

NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, January 24, 2008

COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

Hon. Sharon Bulova	County of Fairfax
Hon. Gerald E. Connolly, NVRC Chairman	County of Fairfax
Hon. Joan Cross	City of Fairfax
Hon. Steve DeBenedittis	Town of Herndon
Hon. Barbara A. Favola	County of Arlington
Hon. John Foust	County of Fairfax
Hon. Penelope A. Gross	County of Fairfax
Hon. Pat Herrity	County of Fairfax
Hon. Catherine Hudgins	County of Fairfax
Hon. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.	Town of Purcellville
Hon. Harold Lippman	City of Falls Church
Hon. Michael C. May	County of Prince William
Hon. Martin E. Nohe, NVRC Treasurer	County of Prince William
Hon. Harry J. Parrish, II, NVRC Vice Chairman	City of Manassas
Hon. Redella S. Pepper	City of Alexandria
Hon. Frank J. Principi	County of Prince William
Hon. M. Jane Seeman	Town of Vienna
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg	City of Alexandria
Hon. Linda Smyth	County of Fairfax
Hon. J. Walter Tejada	County of Arlington
Hon. William J. Treuting, Jr.	City of Manassas Park
Hon. Kristen C. Umstatt	Town of Leesburg
Hon. Lori Waters	County of Loudoun
Hon. Fred E. Yohey, Jr.	Town of Dumfries
Hon. Scott K. York	County of Loudoun

STAFF PRESENT

G. Mark Gibb	Executive Director
Linda M. Tenney	Deputy Director
Linda Summerall	Executive Secretary
Ken Billingsley	Director, Demographics
Barbara Gordon	Communications Director
Dale Medearis	Senior Regional Planner
Doug Pickford	Director, Environmental and Planning Services
David Schwengel	Director, Regional Emergency Planning Services
Michelle Simmons	Director, Human Services

GUESTS

James Mayer	Chairman of the Board, No. Va. Regional Park Authority
Paul Gilbert	Executive Director, No. Va. Regional Park Authority
Carol Loftur-Thun	Executive Director, CrisisLink
Sue Rowland	Principal, SR Consulting; NVRC's Legislative Liaison

CALL TO ORDER While waiting for Chairman Connolly to arrive, Vice Chairman Nohe called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Commissioner Nohe moved approval of the minutes of the December 13, 2007, meeting. The motion was seconded. The minutes were approved with Commissioner York abstaining.

PRESENTATIONS *NVRPA'S NEW 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN*

Chairman Connolly welcomed Jim Mayer, Chairman of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) and Paul Gilbert, Executive Director.

Jim Mayer

Mr. Mayer informed the Commissioners that NVRPA operates facilities offering a variety of activities in 21 locations within its member jurisdictions: the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun.

Mr. Mayer introduced NVRPA Board members in attendance, Immediate Past Chairman Bill Dickinson, Barry Buschow and Brian Knapp.

Paul Gilbert

The five-year strategic plan was adopted by the board at its December 2007 meeting. The plan is a result of a survey to elected officials and user groups plus a two-day board retreat followed by a one-day staff retreat. NVRPA views itself as a conservation organization. It has 40 miles of shoreline in Northern Virginia and over 100 miles of hiking and biking trails. Eighty percent of its operating expenses are covered by self-generated revenues.

Mr. Gilbert reviewed the plans' six goals, along with each goal's key actions and measurable results:

- Increase, maintain and enhance conservation of natural, cultural and historic resources;
- Expand and improve recreation facilities to meet Northern Virginia's population needs;
- Enhance and expand opportunities for cultural and environmental interpretation and education that foster an understanding of the relationship between people and the environment;
- Develop mechanisms for sustainable financing; and
- Provide exceptional leadership for NVRPA.

questions & answers Replying to Chairman Connolly's inquiry about membership, Mr. Gilbert said a Northern Virginia jurisdiction needs to adopt a resolution to join NVRPA; dues are assessed on a per capita rate. Responding to Chairman Connolly's observation that board seats are not apportioned on a per capita basis, Mr. Mayer said he has been a board member since 2001, and the board members are not parochial; each one takes a regional view on the issues.

