

NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, October 24, 2002

COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those present are highlighted)

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| Commissioner Hilda M. Barg | <i>County of Prince William</i> |
| Commissioner Charles J. Billand | <i>County of Loudoun</i> |
| Commissioner Albert J. Boudreau | <i>Town of Vienna</i> |
| Commissioner Melvin Bray | <i>Town of Dumfries</i> |
| Commissioner Sharon Bulova | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner James C. Chesley | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner William C. Cleveland | <i>City of Alexandria</i> |
| Commissioner Gerald E. Connolly | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Joan Cross | City of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Anna F. Dixon | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner William T. Druhan, Jr. | Town of Purcellville |
| Commissioner Albert C. Eisenberg | County of Arlington |
| Commissioner Barbara A. Favola, NVRC Treasurer | County of Arlington |
| Commissioner Jay Fiset | <i>County of Arlington</i> |
| Commissioner Robert C. Goessman | <i>City of Manassas</i> |
| Commissioner Brenda Z. Greene | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Penelope A. Gross | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Katherine K. Hanley | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Mark R. Herring | <i>County of Loudoun</i> |
| Commissioner John F. Herrity | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Edgar B. Holley | County of Prince William |
| Commissioner Catherine Hudgins | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner John D. Jenkins | <i>County of Prince William</i> |
| Commissioner David Kirkpatrick, Jr. | <i>City of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Lyman Krekel | City of Falls Church |
| Commissioner Jesse Ludvigsen | City of Manassas Park |
| Commissioner Elaine N. McConnell | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Stuart Mendelsohn | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Charles Monroe | <i>County of Arlington</i> |
| Commissioner Michael O'Reilly | Town of Herndon |
| Commissioner Sally B. Ormsby | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Harry J. Parrish, II | <i>City of Manassas</i> |
| Commissioner Redella S. Pepper | <i>City of Alexandria</i> |
| Commissioner Alice Keane Putman | <i>County of Fairfax</i> |
| Commissioner Robert Rapanut | City of Alexandria |
| Commissioner Lilla D. Richards | County of Fairfax |
| Commissioner Kristen C. Umstatt, NVRC Vice Chairman | <i>Town of Leesburg</i> |
| Commissioner Don White | <i>County of Prince William</i> |
| Commissioner Edgar S. Wilbourn, III | <i>County of Prince William</i> |
| Commissioner William R. Wren | City of Manassas Park |
| Commissioner Scott K. York, NVRC Chairman | County of Loudoun |
| Vacancy: 1 (Falls Church) | |

STAFF PRESENT

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| G. Mark Gibb | <i>Executive Director</i> |
| Linda M. Tenney | <i>Deputy Director</i> |
| Linda Summerall | <i>Executive Secretary</i> |
| Kenneth Billingsley | <i>Director, Demographics</i> |
| David L. Bulova | <i>Director, Environmental Services</i> |
| Doug Pickford | <i>Director, Economic Issues and Heritage Resources</i> |
| Heather Shackley | <i>Executive Assistant</i> |
| Michelle Simmons | <i>Director, Human Services</i> |
| Tylee Smith | <i>Information and Referral Program Manager</i> |
| James Van Zee | <i>Director, Regional Planning Services</i> |

GUESTS PRESENT

Thomas Connally, M.D.
Sue Rowland

NVRC's representative to CareFirst conversion
SR Consulting, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER Chairman York called the meeting to order at 8:11 p.m. and requested a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent sniper attacks.

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.

MINUTES Commissioner Favola moved approval of the minutes of the September 26, 2002, meeting of the Commission. The motion was seconded and carried, with Commissioners Ormsby, Richards and Wren abstaining.

PRESENTATION *2-1-1 Information and Referral in Northern Virginia and the Washington Metropolitan Region*

Mr. Gibb noted that the speaker was unable to attend. However, Tylee Smith, NVRC's Information and Referral Program Manager, would make the presentation.

Ms. Smith reviewed the dedicated three-digit numbers assigned by the FCC: 411 for telephone directory assistance, 911 for police and medical emergencies, 711 for relay services for TTY machines, 311 for non-emergency government services, and now 211 for information and referral to community services and resources. The 211 number is being adopted throughout the U.S. and Canada. Currently, there are 29 211 call centers in 14 states.

Specialists staff 211, acting as the gateway to comprehensive public and private community resources. They can provide referrals directly to community services, and they can also link to other referral sources, such as voluntary action centers, child care centers, agencies on aging, etc. 211 is useful in service planning and in providing constituent services.

211 is a collaborative arrangement, with information-sharing arrangements negotiated among the initial answering point, the providers of database information, and specialized information and referral services.

Ms. Smith reported that shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the governor of Connecticut established a toll-free number for people to obtain assistance. That toll-free number was linked to the 211 number, which was also publicized. It was established that about 90 percent of the calls made during that time period were made to 211 rather than to the toll-free number. A large number of those calls were from donors wanting to know where to give blood, money, and food and clothing.

The United Way of the National Capital Area and the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems are committed to developing an exemplary 211 service for the metropolitan Washington area. The September 11 Survivors Fund has issued a Request for Proposals, with applications due November 18. The 211 coordinators for Maryland, Washington, and Virginia have begun meeting with the Northern Virginia Information and Referral Network, the D.C and Maryland Information Referral Services, and the Crisis Recovery Manager of the United Way NCA; this group is considering submitting a proposal to the September 11 Survivors Fund. The focus of the proposal would be two-fold: (1) marketing the I&R resources currently available and (2) begin determining the steps necessary for integrating the existing human services databases for public access through the Internet.

NVRC staff is working closely with the local jurisdictional staff, the Human Service Officials and the Chief Administrative Officers in Northern Virginia to keep people informed.

questions and answers

In reply to Commissioner Connolly's inquiry, Ms. Smith said there is no timeline for Virginia instituting 211; currently this is just initial planning. The FCC will review the 211 usage in 2005, and the national partners have a goal of having 50 percent of the U.S. population covered by 211 services by 2005.

In reply to Commissioner Ormsby's questions, Ms. Smith noted that Virginia has six Information and Referral areas. Technology would be used to overlay existing Northern Virginia, Maryland and D.C. services. There are currently no plans in place as to how this would be implemented. Responding to Commissioner Gross, Ms. Smith said there are some 211 areas under development that will cross state boundaries.

CONSENT AGENDA Commissioner Connolly moved approval of the consent agenda, consisting of the items below. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

- A. Financial Reports for September 2002
- B. Resolution No. P03-10: Authorization to Apply for, Accept, and Subcontract Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Year 11 (FY 2003) and Year 12 (FY 2004) Funds in Suburban Virginia
- C. Resolution No. P03-11: Authorization to Apply for, Accept, and Subcontract Title I 2003-2004 Funds for Services Under the Ryan White CARE Act of 1990, As Amended
- D. Resolution No. P03-12: Authorization to Apply for, Accept, and Subcontract Title II 2003-2004 Funds for Services Under the Ryan White CARE Act of 1990, As Amended

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT

- A. Mr. Gibb noted that the monthly activities report was included in the meeting package.
- B. *Report on VRE Land Use Study, Phase II*

James Van Zee, NVRC's Director of Regional Planning Services, explained that the baseline study was done ten years ago while the Phase II study began in 2000. Phase II looked at the change in land use activity and the cost of land around the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) stations in Virginia between 1992-2000. A national literature study was conducted as well as a review of local zoning codes and comprehensive plans.

Ridership on VRE doubled between 1992-2000 and currently stands at approximately 12,000 per day.

The study concluded that while people appear willing pay a small premium to be located near a VRE station, the amount of that premium is statistically insignificant. One probable reason is that the rail tracks are shared by freight trains; another reason is that VRE is a new system with a relatively small ridership.

Commissioner Hanley asked if properties around the catchment area appreciated more than other areas. Mr. Van Zee replied that one mile inside versus one mile outside the catchment area was analyzed. For the majority of the stations, the increase in land value was negligible.

Noting that dense development was not featured, Commissioner Eisenberg asked what is the most intensely developed/planned area; Mr. Van Zee replied he thought it was Lorton. Commissioner Bulova added that a rail line already ran through the existing stable areas. It was pointed out, also, that the economy had slumped between 1992 and 1996, dampening new and re-development.

C. *Update on CareFirst Health Insurance Conversion to For-profit Status*

Thomas Connally, M.D. reported that at the beginning of 2002, CareFirst, the largest non-profit health insurer in the metropolitan Washington region, and WellPoint, a California-based for-profit health insurer, petitioned for a conversion to for-profit status. WellPoint offered \$1.3 billion, a price that some analysts believe is too low. Part of the purchase price would be distributed to the communities covered by CareFirst. One point to consider is how to ensure that Virginia gets its fair share if the sale is approved. Congressional assistance may be needed.

In the early 1990s, Blue Cross Blue Shield of the National Capital Area was poorly managed and had financial problems. The D.C. Blue Cross joined with the Maryland Blue Cross to form CareFirst; Delaware joined later. Approximately 200,000 residents in Northern Virginia are covered under CareFirst.

In studying this possible conversion, the legal premise is, is this in the public interest? Dr. Connally believes it highly unlikely that the conversion can be proven to be in the public interest. He noted that CareFirst's administrative fee is approximately twelve percent, whereas WellPoint's is 25 percent, meaning that only 75 percent of the insurance premium is being spent on health care under WellPoint versus 88 percent under CareFirst. He added that CareFirst has ample reserves, nearly \$600 million.

The California Medical Society is suing several health care insurers, including WellPoint, citing RICOH statutes.

If the conversion takes place, interested parties will need to determine the mechanism for distributing the profits. Will one foundation be established for the metropolitan Washington area or will each area have its own foundation? If it is one foundation, how will it be governed and how will Northern Virginia receive its portion of funds? Finally, if Northern Virginia receives its monetary share, it is important that the money stay in Northern Virginia to be used for health care and not be absorbed by the state.

In reply to Commissioner Favola's inquiry as to whether the D.C. Insurance Commission can require a restructuring of CareFirst and/or require consumer protections, Dr. Connally said he thinks the insurance commissioner can stop the merger, and there is a movement to put pressure on the D.C. Council to change the regulations. Dr. Connally said he would keep the Commission informed of developments.

D. *Report on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Project*

Doug Pickford, NVRC's Director of Economic Issues and Heritage Resources, distributed a copy of the three reports specific to Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties. Detailed presentations have been made to these jurisdictions. Information will soon be posted on NVRC's website, www.novaregion.org.

The project in each of the jurisdictions shared the same three objectives:

- 1) identify an agreed-upon alignment for the trail and look at alternative alignments;
- 2) develop detailed cost estimates for trail segments; and
- 3) develop short-term, intermediate, and long-term priorities for implementation.

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is one of 21 federally-designated trails in the U.S. It is the only scenic trail containing a heritage designation.

By definition, the trail route in Northern Virginia attempts to take advantage of the many heritage resources while initiating an aesthetically pleasing user experience. The concept for the trail is evolving into what is being referred to as a "braided" trail, which will encompass multiple routes in an effort to accommodate hiking, biking and equestrian uses throughout the entire trail corridor

The total cost estimate of \$20.3 million is a high-end estimate. Mr. Pickford believes volunteers and developers will donate services that will lower costs. Secondly, the type of trail may change over time. The \$229,000 per mile figure is very consistent with what many localities are spending on TEA-21 projects. Approximately 68 percent of the corridor is on the ground, already in the public domain, or under easement. Of the remaining 32 percent of privately owned land, 75 percent is northwest of Leesburg. In reply to Commissioner Hanley's inquiry, Mr. Pickford said the cost of land acquisition is not included in the trail's cost per mile.

The trail will consist of portions of paved asphalt, natural surface, and "other" surfaces, primarily stone beds. Potentially, the trail will link with 28 public parks, such as Great Falls, the George Washington Parkway, numerous regional park authority properties, Mason Neck, and heritage sites such as Arlington Cemetery, Old Town Alexandria, Mount Vernon, Woodlawn. Educational opportunities include Native American heritage, African American heritage, the founding of the country, the Civil War.

Mr. Pickford added that the trail in its entirety runs approximately 650 miles; portions are located in Maryland and south of Northern Virginia.

Commissioner Richards requested that the trail alignment in Fairfax County be rechecked.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman York reported that 15 responses to the survey were received. The one consistent comment was that the respondents want a retreat. Chairman York will work with Commissioners Umstadd and Favola on a workshop to be held in January or February to discuss priorities and the direction of the Commission.

Chairman York reported he would like to hold a conference on affordable housing next year. Commissioner Connolly suggested that smart growth and its impact on affordable housing be examined. Commissioner Gross reported that MWCOC is holding a housing conference next month, and cautioned that NVRC should not duplicate that information. Commissioner Eisenberg stated the value of reviewing ordinances specific to Northern Virginia.

Chairman York announced he has appointed Commissioner Boudreau to chair the Economic Issues Committee.

Chairman York reminded the members that the Commission's November and December meetings are combined, and the next meeting is scheduled for December 12. A notice will be sent next month regarding the time that meeting will start, since the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority is also scheduled to meet that night.

NVRC'S FY 2003 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Commissioner Connolly, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, referred members to the draft legislative platform that staff had distributed. He called their attention to the two priority positions, as well as the Virginia Municipal League's (VML) position on Tax Restructuring and Education Funding, which staff distributed.

Commissioner Connolly explained that the position on Transportation will be written after the election. It was agreed to delete reference to the governor's transportation accountability committee.

Commissioner Wren requested that NVRC take the position of requiring utilities that collect taxes to identify on the invoice what jurisdiction the tax is for. Commissioner Connolly agreed that if Commissioner Wren provides the language it will be incorporated into the final draft platform for the Commission's December 12 meeting.

Commissioner Connolly reported that the McDonnell/Hanger Joint Subcommittee to Study and Revise Virginia's State Tax Code is looking at tax restructuring. It is contemplating abolishing local ability to set telecommunications taxes. Additionally, businesses are objecting to BPOL, and the joint subcommittee is looking at abolishing this tax as well.

Chairman York inquired into NVRC's legislative strategy for the upcoming session. Commissioner Connolly replied that by adopting the two priority positions, or adopting VML's position, NVRC will be in sync with the other statewide organizations, which will be an effective strategy in Richmond.

Commissioner Hanley pointed out that cable and Direct TV are covered under telecommunications, so localities' cable franchise fees could be impacted. However, the various sectors of the telecommunications industry are in disagreement.

ADJOURNMENT There being no further business, Chairman York adjourned the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved by:

G. Mark Gibb
Executive Director

Scott K. York
Chairman