. As I reflect back on almost eleven years of service as your supervisor, I am pleased to recall the many things we have been able to accomplish by working together. As it has become common to release “Top Ten” lists for just about everything, I set out to draft a Top Ten list of accomplishments for my tenure. It came out to twelve, so, here is my top twelve list. None of them are things I did alone. I thank my excellent staff, who served you so ably during my term, and so many of you, who came to meetings, offered your thoughts in emails and letters, served on boards and commissions, and in general were exactly the type of engaged residents we need to have to make our community the best it can be. I also thank my Board colleagues, county staff, and others from across the county who worked together, as they always do, to achieve not only this list of accomplishments, but many others as well. Working together is the proven method of getting things done. And, in hindsight, we got a lot of things done.

So, here comes the list, in no particular order of priority.

### **I. Enhanced Communication and Transparency in Government**

There is vast dissatisfaction today with many of our societal institutions, including government. There are many reasons for this, but certainly one is a feeling of disconnection. People believe government does not hear them, so they do not connect with government, and then are dissatisfied with the outcome. I set out to make that connection as strong as I could. I was among the first supervisors to have a regular electronic newsletter. Ours was not a political piece, but an information-sharing effort to inform residents of what they needed to know about local government and issues, and to solicit feedback in return. More than anything else I have done, I am regularly thanked by constituents for our newsletter, the Braddock Beacon, and our regular advisories. While we have not always agreed on every issue (which would be impossible!), Braddock residents have had a vehicle to follow government and offer real feedback. And they have appreciated the attention.

### **II. Citizen Participation in Government**

Part of the importance of communication is to provide residents with the information they need to be involved in civic life in a productive manner. We trained over 300 Braddock residents with our numerous “neighborhood colleges.” I held town hall events on a number of topics including environmental protection, special needs education, community communication, laws affecting HOA’s and civic associations, recycling, neighborhood watch, emergency management, and much more. I established a resident land use committee to review all land use applications (comprehensive plan amendments and rezoning applications) and provide me with their informed opinions. We sponsored town halls and community meetings regarding the Braddock Road Improvement Project, Erickson’s rezoning of the Northern Virginia Training Center site, the One University application, and every other major issue to come before the district. My work was informed and improved through the benefit of your feedback. Residents also came to understand their own ability to

organize for positive change. Several “friends” groups formed to protect our parks, lakes and stream valleys. Some civic and homeowners’ associations revitalized with the understanding they could affect positive change. And the community benefited greatly.

### **III. Constituent Services**

Local government is the level of government closest to the people, and the only level of government that can realistically provide hands-on service to individual residents on the wide range of concerns they have which involve public issues. I set out to provide the best constituent services possible, and I think we’ve come pretty close. There are hundreds of issues we have handled, but two were especially pertinent.

In 2010, “snowmageddon” came. Over two feet of snow fell in two separate storms, only a day apart. Gridlock was everywhere. My staff worked long hours, remotely from home, to gather complaints of unplowed streets and coordinate work with VDOT. Once the streets were plowed, school board member Tessie Wilson and I developed a plan to open our schools. We issued a county-wide call for residents to shovel ice off of sidewalks so our kids could get to school. The public responded in heroic fashion and schools were able to open safely.

In that same timeframe the Kings Park West Swim Club folded. The pool became a crime-magnet and blight on the community. We worked with community leaders and county staff to convey the land to the county and create a stormwater detention project as well as a new park named Rabbit Branch.

### **IV. Braddock Road Improvement Project**

Braddock Road is the spine of the district. It handles 70,000 vehicles a day, making it one of the most heavily travelled and congested secondary roads in the Commonwealth. Improving the road to move more traffic faster, provide for safe bicycle and pedestrian use, protect neighborhoods, and take advantage of transit opportunities was a huge challenge. I engaged the community through a citizen-appointed task force and a series of well-attended community meetings. The result was a plan for 17 specific intersection improvements and the construction of 11-foot shared use paths on both sides of the road. This plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors and is now in the design phase, with construction anticipated to begin in 2022. When the improvements are built, we will see significant positive change come to the center of our district.

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### **V. Saving Lake Accotink**

What can I say? Working together, we saved the lake. Park Authority staff, faced with the prospect of the lake filling in ever faster from sediment from run-off, and without the funds to dredge the lake again, began to consider allowing the lake to disappear. I knew the community loved the lake and saw it as a tremendous community asset. I brought the issue to the community and asked the community to respond. And respond you did! Residents organized, signed petitions, attended meetings, and were heard. Your voices helped me and Supervisor Jeff McKay convince our Board colleagues to save the lake, and county financial and stormwater staff worked with the Park Authority to develop a plan to save the lake for all time. The Board of Supervisors approved the funding plan, and dredging should begin in 2021.

### **VI. Police Reform Efforts**

Serving district needs provided me with a foundation to address significant countywide issues. As Chair of the Board’s Public Safety Committee since 2016, I led the Board’s review of the over 200 recommendations of Chairman Bulova’s Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission. Every recommendation was considered. Most were implemented. I worked with our Chief of Police to change the county’s philosophy of policing. We are now a national leader in putting the sanctity of life first in police actions, using de-escalation techniques, and training our officers in

handling issues arising out of mental health and disability circumstances. As a result, our police are better trained, and our community is safer.

## **VII. Diversion First Program**

Perhaps the county program I am most proud of is Diversion First. This nationally recognized program provides treatment instead of incarceration for those committing low-level offenses arising out of the challenges presented by mental health needs or developmental disabilities. Thousands of residents have been diverted from arrest into treatment. Our court system is now equipped to refer hundreds of others who do get arrested to treatment instead of jail. Recidivism rates, that is, the number of subsequent crimes committed, are dropping significantly as people get the treatment they need. Crime is reduced and we are saving significant money in jail operations.

## **VIII. Enhanced Domestic Violence Awareness**

Too often, people think of domestic violence as something that happens to someone else. This topic was once viewed as somewhat of an intellectual backwater, not relevant to the average citizen. Since I became chair of the county's Council to End Domestic Violence in 2016, we have raised awareness and provided for significant community education. Treatment options are expanding for victims. More people are learning how to spot the signs of abuse and report them. Offenders are getting services to turn around their lives. Domestic violence prevention, suicide awareness and prevention, sexual assault awareness and prevention, and human trafficking awareness have all become top county priorities due to my efforts.

## **IX. Northern Virginia Training Center – Erickson Rezoning**

The biggest land use case in the Braddock District in 40 years landed in our laps several years ago when the state announced the sale of the 78.8-acre site of the former Northern Virginia Training Center to Erickson Living, which announced a proposal to build a senior living facility at the site. I formed a community task force and held several community-wide engagement meetings. We reviewed the needs of the county and district and the impacts various ideas would have on Braddock Road traffic and on adjoining neighborhoods. In the end, the Board of Supervisors approved, with significant community support, a broad effort to redevelop the site with an Erickson Living senior project, an affordable senior housing project, and a new “all abilities” activities center. Design work for all three of these projects is now under way.

## **X. Welcoming Inclusion Network (WIN)**

Fairfax County has long provided employment and day services for people with intellectual disabilities, to supplement the woefully inadequate services provided by the Commonwealth through its under-funded Medicaid waiver program. When state rules changed so these programs would be available to all people with developmental disabilities, twice the previously eligible population, the county was faced with both a challenge and an opportunity. I co-chaired a community-based network that worked with county staff to develop a whole new framework for providing state-of-the-art services to people with developmental disabilities, within a realistic, fiscally constrained program. The result was to set the county on a path forward for remaining a terrific place for families with developmentally disabled family members to live and thrive.

## **XI. Community Emergency Response Guide**

From my first day as civic association president, I focused on emergency management. I remain very concerned that our local communities are not prepared for emergencies or disasters. I include in those terms not only the “big ones” that we hope never happen – another 9/11 terrorist attack, war, biological attack – but also the smaller ones that do occur on a regular basis – snow, tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, etc. Fairfax County made a big step forward this year with the publication of its first Community Emergency Response Guide. For years I was frustrated that the County's emergency planning focused on getting the county *government* prepared for an emergency. I wanted to get our people – our neighborhoods and communities – prepared. This guide published by the county this year – does just that. Government cannot force communities to follow the Guide. But that's not the point. Emergency planning needs to be from the bottom up. Communities need to come together and determine what type of planning works for them. The Guide allows communities to pick and choose from a menu of well-vetted options. The publication of the Guide alone will not prepare

all of our communities for emergencies. But it is a big step forward. I hope our communities will use the Guide to build resilience within our communities so when an emergency does happen, we are prepared to help ourselves and our neighbors.

## **XII. Infrastructure Financing Committee**

Our county grew quickly in the 1960s and 1970s, and now much of the public infrastructure built during that time – schools, county office buildings, parks, and more – now needs significant capital attention. The question is how to fund those improvements. This committee, which I co-chaired back in 2013, was tasked with studying that question and coming up with answers. Some of our recommendations have been adopted and some have not. But the biggest policy change that did come out of our work was the idea of using a percentage of our year-end balance each year for infrastructure revitalization. Since the county is required by law to have a balanced budget each year, with penalties if we don't, the county must aim to have one or two percent of its budget "left over" each year in order to create a cushion in the event budget projections are off or unexpected events occur. These "left over" funds must be allocated each September in a "carry over" budget. That budget used to be a bit of a Christmas tree for funding special projects. But due to my committee's work, now a big piece of that budget is used each year for infrastructure. That means each year we have several millions of dollars not allocated in the budget which then becomes available, and we commit those funds to rebuilding infrastructure, instead of fulfilling a wish list. This financing system has worked well and enabled a number of projects to move forward which otherwise would not have been funded through the normal budget cycle.

### **Conclusion**

There are many more topics I could include. But these are the highlights. None of them occurred alone. All of them benefited from your input. Thank you again for the great honor of serving you. It has been a pleasure.

John C. Cook  
Braddock District Supervisor  
December 2019

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### **Update on Fairfax Connector Work Stoppage**

On the evening of December 4, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) called a strike against Transdev, which is a company that runs the Fairfax Connector bus service under contract with Fairfax County. Transdev is now operating the Fairfax Connector on a Sunday schedule. Negotiations are ongoing. The County is pressing Transdev to add additional service. Routes on the Sunday schedule include:

- 151, 171, 310, 321, 322, 401, 402, 630, 640, 650, 950, 981, 983, RIBS 1 and RIBS 3.

The Board of Supervisors will be holding an emergency session on Tuesday, December 10 to discuss taking legal action against Transdev for failing to provide Fairfax Connector bus service. This strike comes on top of another strike by the same union against the same company, at WMATA's Cinder Bed Road facility, which has resulted in the cancellation of around 5% of Metrobus routes for the last 45 days, including routes 17G and 17H.

On Thursday, December 5, at the meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), I made a motion that was unanimously approved. This motion directs that the NVTC appointee to the WMATA Board of Directors ask the WMATA Board to find Transdev in breach of its contract with WMATA regarding the Cinder Bed Road Bus Garage. I also joined in a second resolution which passed that is designed to get WMATA to deal with the systemic issues underlying the work stoppage.

We regret that this situation has impacted the residents of the Braddock District. We are doing everything that we can to make sure Transdev gets buses back on the streets. Please feel free to call our office at 703-425-9300 with any questions or concerns.



# You are cordially invited to the Taste of Braddock

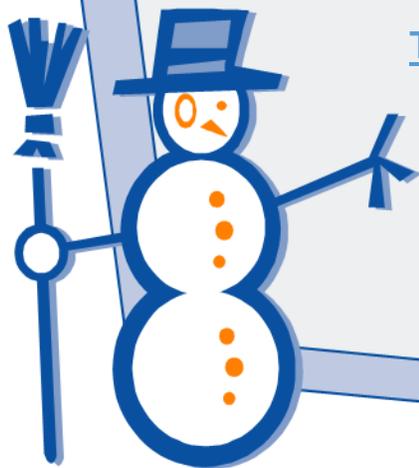
Join Braddock District Supervisor John C. Cook for his last community event, along with other community leaders, residents, and county employees at the annual "Taste of Braddock," a holiday celebration of the food and spirit of the Braddock District.

Food donated by Braddock District businesses.  
Come join this celebration of community.

Please RSVP if you intend to join us  
Call 703-425-9300 or E-mail us at  
[braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov)

Location: Braddock Hall and the  
Kings Park Library Meeting Room  
9002 Burke Lake Rd  
Burke, VA 22015

Time: Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>  
From 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm



# Braddock Neighborhood News



Supervisor Cook hosts a monthly television show, Braddock Neighborhood News, on Fairfax County Channel 16, which is available on most cable networks. In the past, Supervisor Cook has invited special guests to cover topics on important matters that affect the Braddock District. However, this month Supervisor Cook will be interviewed by Tony Castrilli who is the Director of Public Affairs for Fairfax County. Episodes air on Sundays at 5 pm, Wednesdays at 7 pm and Fridays at 5 pm. You may also watch the episodes online.

## Human Services Corner

### Braddock District Council's Aging in Place Committee

**Social Security: Understanding your Benefits** with Ridge Multop, AARP Volunteer, Braddock Hall, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA. Wednesday, December 11 at 1 pm.

### From The Golden Gazette

**City of Fairfax Festival of Lights & Carols:** Come listen to live holiday music and enjoy s'mores and hot cider! Saturday, Dec. 7, 12 pm to 6 pm. Tree Lighting Ceremony and caroling—5:30 pm.

Old Town Square  
10415 North St., City of Fairfax  
[www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov)  
703-385-7858

**Annandale Annual Arts & Crafts Show:** Find unique holiday gifts at one of Northern Virginia's longest-running arts and crafts shows. Shop for top-quality handmade arts and crafts offered by nearly 100 of the area's finest artisans. Door prizes will be awarded.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9 am to 4 pm and Sunday, Dec. 8, 10 am to 3:30 pm.  
Cost: \$2  
Audrey Moore RECenter  
8100 Braddock Rd., Annandale  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks)  
703-321-7081

**Season Extended for the Burke Farmer's Market:** On Saturdays, enjoy the popular Burke Market, 5671 Roberts Pkwy., from 8 am until 12 pm through Dec. 21. Rolling into the markets right now are winter squash, greens, apples, potatoes, mix and match greens, carrots and more! A holiday feast that includes fresh ingredients is a great way to treat your family to healthy food that celebrates the season. Contact the Community Horticulture Office at 703-642-0128 for more information.

**Fight the Flu Season, Get Vaccinated:** The flu season is here, and the Fairfax County Department of Health encourages everyone six months and older to get a flu shot. Services and clinic hours vary by location. Please call individual clinics for detailed information.

- Annandale District Office, Annandale 703-534-8343
- Joseph Willard Health Center, Fairfax 703-246-7100
- Springfield District Office, Springfield 703-569-1031

**Donate to Food for Fines:** The popular Food for Fines program is back for a second year. Bring your nonperishable food items to any library branch in December. We will waive \$1 in fines for each item you bring in (maximum of \$15). Food items collected will be donated to Food for Others, a not-for-profit food pantry and food rescue operation that serves Fairfax County. Stop in your local branch for more details or visit us online: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library).

**Second Saturday Art Walk Lorton:** This is the perfect time to meet nearly 100 resident and associate artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in 12 campus galleries.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 6 pm to 9 pm.

Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton [www.workhousearts.org/secondsaturday](http://www.workhousearts.org/secondsaturday)

**The Nutcracker in Fairfax:** Experience this timeless holiday classic with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax Ballet. Saturday, Dec. 21, 4 pm and Sunday, Dec 22, 4 pm.

Center for the Arts, Concert Hall

George Mason University, Fairfax Campus

Purchase tickets at: [www.fairfaxsymphony.org](http://www.fairfaxsymphony.org)

**Fireside Café, Dec. 12, 6 pm to 9 pm:** Hear beautiful music performed by the Robinson Concert Orchestra at the Holiday Open House. Relax by the flickering fireplace while savoring hot chocolate. Free. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Rd., Burke. Call 703-249-1520.

**Genealogy One-on-One, Dec. 28, 10 am to 11 am:** Research your family history with a genealogy volunteer using library online resources. Free. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Rd., Burke. To register, call 703-249-1520.

### **SHEPHERD CENTER OF FAIRFAX/BURKE**

**WINTER WONDERLAND CONCERT by the Annandale Brass**

**Sponsored by NOVA-Annandale Community College and the Reunion Music Society**

**Sunday, December 8, 2019, 4 pm**

Richard J. Ernst Cultural Center

8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003

Free parking available.

Purchase tickets by calling the Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke office, 703-426-2824 – Tickets: Adults, \$15; Children under 12, free. Here is the link to the flyer:

<https://faithconnector.s3.amazonaws.com/scfbva/files/winter.wonderland.flyer.11.8.2019.final.pdf>

**HANDY HELPERS - A free service to help seniors in the Fairfax/Burke area:** SCFB volunteers will provide *minor* home repairs, small housekeeping jobs, and limited yard work. Actions include replacing light bulbs, filters, or batteries, hanging pictures and curtains. Outside: trimming, planting and raking the yard. Plumbing and electrical work cannot be offered. Materials and supplies should be provided by the client and requests should be submitted well in

advance of needed service. If you would like to receive such assistance, contact Barry Wickersham at 703-359-2918, or at [aowbrw@verizon.net](mailto:aowbrw@verizon.net) to make arrangements.