Commissioner Tejada inquired about the cultural diversity of the activities. Mr. Gilbert cited expanded picnic facilities to accommodate larger groups. Additionally, the Korean community approached him for space in which to install a bell tower, paid for by that group.

Responding to Commissioner Lippman, Mr. Gilbert said he attends the monthly jurisdictional parks directors meetings, which fosters good coordination among NVRPA and the local parks departments.

Commissioner Gross inquired about bonding authority. Mr. Gilbert replied that although his agency has had that authority since its inception nearly 50 years ago, it has never been used.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN 2-1-1

Chairman Connolly introduced Carol Loftur-Thun, Executive Director of CrisisLink. CrisisLink is a local nonprofit located in Arlington that runs the 24-hour hotline serving Northern Virginia. CrisisLink has been awarded the state contract to manage the 2-1-1 human services information and referral phone line in Northern Virginia.

Carol Loftur-Thun Ms. Loftur-Thun introduced Tom Donegan, CrisisLink's Board Chairman, and staff member Jamie Carter, the 2-1-1 call center director.

She told Commissioners her organization has been awarded the state contract to operate the 2-1-1 center in Northern Virginia. She went on to describe her facility and that CrisisLink has expanded staff and installed a new telephone system to handle 2-1-1 calls Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Her staff has been taking 2-1-1 calls in unadvertised mode for most Northern Virginia jurisdictions for a few weeks now.

Ms. Loftur-Thun mentioned that CrisisLink is seeking to constitute and organize the Northern Virginia 2-1-1 Collaborative, a cross-sector, regional advisory body to help CrisisLink implement a sustainable system for 2-1-1. She directed Commissioners to the green handout folders, which include a job description for Collaborative members.

Ms. Loftur-Thun also asked Commissioners for their help in advocating for additional state funding for 2-1-1, describing two budget amendments (Senate and House versions) before the General Assembly this year which if approved, would provide \$330,000 in 2009 and \$350,000 in 2010 to make 2-1-1 service available 24/7 statewide and supplement local operating costs.

CONSENT AGENDA Commissioner Nohe moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of Resolution No. P08-13: Authorization to Sign Agreement for Media Buying Services. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT

Mr. Gibb distributed his report. Highlights include:

- The first U.S.-European Conference of Regional Metropolitan Councils will be held April 9-11 at the Embassy Suites in Alexandria, co-hosted by NVRC, MWCOG, METREX, the regional councils of Stuttgart, Hamburg and London, and the German Marshall Fund of the U.S.;
- The Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) holds its Winter Conference January 28-29 in Richmond. Featured speakers include Governor Tim Kaine (invited), former Governor Linwood Holton, and Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra;
- A budget amendment for NVRC has been introduced by Senator Colgan and Delegate May. State per capita funding for NVRC *dropped* from 30¢ in FY 1998 to 14.1¢ in FY 2008; and
- After Technology Secretary Chopra spoke to the Commission in December about opportunities for regional collaboration in Northern Virginia, the members voted to form a subcommittee to study and evaluate ways to work better regionally on technology/economic development. That subcommittee will meet with the Secretary on February 7 — VML/VACo day in Richmond.

CHAIRMAN'S
REPORT

Six new members have been appointed to the Commission: Lori Waters and Scott York from Loudoun County, Michael May and Frank Principi from Prince William County, and

John Foust and Pat Herrity from Fairfax County. Chairman Connolly noted that Commissioners York and Herrity were present and welcomed them to the Commission.

Chairman Connolly reported that the governor, the Congressional delegation and others met today with the Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters, and the Federal Transit Administration Administrator, James Simpson, and were essentially told the federal government intends to deny funding for the Dulles Rail project.

Commissioner Hudgins moved that NVRC send a letter to the FTA urging reconsideration of its decision. The motion was seconded.

A discussion of the rationale for funding denial and federal responsibility to fund transit in Northern Virginia and the greater Washington region ensued. The NEPA process identified heavy rail as the only viable method. The Dulles Rail Project is both regionally and nationally significant, as Dulles International Airport is the premier airport of the nation's capital. This project is critical to the federal government and the entire national capital region for homeland security evacuation, air quality improvement, economic development and improved long-term planning. Commissioner Gross stated it would be catastrophic for the Washington metropolitan region if Dulles Rail is not built.

The motion carried with Commissioner Herrity abstaining.

NVTA PLANNING COORDINATION ADVISORY CMTE.

Mr. Gibb referenced his memorandum that had been distributed. Chairman Connolly suggested that NVRC as an entity serve to fulfill the role of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's (NVTA) Planning Coordination Advisory Committee [option #2 in the memorandum]. Commissioner Bulova concurred, noting that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors does this as the Solid Waste Commission. Commissioners DeBenedittis and Lazaro expressed support for option #2, adding that Commissioner Seeman was also supportive.

Commissioner DeBenedittis moved that the Commission as an entity is willing to serve as NVTA's Planning Coordination Advisory Committee and that a liaison committee will be formed to develop a memorandum of understanding that will define this relationship. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Gross requested a tutorial of the committee's duties.

NVTA Executive Director John Mason noted that the Commission's decision would now need to go to the NVTA members for approval. Commissioner Nohe recalled that NVTA had already voted to have NVRC serve as that advisory committee. Chairman Connolly asked Mr. Mason to provide brief monthly summaries' of NVTA's actions and projects.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

An updated version of the Commission's 2008 platform referencing bills corresponding to the positions was distributed. Chairman Connolly noted there is a budget amendment to provide additional state funding for NVRC.

Chairman Connolly reported on legislation to have the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) collect the additional one percent sales tax on cars sold to Northern Virginians, rather than having the car dealers collect the tax. The result will be that the buyer can't role the cost of that tax into financing, and secondly, it could require the buyer to physically go to DMV to pay the tax. This legislation is expected to pass.

Sue Rowland, NVRC's Legislative Liaison, reported there are several bills liberalizing absentee voting.

Commissioner Lazaro raised the issue that SB 786 (Watkins) would essentially end local jurisdictions' practice of negotiating proffers from developers, replacing them with a flat impact fee; in Northern Virginia, localities would be permitted to collect \$8,000 per new house. He asked that the Commission send a letter of opposition. Chairman Connolly pointed out it will be more effective for local elected officials to talk to their state legislators. Commissioner York concurred, urging members to go to Richmond during the session to talk with their legislators in person.

Commissioner Nohe made the point that SB 786 would lead to a "wealth transfer," taking money out of the pockets of commercial developers and putting it into the pockets of residential developers, as Prince William County would likely have to enact the commercial property tax option under HB 3202.

Commissioner Smedberg asked about legislation to require older buildings to install sprinkler systems within ten years, noting that it may be either impossible from an engineering standpoint or cost-prohibitive, resulting in a loss of affordable housing within Northern Virginia's inner-suburbs. Ms. Rowland reported the bill is dead.

Commissioner Tejada inquired about the homestead exemption. Chairman Connolly pointed out that the constitutional amendment as written does not address longevity. The constitutional amendment cannot be amended but the enabling legislation can. The members agreed that Ms. Rowland should report to the state legislators that the Commission expects the enabling legislation to be modified with the option of duration. The homestead exemption needs to be a flexible tool.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications

Commissioner Smedberg reported that the Commission's new website will be launched on February 8.

It was noted that Commission received television coverage from its "go green for the holidays" press release.

ad hoc Energy and Environmental

Commissioner Lazaro reported the Virginia Municipal League (VML) has taken up the "go green" state initiative.

Commissioner Gross informed the members she has been appointed to the Governor's Commission on Climate Change.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Nohe reported that former Delegate David Brickley is the Virginia Coordinator for the East Coast Greenway, the trail system running from Maine to Florida. That organization is applying for a state grant to publish public educational brochures and would like a letter of support from the Commission to VDOT. There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

G. Mark Gibb
Executive Director

Approved by:

Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman