

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION**

**Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, February 25, 2021 – via Zoom**

**COMMISSIONERS**

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

**Hon. Walter L. Alcorn**  
**Hon. Victor S. Angry**  
**Hon. Andrea O. Bailey**  
**Hon. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker**  
Hon. Kenny A. Boddye  
**Hon. Juli E. Briskman**  
**Hon. Kelly Burk**  
Hon. John T. Chapman  
**Hon. Linda J. Colbert**  
**Hon. Matt de Ferranti**  
**Hon. Libby Garvey**  
**Hon. Penelope A. Gross**  
Hon. Pat Herrity  
**Hon. Rodney L. Lusk**  
**Hon. David Meyer**  
**Hon. Cydney A. Neville, NVRC Vice Chairman**  
**Hon. Sheila A. Olem**  
**Hon. Dalia A. Palchik**  
Hon. Jeanette Rishell  
**Hon. Koran T. Saines**  
**Hon. Kathy L. Smith, NVRC Treasurer**  
**Hon. David Tarter, NVRC Chairman**  
**Hon. James R. Walkinshaw**  
**Hon. Mark Wolfe**

**County of Fairfax**  
**County of Prince William**  
**County of Prince William**  
**City of Alexandria**  
*County of Prince William*  
**County of Loudoun**  
**Town of Leesburg**  
*City of Alexandria*  
**Town of Vienna**  
**County of Arlington**  
**County of Arlington**  
**County of Fairfax**  
*County of Fairfax*  
**County of Fairfax**  
**City of Fairfax**  
**Town of Dumfries**  
**Town of Herndon**  
**County of Fairfax**  
*City of Manassas Park*  
**County of Loudoun**  
**County of Fairfax**  
**City of Falls Church**  
**County of Fairfax**  
**City of Manassas**

**STAFF PRESENT**

Robert Lazaro  
Linda M. Tenney  
Gina Kesselmann-Smith  
Normand Goulet  
Jill Kaneff  
Dale Medearis  
Michelle Simmons  
Debbie Spiliotopoulos  
Peggy Tadej

*Executive Director*  
*Deputy Director*  
*Management Analyst*  
*Environmental Services Director*  
*Regional Demographer*  
*Senior Environmental Planner*  
*Human Services Director*  
*Senior Environmental Planner*  
*Director, Community and Military Partnerships*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Frank Anderson  
Dr. Danny Avula  
Susan Baker  
Ann Hyslop  
Bob Kuhns

*Fairfax County*  
*Virginia Department of Health*  
*Go Virginia*  
*Go Virginia*  
*Mead & Hunt*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Tarter called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called and all members present or absent were noted for the record.

**PRESENTATION**

**COVID-19 Vaccine Update**

Commissioners received an update from Dr. Danny Avula of the Virginia Department of Health who is leading the Commonwealth's efforts on the COVID19 vaccination. Dr. Avula provided information with respect to ongoing efforts to vaccinate residents of the Commonwealth, supply related issues and other important information.

**Report from Go Virginia Northern Virginia**

NVRC serves as the support organization for the Go Virginia Northern Virginia organization. The Go Virginia Northern Virginia organization has awarded grants for several projects in the region as a part of this State initiative. The Commission received a report on that work in Northern Virginia.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Resolution No. P21-15 – Authorization to submit a flood education and prevention grant proposal to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neville and carried unanimously.

**Background:**

The resolution authorizes the Executive Director to submit and sign an agreement with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation a grant for \$45,000 for furthering a regional flood education and outreach plan. The 2016 Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan update determined that most of the Northern Virginia jurisdictions have a 'Highly Likely' probability of continued flood risk due to 'High' vulnerability to flood hazard.

Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Resolution No. P21-16 – Authorization to receive funds from the Virginia Department of Health to perform various technical assistance activities in support of HIV/AIDS care and prevention. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neville and carried unanimously.

**Background:**

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has contracted with NVRC for the past 30 years to receive and subcontract funds for HIV services in Suburban Virginia. The types of tasks identified for NVRC staff that would be performed under contract to VDH are consistent with NVRC's role and mission, including grants management, training and technical assistance, research, program development, and neutral convener.

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Mr. Lazaro presented his report to the Commission, which included the financial report for January 2021 and the following:

- Increased Funding from the Commonwealth

- Both the Senate and House have passed amendments to the State budget increasing the amount of State funding to NVRC and the other Planning Districts in the Commonwealth by \$14,000 each. NVRC's appropriation grows from \$151,000 to \$165,000. This is the first increase since 2008 when it was cut during the Great Recession.
- Webinars are Underway
  - NVRC's free resiliency webinars are now underway. To date, more than 1,000 people have registered for NVRC sponsored webinars in less than a 12-month period.
  - There are a minimum eight more webinars that are being worked on that will be offered during 2021. All
  - the webinars are free, and Commissioners and others are encouraged to share their availability across your various communications platforms. The webinars are taped and then hosted on the Commission's YouTube channel.
- Starting Our Learning Experiences
  - Dr. Dale Medearis of our staff was invited to participate in an interview with the Jefferson Educational Society of Erie, Pennsylvania. The Society is a Think Tank serving the Erie area. Dale discussed the Commission's successes in our more than twenty-year partnership with the Stuttgart Region working with local, regional and state governments in Germany and what lessons they could learn by seeking such partnerships for their region.
- Energy Efficiency Program / Solarize NoVA
  - Since 2016 more than 7200 families in Northern Virginia have been helped through energy efficiency programs sponsored by the utilities and implemented by the Local Energy Alliance Program and Community Housing Partners. While our Solarize campaign will be implemented in April, now is the time to take the opportunity to reduce your energy use. These programs are at no cost to the homeowner based upon income and age limits. Details at: <https://energysmarthomesva.org/income-qualified-programs/>.
- Vaccination Dashboard
  - Jill Kaneff, our regional demographer, has updated our Regional data dashboard to include information regarding vaccinations in the region.

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Tarter invited Commissioners to let him or Mr. Lazaro know of issues Commissioners would like NVRC to address.

COMMUNITY & MILITARY  
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE  
REPORT

Commissioner Gross invited Commissioners to attend the upcoming Community and Military Partnership Meeting scheduled to be held virtually on March 11 at 10 am. It will feature several updates:

- Briefing on the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) national report on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
- Progress report on a video under development by ADC featuring Northern Virginia's DEI efforts
  - Focused on our partnership with military members, military families, and veterans
  - Highlights of our conversations, listening sessions, initiatives, and actions
- Update by Supervisor Angry on DEI efforts in Prince William County
- Review of our Community, Military, and Federal Facility DEI Roadmap to include:
  - Listening sessions, e.g., EveryMind sponsored community partnership listening session 4 March
  - Listening and learning through art, e.g., Lorton Workhouse Arts Center Military and the Arts Initiative (WMAI)
  - Community-related service projects, e.g., wreath-laying at Black cemeteries, capturing stories, healing projects
  - Policy-related initiatives
- Example: EveryMind - Community Military Partnership Listening Session
  - Focus: Series of Listening Sessions with Military Members and Their Families to Share Stories and Experiences
  - Tentative Date for first session – March 18, 2021 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM ET
  - Bringing together 8 military spouses with representatives of the community and military
  - Session to be facilitated with a Chaplin or Social Worker on hand for support
  - POCs: Peggy Tadej [peggy.tadej@novaregion.org](mailto:peggy.tadej@novaregion.org). Aimee Stoddard [astoddard@every-mind.org](mailto:astoddard@every-mind.org), Program Manager of ServingTogether, a program of EveryMind
- Example: Workhouse arts center
  - Announced a Workhouse Military and the Arts Initiative (WMAI) in partnership with the NVRC and underscored their call for artwork submissions
  - Submissions Jan 20 - March 21, 2021
  - The call is open to all branches, veterans, active duty, retired, reserves, and military caregivers, spouses and dependents
  - Support OMOC initiative to impact change in defense communities and help create a better place for all service members and their families to call home
  - The exhibition May 12 - August 1, 2021

OTHER ITEMS

Commissioner Walkinshaw raised for the commission's consideration an issue regarding the plastic bag ordinance. In 2020, the General Assembly passed the legislation allowing localities to adopt a 5 cent tax on plastic bags in grocery stores, convenience stores, and drug stores. And the legislation specifically directs the tax commissioner to develop guidelines. It seems that the tax commissioner has informed

Fairfax County and possibly other jurisdictions that they do not intend to adopt those guidelines as the legislation directs until the first locality drafts and passes an ordinance. Then they would look at that ordinance and draft guidelines. This is concerning, as having a uniform set of guidelines for all jurisdictions to look at as they consider an ordinance would be helpful. Additionally, going through the process of drafting an ordinance only to have the tax commissioner issue guidelines that potentially obviate sections of that ordinance would not be in anybody's interest. Thus, it would be beneficial, if the tax commissioner would do what the legislation says, which is drafting the guidelines, ideally in collaboration with local governments and then allow the jurisdictions, if they choose, each to pass an ordinance adopting it. Consequently, Commissioner Walkinshaw suggested to the Commission to send a letter to Governor Northam asking him to direct the Department of Tax Administration (VDT) to work with localities in crafting these regulations, which the Commissioners agreed to do.

Commissioner Bennett-Parker provided an update to the Commission that the bill HB1931 was signed into law by Governor Northam. This is a bill that expands and increases the ability of members of public bodies to be able to participate electronically when there is a physical quorum. It authorizes a public body to conduct through electronic communication means a meeting for which, on or before the day of the meeting, a member of the public body holding the meeting notifies the chair that such member is unable to attend the meeting due to a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care for such family member, thereby preventing the member's physical attendance. The bill also clarifies that participation in an electronic meeting by a member of a public body due to the inability to attend because of a personal matter is limited each calendar year to two such meetings, which is current law, or 25 percent of the meetings held that calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater\*.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Commission meeting minutes of January 28, 2021. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bailey and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Tarter adjourned the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved by:

Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.  
Executive Director

P. David Tarter  
Chairman

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\* <https://openstates.org/va/bills/2021/HB1931/>