# Land Use

## UPCOMING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEARINGS

### **Board of Supervisors – Rezoning Application for 9730 Maury Road, Fairfax**

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 4 pm – Government Center Auditorium

### REZONING PROPOSAL

#### **Board of Supervisors Hearing on Rezoning Proposal for 9730 Maury Road Scheduled for January 28**

Virendra Bery and Amit Bery have submitted an application to rezone 2.32 acres at 9730 Maury Road, Fairfax, from the R-1 District to the R-3 District to build 5 single-family dwellings. This property is currently developed with one house. The proposal would extend the existing Maury Court eastward to a new cul-de-sac on the subject property. Three of the proposed lots would be oriented toward the relocated cul-de-sac. The other two lots would be located on and accessed from Maury Drive.

The application states that the proposed lots would average 13,160 square feet in size. The architectural design and materials would be compatible with the surrounding area, and the materials would include brick, stone, and/or HardiePlank siding. On-site stormwater management is proposed with individual treatment facilities on each new property. An interior outlot has been proposed to act as a tree save area for the development. A five-foot-wide sidewalk is proposed on both sides of the extension of Maury Court and curb/gutter would be provided. Frontage improvements would also connect existing curb/gutter and sidewalk along Maury Road.

The Planning Commission held a hearing on this application on October 16. Commissioners raised a number of questions and concerns regarding stormwater, tree save, and the location of two of the houses. Following the hearing, the applicants made several revisions to their plans. One house has been relocated to the northeast corner of the property and away from the natural stormwater runoff path through the center area. The offsite stormwater that currently sheet flows across the property would be captured in a 30-inch pipe that would connect to the existing downstream inlet. Onsite stormwater would be captured in a common bioretention facility on the western edge of the site near that stormwater inlet that connects to an offsite dry pond. The applicants will be providing \$20,000 to the future Homeowners Association for maintenance of the common areas and the bioretention facilities. A proffer was also added to require copies of subdivision plans and any major inserts or revisions to those plans to be provided to the Braddock District Supervisor and Planning Commissioner for the purpose of administrative review and comment. These changes are captured in an addendum to the staff report which is available at: <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ldsdfw/4690880.PDF>. Based on these improvements, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning application.

Because the Board of Supervisors does not consider land use cases in November and December of election years, a hearing before the Board of Supervisors has been scheduled for 4 pm on January 28, 2020. To testify before the Board of Supervisors, go to: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form>.

### BRADDOCK DISTRICT LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Braddock District Land Use and Environment Committee will meet on **Tuesday, January 21, at 7:30 pm in Braddock Hall**. Braddock District Land Use and Environment Committee meetings are open to the public.

## **CASES FILED WITH THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**

The Fairfax County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) hears and makes decisions on requests for variances (relief from specific zoning regulations such as lot width, building height, or minimum yard requirements) and Special Use Permits. It meets on Wednesdays beginning at 9 am in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. BZA meetings are also aired live on the county government's cable TV Channel 16. Residents who have concerns about an application are encouraged to submit a letter for the record or testify at the hearing on the case. You may register to testify at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/bza/bzaspeaker.htm>. These matters will not come before the Board of Supervisors but will be decided by the BZA. Staff reports are normally available two weeks before the scheduled hearing.

### **Haze Hookah Café 2 – 9565 Braddock Road, Fairfax SP 2019-BR-082**

The applicant is seeking a Special Permit for a Commercial Indoor Recreation Use to open a hookah lounge within the Twinbrooke Shopping Center on Braddock Road. The proposed use would occupy 2,000 feet of existing space and would not serve food or alcohol. There would be four employees and approximately 150 patrons daily. No impact on AM peak hour traffic is expected, and the applicant predicts approximately 30 PM peak hour trips. The proposed hours of operation are from 12 pm to 1 am Sunday through Thursday and from 12 pm to 2 am on Friday and Saturday. The applicant operates a similar use in a shopping center off Route 50 in Chantilly. The BZA held a hearing on this application on December 4, during which 11 individuals offered testimony and BZA members raised a number of questions. In order to give staff and the applicant time to respond, the decision in this case was deferred until January 15 at 9 am. The record remains open for additional written comments, which may be submitted to: [bzaclerkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:bzaclerkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov). Additional information, including a map of the site and staff report, may be found here: <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ZAPSMMain.aspx?cde=SP&seq=4265051>.

### **Ana Vargas – 7803 Harwood Place, Springfield SPA 2014-BR-111**

The applicant is seeking to amend the previous approval for a home child care facility to permit modifications to the development conditions. At the applicant's request, this application was rescheduled to go before the BZA on January 15, 2020. Information, including a map of the site and staff report, when available, may be found here: <http://ldsnet.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet/ZAPSMMain.aspx?cde=SPA&seq=4259545>.

If you have any further questions regarding these land use cases or any other issues of concern to you, please email [braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call us at 703-425-9300.