

NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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

COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

Hon. Walter L. Alcorn	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Victor S. Angry	<i>County of Prince William</i>
Hon. Andrea O. Bailey	<i>County of Prince William</i>
Hon. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker	<i>City of Alexandria</i>
Hon. Kenny A. Boddye	<i>County of Prince William</i>
Hon. Juli E. Briskman	<i>County of Loudoun</i>
Hon. Kelly Burk	<i>Town of Leesburg</i>
Hon. John T. Chapman	<i>City of Alexandria</i>
Hon. Linda J. Colbert	<i>Town of Vienna</i>
Hon. Matt de Ferranti	<i>County of Arlington</i>
Hon. Libby Garvey	<i>County of Arlington</i>
Hon. Penelope A. Gross	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Pat Herrity	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Rodney L. Lusk	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. David Meyer	<i>City of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Cydney A. Neville, NVRC Vice Chairman	<i>Town of Dumfries</i>
Hon. Sheila A. Olem	<i>Town of Herndon</i>
Hon. Dalia A. Palchik	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Jeanette Rishell	<i>City of Manassas Park</i>
Hon. Koran T. Saines	<i>County of Loudoun</i>
Hon. Kathy L. Smith, NVRC Treasurer	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. David Tarter, NVRC Chairman	<i>City of Falls Church</i>
Hon. James R. Walkinshaw	<i>County of Fairfax</i>
Hon. Mark Wolfe	<i>City of Manassas</i>

STAFF PRESENT

Robert Lazaro	<i>Executive Director</i>
Linda M. Tenney	<i>Deputy Director</i>
Gina Kesselmann-Smith	<i>Management Analyst</i>
Normand Goulet	<i>Environmental Services Director</i>
Jill Kaneff	<i>Regional Demographer</i>
Dale Medearis	<i>Senior Environmental Planner</i>
Michelle Simmons	<i>Human Services Director</i>
Peggy Tadej	<i>Director, Community and Military Partnerships</i>

OTHERS PRESENT

Gerry Connolly	<i>United States Congress</i>
Thomas Kaufmann	<i>Northern Virginia Community College</i>
Dr. Anne Kress	<i>Northern Virginia Community College</i>
Carlton Reid	<i>Booz Allen Hamilton</i>
Will Rowe	<i>Booz Allen Hamilton</i>
Wyatt Shields	<i>City of Falls Church</i>
Dr. Gregory Washington	<i>George Mason University</i>
Tony Zipfel	<i>Wreath laying project – City of Fairfax</i>

- 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**
- Report from the Presidents of George Mason University and the Northern Virginia Community College**
- Commissioners received a briefing from President Gregory Washington and President Anne Kress. Dr. Washington has been President of GMU since July 1, 2020 and Dr. Kress has been President since January 2020. Both have taken office during these unprecedented times and challenges related to COVID19, the economy, and a wide range of issues.
- Fairfax City Historic Black Cemetery Project**
- City of Fairfax Wreath Laying Project at the Jermantown Cemetery. Honoring African Americans and the Current Trustee at this Sacred Site Established in 1868 as a Service Project for Racial Healing. The Commission received a short presentation from Mr. Tony Zipfel who is a member of an organization that is promoting racial reconciliation in the community.
- Congressman Gerry Connolly Update on American Rescue Plan**
- Congressman Gerry Connolly provided an update to members on the American Rescue Plan. Now that the legislation has been adopted and signed into law the various rules and regulations regarding its use will be developed by the Administration.
- ACTION ITEMS**
- Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Resolution No. P21-17 – Emergency resolution extension to modify public meeting practices. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bailey and carried unanimously.
- Background:
- Since March 12, 2020 when Governor Northam issued a State of Emergency the Commission has held its meetings virtually. The resolution permits the Commission to continue to meet virtually for an additional six months under the State of Emergency declared by the Governor.
- Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Resolution No. P21-18 – Resolution authorizing amendment to Commission by-laws regarding remote participation in meetings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bailey and carried unanimously after the amendment was made to strike the last paragraph as this action will officially be put up for vote at the April 2021 NVRC meeting.
- Background:
- Senate Bill 1931 as signed into law by Governor Northam has made changes to the number of meetings that a member of the Commission can participate in from a remote location. The resolution authorizes

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT

the amendment to the Commission's by-laws to reflect the new state law. As per the by-laws the amendment will be taken up for approval/disapproval at the April meeting of the Commission.

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

- Remembering the Victims of Covid19
 - NVRC produced a video that was shared on Comcast and Cox as a PSA remembering the victims of COVID19 and reminding residents to take steps to protect themselves from the disease
 - Working with Fairfax County to put together a public remembrance program later in the year.
- Dashboard Upgrade
 - We updated our data dashboard to improve its use and appearance on mobile devices, accessibility and search engine optimization.
- American Rescue Plan in NoVA
 - The American Rescue Plan passage results in more than \$1 Billion in aid to NoVA's local governments and public school divisions.
 - NVRC coordinated Zoom meetings with the region's Mayors and Chairs with Senators Warner and Kaine just prior to the passage of the plan and afterward with Congressman Beyer.
 - Now that the bill has passed rules as to its use, etc will be developed. NoVA's CAOs are working closely together as the rules are developed.
- Energy Efficiency Program/Solarize NoVA
 - Many thanks to Commissioner Palchik for sharing information regarding our energy efficiency work with the Local Energy Alliance Program in one of her district e-newsletters. NVRC and LEAP can help facilitate providing graphics, information, text, etc regarding this and our Solarize programs.
- Webinar with Standard & Poors
 - NVRC was pleased to host a well-attended webinar with representatives from Standard & Poors regarding the role of bond rating agencies and climate resiliency planning in Northern Virginia.
- Economic Impact of Covid19
 - While unemployment rates in the region have gone down, more than 93,263 persons have dropped from the workforce since February 2020.
 - Several factors:

- People cannot find work so they have dropped out of workforce
- People have left their jobs to take care of families at home
- People have retired early

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Tarter praised the way the region came together, particularly with the help of NVRC.

Chairman Tarter also informed the Commissioners that he will be sending everyone information regarding the annual performance review of Mr. Lazaro to be able to discuss compensation.

COMMUNITY & MILITARY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Gross reported that the March 11 Community & Military Partnership Committee Meeting agenda featured 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. Aimee Stoddard 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
- Follow-up Actions
 - Finalize Roadmap to include recommendations from: DoD, the State, County, and City of Fairfax of the DEI Actions as well as the Military
 - Include themes we heard and address gaps
 - Prepare Resolution for April to Base Commanders for their participation who are moving forward:
 - Col. Kimberly A. Peeples, JBM-HH
 - Col William C. Bentley, MCBQ
 - Next Meeting – Prepare questions to address the Community, Military, and Federal Facility Partnership Meeting as a Listening Session
 - Questions need to include barriers and pain points and how to get around
 - Please join us to help better understand the process
 - Bring all the DEI Officers from the Counties back for Report out to the NVRC Board on Findings, events, and if the need for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Alliance for the Region.

Commissioner Gross also invited Commissioners to attend the upcoming Community and Military Partnership Meeting scheduled to be held virtually on May 13 at 10 am.

OTHER ITEMS

Commissioner Neville and Commissioner Chapman brought to the Commission's attention a new initiative: Historically Black College University in Northern Virginia – Including HBCUs in our region and building a presence. As such, it was suggested to reach out to the presidents of the Norfolk State University and Virginia State University to see how we in the Northern Virginia region could work with these institutions for the betterment of the communities we jointly serve. In particular, there was interest expressed on whether NSU or VSU have considered offering courses in conjunction with our community college or George Mason University in disciplines not available at both those schools here in Northern Virginia. In addition, interest was expressed with respect to working collaboratively in establishing partnerships with not only the regional commission, but the many private sector firms that are located in Northern Virginia.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gross moved approval of the Commission meeting minutes of February 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olem and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Tarter adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.
Executive Director

Approved by:

P. David Tarter
Chairman