

Mason Matters!

Fall 2020

Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross

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A Message From Supervisor Gross

Special Interest Articles:

- *Early Voting in Effect for November 3 Election*
- *Ballot Information*
- *Grab-N-Go Meals for FCPS Students*
- *Land Use News*
- *COVID-19 Resources for Business Owners and Employees*
- *Coming Attractions*
- *Community Notes*
- *Virtual State of Mason District Report*

Dear Mason District Neighbor:

The last time I wrote to you in the *Mason Matters!* print newsletter, Fairfax County was in budget mode, looking forward to Spring, the decennial Census, free summer concerts, shredding events, library book sales, and all the usual activities that accent the rhythm and flow of our community. The Spring edition arrived in your mailbox just days before life changed, as the COVID-19 pandemic began to plague our county, our Commonwealth, and our nation. In fact, the Mason District Budget Town Meeting was the last public, in-person meeting hosted in the Mason District Governmental Center. The building has been closed to the public since mid-March and all room reservations were cancelled, but my staff and I continue to assist constituents via telephone and e-mail, and lots of virtual meetings!



Although there is no specific information about re-opening the building for regular activities, **absentee in-person voting will begin** here on **Wednesday, October 14**. There is extensive information about voting, and the bond referendum issues, on page 2 of this newsletter, and I urge you to read it carefully as you decide how to vote – by mail ballot, in-person absentee, or at your precinct polling place on Election Day. Remember, your ballot counts, regardless of the voting method you choose.

The first phase of the Site Specific Comprehensive Plan Amendment process (SSPA) for Mason District was completed in late August, and the nominations recommended for further review will be considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors later this fall. The citizen task force I appointed last spring to review the six nominations was able to meet only once before COVID-19, but continued their deliberations virtually, with many residents able to log in and participate. Many thanks for all the extra effort put forth by the task force, the county staff, and the community. More information is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/sspa/south.

Weather and climate change have not been kind to Fairfax County's tree canopy. Many trees have died, and others show the effects of age and weather stress. The fall and winter season is when most trees are leafless, is a good time to have trees and dangerous limbs removed, before they become a hazard to life and property. An examination of your trees now, before leaf fall, allows you to formulate a plan for removal and engage the assistance of professional foresters. Trees are a renewable resource, but only if we maintain a healthy environment for them.

For the first time in 25 years, the annual **Mason District Holiday Town Gathering** will **not** be held, another casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we will not be able to be together to enjoy live musical entertainment, refreshments, and door prizes, I will share my annual **State of Mason District** report on my county webpage, starting **Wednesday, December 9** at 12 p.m. I will respond to constituent questions, as time permits, so please **e-mail** your **county-related questions** to mason@fairfaxcounty.gov by **Tuesday, December 1, 2020**. Please include "**Town Gathering Question**" in the subject line.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your Mason District Supervisor, and I hope you will let me know whenever my staff and I can be of assistance to you. My office is providing assistance by e-mail and phone from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and we are ready to assist with any county-related matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Gross'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

LOOK FOR **MASON MATTERS!** THE TELEVISION SHOW
on Cable Channel 16
EVERY THURSDAY AT 7 P.M.
EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY AT 6:30 P.M.
DAILY ON THE WEB AT WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV/MASON



in Effect for the November 3 Election

With the General Assembly's approval of "early voting" for the November 3, 2020, General and Special Elections, registered voters may vote in person before Election Day at **14** satellite locations, including the **Mason District Governmental Center**, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale, and (additional location) the **Thomas Jefferson Library**, 7415 Arlington Boulevard in Falls Church, from **October 14 - 31, 2020**. Voting hours are **Monday through Friday**, from 1 to 7 p.m. Voting also is available **Saturdays, October 17, 24, and 31 (last day to vote early/absentee in-person)**, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bring a current and valid photo identification. There is no voting on Sundays.

If your address changed since you last voted, **update your address before October 13**. First-time voters are urged to contact the Fairfax County Office of Elections for instructions. Information is available on-line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/absentee.htm, by phone at 703-222-0776; TTY 711, or by e-mail at voting@fairfaxcounty.gov. **The deadline to register to vote is October 13, 2020, at 5 p.m.; online: 11:59 p.m.**

The **deadline to apply for an absentee ballot** by mail, fax, e-mail, or online is **Friday, October 23 at 5 p.m.** Send completed absentee ballot applications to: **Mail:** Office of Elections, Box 10161, Fairfax, VA 22038; **Fax: 703-324-3725**; or **E-Mail: absenteeballot@fairfaxcounty.gov**. For inclusion in the Election, all mailed absentee ballots **MUST** be **postmarked November 3** and **received** at the Office of Elections **by 12 p.m. on November 6, 2020**.

Students attending college outside the metropolitan area may register to vote, update voter registration status, and request an absentee ballot through the Virginia Department of Elections at <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation>. Students' completed ballots must be postmarked by November 3 and received at the Office of Elections by 12 p.m. on November 6.

RETURNING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

The Virginia General Assembly recently approved the use of drop boxes at precincts and satellite locations, as well as the Office of the General Registrar (Office of Elections).

- ✓ During the dates and times the Office of Elections is open (**weekdays 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**), voters can return their ballot at the **Office of Elections, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 323, Fairfax, Virginia 22035**.
- ✓ During the dates and times that the satellites locations are open for absentee in person/early voting, voters can return their ballot to the satellite locations.
- ✓ On Election Day, November 3, from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m., voters can return their ballot to any precinct.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: ONLY when the Office of Elections or absentee in person/early voting satellite locations are open can voters return their ballots to those locations' drop box.

On Election Day, vote at your regular polling place. For more information, visit the Fairfax County Office of Elections website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections, or call 703-222-0776; TTY 711. Not sure of where you vote? Visit either the GIS [My Neighborhood App](#) or the [Virginia Department of Elections](#) website at www.elections.virginia.gov/citizen-portal/index.html.

November 3 Ballot Information

On the ballot for the November 3, 2020, General Election will be elections for President, Vice President, U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, four separate Bond Referendums, and two proposed amendments to the Constitution of Virginia.

If approved, the **Bond Referendums** would be used as follows:

- Four Libraries** - \$90 million for renovations and upgrades at
- Patrick Henry Community (\$23 million);
 - Sherwood Regional (\$18 million);
 - George Mason Regional (\$15 million);
 - Kingstowne Regional (\$34 million - community library proposed to be replaced with new regional library).



Parks - \$112 million of which \$100 million would be for:

- Park renovations and upgrades;
- Natural and cultural resource stewardship;
- Land acquisition and open space preservation; and
- New park development.



The remaining \$12 million would fund the county's share for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's capital program to

- Expand public open space and trails;
- Protect natural, cultural, and historic resources;
- Improve existing facilities; and
- Provide additional recreational opportunities.



Community and Health and Human Services - \$79 million to renovate or upgrade two county facilities:

- Joseph Willard Health Center (\$58 million); and
- Crossroads (\$21 million).



Transportation - \$160 million would pay for Fairfax County's share of Metro's capital improvement program for:

- rehabilitating and modernizing the Metrorail system;
- purchasing new railcars and buses; and
- building a new bus garage.



Information about the 2020 Bond Referendums is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bond/. Absent military or overseas citizens are eligible to vote using the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, available at www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/military-overseas/index.html.

There are two proposed amendments to the Constitution of Virginia. The first referendum establishes the Virginia Redistricting Commission, comprised of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.



The second referendum grants an automotive tax exemption to fully disabled veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Virginia National Guard. For more information, visit www.elections.virginia.gov/proposed-constitutional-amendment-2020/.

Grab-N-Go Meals for FCPS Students

The Fairfax County Public Schools is offering **ALL** students a **free** healthy breakfast and lunch through December 31, 2020. Grab and go breakfast and lunch meals will be served (at the same time) at school sites and community locations from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday - Friday (excluding holidays). Meals for Saturdays and Sundays will be distributed at all sites and on bus routes on Fridays. Visit www.fcps.edu/return-school/food for more information, send an e-mail to foodinfo@fcps.edu, or call 703-813-4800.

Land Use News

➤ The **Zoning Ordinance Modernization (zMOD)** project advances to BOS Land Use Policy Committee this fall. The zMOD project process continues with the [Zoning Ordinance Consolidated Draft](#) scheduled for discussion by the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Policy Committee on **Tuesday, October 27, 2020**, at 1:30 p.m. Although existing property zonings do not change, the proposed new Zoning Ordinance addresses land use definitions, removes gaps and inconsistencies, and creates a streamlined, user-friendly document that is easier to understand. Information about the zMOD project's progress is available at the Department of Planning and Development's [website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod). Questions? Call the Zoning Administration Division at 703-324-1314, or send an e-mail to the zMOD Team at dpdzmodcomments@fairfaxcounty.gov.

➤ In October, the **Virginia Department of Transportation** is featuring virtual video presentations (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese), and an online survey (English) about potential safety and operational improvements along Rt. 50/Arlington Blvd., between Jaguar Trail and Wilson Blvd. in Fairfax County. The **Route 50 STARS** (Strategically Targeted and Affordable Roadway Solutions) study includes concepts for improved traffic signal timing/operations, turn lane improvements, turn restrictions, access management, and pedestrian enhancements. Visit www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route50fallschurchstudy.asp to access the presentations and survey. Send comments by e-mail to meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov, or by first-class mail to Mr. Bobby Mangalath, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. The survey will be available for responses for 30 days.

➤ **Radley Management, LLC's** application for a re-zoning (RZ 2020-MA-012) and special exception (SEA 85-M-086-02) includes a proposal for an addition to the Radley Acura Dealership's showroom building, located at 5823 Columbia Pike in Falls Church, and a three-level parking garage to be used for new vehicle storage. The proposed addition, to the rear of the existing building, entails an enclosed, air conditioned service drop-off area for customers bringing their vehicles for service. Public hearings are anticipated to be scheduled in early 2021.



(L-R) Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross, Mt. Vernon District Supervisor Daniel Storck, and Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik observed the Centennial Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2020 at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia. The proclamation commemorates the contributions of women suffragists, who worked tirelessly to give women the right to vote.

Photo provided by the Office of Mt. Vernon District Supervisor Daniel Storck.

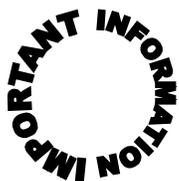
COVID-19 Resources for Business Owners and Employees

If your business, organization, or employees need COVID-19 assistance, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/information-businesses-impacted-coronavirus, to find resources and information specifically for business owners and their employees. Small business owners can find information about loan and grant assistance programs, health, labor, and safety guidance, policy and tax changes. Employees can find information about teleworking, sick leave, childcare, unemployment, and other resources. Specialized questions may be sent to the Department of Economic Initiatives at DEI@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Coming Attractions

- **National Fire Prevention Week** will be observed **October 4-10, 2020**. This year's theme is "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen." Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) will feature interactive activities, and virtual events throughout the week, and a virtual open house throughout the day on **Saturday, October 10, 2020** on FCFRD social and digital platforms. For more information, call 703-246-3801, or log-on to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/firepreventionweekpage.
- **Low-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics** are scheduled for **Sunday, October 18** and **Sunday, December 6, 2020**, from 1-3 p.m. at the Department of Animal Sheltering, 4500 West Ox Road, in Fairfax. Pre-registration is required for these curbside clinics. Pet owners must wear masks, and cats and ferrets must be in a secure carrier. For more information and to register, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/communityassistance/rabiesclinics. Questions? Call 703-830-1100, or send an e-mail to animalshelter@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- The **DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day** is set for **Saturday, October 24, 2020**, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m., and unused or expired prescription medicines may be dropped off at all Fairfax County Police Stations. For patrol station locations near you, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/fairfax-county-police-department. Additional information also is available at the DEA website www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html.

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Mason Matters! The Newsletter to Keep YOU Informed

Community Notes

- The **Bailey's Shelter and Supportive Housing's Hypothermia Prevention Program** begins **December 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021**. Food donations from churches, organizations, and individuals are needed to provide approximately 50 bagged breakfasts and lunches daily, and dinner for 50 individuals each night. For more information, to donate meals, and coordinate deliveries, contact Sherry Edelkamp at BaileysHypoShelter@gmail.com, or call 703-966-1270.
- AARP volunteers anticipate returning in **February 2021** to the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale (**pending building reopening to the public**), to provide free income tax preparation to residents of all ages with low and moderate incomes within the area. **AARP Tax-Aide** envisions changes to the program, which include increased use of appointments, reduced in-person interactions, masks, and social distancing. All returns are filed electronically. For more information about AARP Tax-Aide, visit www.aarp.org/taxaide, or call 1-888-687-2277.
- **Crossroads Opportunity Neighborhoods** is recruiting volunteers to serve as Community Ambassadors. If you live in the Bailey's Crossroads/Culmore area, and would like to help others become connected to resources and improve our community, contact Ebony Belt, 571-453-8627.
- The Annandale Christian Community for Action (**ACCA**) is a volunteer organization serving neighbors in dire need of assistance, including furniture. Please call 703-256-9513 and ACCA will pick up your donated furniture and give you a tax-deductible receipt. The most needed items are mattresses/box springs (single, double, or queen size) sofas (not sleeper types), kitchen/dining room tables, and chairs, chests of drawers/dressers, coffee tables, end tables, and microwaves.

State of Mason District Report

Available Wednesday, December 9, 2020
at www.FairfaxCounty.Gov/Mason

Supervisor Gross highlights the unique start of the 2020 decade in her **State of Mason District** report. Residents' questions, sent by e-mail before December 1 to mason@fairfaxcounty.gov, are answered, and learn how our community is successfully accomplishing goals, while adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Visit us on the Web: