



## **Dulles Direct Newsletter**

**January 2013**

Welcome to the January edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. I hope your New Year is starting off well. While it has been a busy month for me, the next three months will be even busier with consideration of our FY2014 budget.

Speaking of that, I know that a lot of you have questions and opinions about the budget. I will be having my first quarter Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting on February 19 at 7 pm at Freedom High School. I will provide you with updates on how I'm looking at this year's budget and answer any and all questions.

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

#### **New Board Assignments**

The Board of Supervisors must pass a new Organizing Resolution every year which sets up our meeting schedule, elects a vice-chairman and selects committee assignments. This year, we've changed our schedule. The Board of Supervisors business meetings will shift to the first and third Wednesday of the month, beginning at 4pm. Public comment will still be available during those meetings. Additionally, the Board's monthly Public Hearing will also shift to the second Wednesday at 6pm. All meetings are broadcast on TV and webcast online at [www.loudoun.gov](http://www.loudoun.gov). The new schedule allows citizens a better chance to be present for our biggest decisions, as they will no longer be occurring during morning hours.

I am pleased to report that I will continue to serve as Chairman of the Board's Economic Development Committee in 2013. There is a change in my other assignment. I am now a member of the Board's Finance and Government Operations Committee rather than the Transportation/Land Use Committee. Rest assured that I will still be just as active on transportation issues, but the Finance Committee affords me an opportunity to work more closely on oversight of the core functions of government and our fiscal health.

Finally, in December I was elected corporate Vice-President of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (COG), the regional organization representing the 22 local jurisdictions of the Washington area. I continue to serve as a member of the COG Board of Directors as well. Given the fact that so many of our residents currently leave the County to work, we have an obvious stake in regional issues and it will be helpful for Loudoun to have a bigger seat at the table at COG.

### **Dulles South Elementary School (ES-21) Update**

ES-21 was accelerated by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board and will be opening for the 2014 school year adjacent to Lunsford Middle School. I had serious concerns with the initial site plan filed by LCPS, which put the entrance to the school directly on Braddock Road and called for a traffic light at First Frost Way. As you know, Braddock is severely congested during rush hour, and I was concerned about school traffic backing up on the road. In addition, after many discussions with VDOT, I became concerned that they would not actually approve the signal at First Frost because the intersection may not generate enough traffic to meet the warrant study.

I proposed an alternate entrance to be located on Bull Run Post Office Road. This entrance would alleviate the traffic concerns and the Bull Run Post Office Road intersection is more likely to meet warrant given the higher volume coming from Donovan Drive. I received support for my position from Chairman York and other members of the Board of Supervisors. During the legislative referral process, Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services issued an independent finding that the Braddock Road entrance should be changed.

I'm pleased to report that the School Board has revisited the site plan, and LCPS has now filed a new plan which includes the entrance I proposed on Bull Run Post Office Road. This new site plan is working its way through the legislative review process, and I expect to come before the Planning Commission in March and the Board of Supervisors in April. While the timeframe is very tight, I'm optimistic that it will be met. Given the experience with Buffalo Trail Elementary School and traffic on Gum Spring Road, it was important for me to make sure that we did this project correctly in a way that will avoid costly changes after construction.

### **Ball Field Lighting at Byrnes Ridge Park**

Thank you to those of you who attended the information session in December regarding the lighting of three fields at Byrnes Ridge Park in Stone Ridge. I understand the concerns of some residents who live in close proximity to the fields. The Planning Commission conducted a thorough review of this project and I think they came up with reasonable conditions of approval that will help mitigate the impact of the lights, as evidenced by the letter of support I received from the Stone Ridge HOA for this application. I want to thank my Dulles District Planning Commissioner, Jeff Salmon, in particular for his work.

As you know, I have been a strong advocate for field improvements. The Dulles District currently does not have a single lighted field available for Parks and Recreation use. Adding

lights allows more teams to practice and helps provide more field time for recreation and competitive leagues.

The Board will hold a public hearing on this issue on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 6pm at the Government Center in Leesburg. If you would like to sign up to speak, please call 703-777-0200 until noon the day of the meeting, or you may sign up when you arrive at the meeting in person. The Board will only be reviewing lighting at Byrnes Ridge.

Separately, the application to light nine fields at the new Brambleton Park will be considered at the Planning Commission Public Hearing on February 19, 2013 and pending that outcome will come to the Board of Supervisors for Public Hearing.

### **FY14 Fiscal Guidance**

At the January 16 business meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted to instruct the County Administrator to propose a budget with an equalized tax rate, meaning no tax increase on the average property owner. The current tax rate is \$1.235 for every \$100 of assessed value. An equalized rate would be approximately \$1.23. This is not the final rate, as the Board will spend two months reviewing the proposed budget after it is presented by the County Administrator on February 6.

This final fiscal guidance is an improvement over the preliminary fiscal guidance which would have reduced the LCPS budget specifically by three cents on the tax rate. I did not support that direction and am happy to see the Board moving toward a more balanced funding approach. I will say, however, that this is shaping up to be an extremely difficult budget year. There are some early signs that tax revenue is weakening slightly, and there is no question that the fiscal issues in Washington could have a major impact on Loudoun. In addition, it appears that Loudoun will suddenly be losing state and federal grants worth millions of dollars for our regional VRT bus service, which we will need to address.

The School Board has recently passed its budget request, which is \$859.7 million, an increase of \$36.7 million from last year. There is still an anticipated shortfall, which staff is still piecing together based on several factors including final revenue numbers.

I also anticipate a higher budget request for the Sheriff's Office, which I will carefully consider. But I also am mindful of the impact that higher taxes could have on residents in these uncertain times, especially given the large number of federal contractors living in my district who may see reductions in pay over the coming year. As I said, it will be a difficult year.

Here's an idea of the timeline moving toward adopting the FY14 budget:

February 6	4:30pm	County Administrator presents proposed FY14 budget
February 27	3:00pm	Public Hearing on FY14 budget
	6:00pm	Public Hearing on FY 14 budget

February 28	6:00pm	Public Hearing on FY14 budget (if necessary)
March 2	9:00am	Public Hearing on FY14 budget at LCPS Administration Bldg.
March	(throughout)	Board work sessions on budget
April 3	4:00pm	Board adopts FY14 budget

All of these sessions will be held at the Loudoun County government center in Leesburg with the exception of the March 2 public hearing, which will be held at the LCPS Administration building. If you wish to speak at one of the public hearings, you may do so by calling 703-777-0200 for advance sign ups (until noon the day of the meeting) or by signing up in person at the meeting. I recommend calling ahead to schedule your speaking slot, as many members of the public often turn out to speak.

Finally, you can always give me your comments on the budget (or anything else) via email at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov) and share them with the entire Board at [bos@loudoun.gov](mailto:bos@loudoun.gov).

### **Board Approves Business Friendly Changes to Zoning Ordinance**

As part of the Board’s goal of making Loudoun more inviting for businesses, we are undertaking a major review of the Revised 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance for the purposes of adopting a package of Commercial and Industrial Zoning Ordinance Amendments (ZOAM-2012-0002). Throughout 2012, the Board and staff worked with stakeholders to identify, review, and prioritize a list of issues and concerns in the zoning ordinance to make Loudoun more advantageous for commercial and industrial businesses wanting to relocate or start-up in Loudoun.

At the January 16 business meeting, the Board adopted the first of three packages of the ZOAM. The “Package 1” amendments to the zoning ordinance include fixing a discrepancy in vehicular access to certain parcels in the Commercial Light Industrial (CLI) zoning district—a district that is unique in that it only exists in the Dulles South area. The Board also approved adding facilities for lessons in dance, gymnastics, judo, and sports training in the CLI district as permitted uses.

Some other items of note also approved in the first package include: adding motorcycle sales to be included under motor vehicle sales; car wash, convenience food store, and auto service station to be permitted uses in Planned Development Office Park (PD-OP). Also, contractors in the Planned Development Industrial Park (PD-IP) district are now permitted outdoor storage for up to 20% of their lot area, as well as allowing animal hospitals as a permitted use (rather than Special Exception, SPEX).

There are many other changes that have been proposed in Package 2 and Package 3, and several of them could have significant impacts on Dulles South. I will provide further updates.

### **DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES**

## **StoneSpring Emergency Center Breaks Ground**

The StoneSpring Emergency Center at the corner of Gum Spring Road and Route 50 has broken ground and is slated to open this fall. StoneSpring will have 12 private rooms, a full-service laboratory, a CT scanner and other important technologies. It will operate as a department of Reston Hospital Center and similar to a hospital ER, it will operate 24 hours a day. The center will be built on the same 50-acre property where HCA Virginia's StoneSpring Medical Campus will open in December 2015. According to John Deardorff, president and CEO of HCA Virginia Health System's Reston Hospital Center, "StoneSpring Emergency Center will provide vital medical services to residents along the Route 50 corridor. We're delighted to be one step closer to making this facility a reality for Loudoun County." I am glad to see progress in bringing increased medical services to the Dulles South area. This is the first step toward seeing the full StoneSpring hospital. I have regularly been in touch with HCA and they continue to assure me that it will be open by the end of 2015.

## **Cable and Internet Coming to Cedar Crest Neighborhood**

Early in my 2011 campaign, the Cedar Crest community—a neighborhood of 163 homes located on the southern end of Gum Spring Road-- alerted me to their lack of cable television and broadband access. It is hard to believe such services were not available to this neighborhood in this day and age. However, the infrastructure was not in place and companies were reluctant to build it.

Over the past year, Delegate David Ramadan and I have met with representatives from Verizon and Comcast about providing service to Cedar Crest. Verizon let us know that they were moving toward a wireless service model and believed Cedar Crest would be better served by that technology. They had no plans to expand broadband and cable in the area. While discussions with Verizon were unsuccessful, I am happy to announce that Comcast has agreed to provide service to every home in Cedar Crest by the end of 2013. In discussions with Comcast, I worked on the county level with the Information Technology Department to have Comcast executives for a site visit to Cedar Crest and other communities in the vicinity, making the business case for the advantages of serving more of the Dulles South area. Delegate Ramadan also worked with members of the General Assembly and Comcast executives in Richmond to make it known that Cedar Crest was one of his highest priorities. Together, we engaged Comcast officials at various levels with letters, phone calls, and meetings.

After much time and effort, we are pleased that Comcast will be expanding services throughout the Dulles South area. I plan on setting up a community meeting with Comcast representatives in the coming months as more information about costs and services becomes available.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting**

As I mentioned, the next Dulles Direct Town Hall Meeting will be held Tuesday, February 19 at 7:00pm at Freedom High School, 25450 Riding Center Drive, South Riding, VA. .

## **Personal Property Taxes E-File option**

Loudoun County Commissioner of the Revenue Robert S. Wertz Jr. has mailed notification of 2013 personal property filing requirements to all personal property owners currently on the county's tax rolls. Instead of completing and mailing a form, residents should report changes online at [www.loudoun.gov/vehicle-file](http://www.loudoun.gov/vehicle-file). The online process replaces the need to complete and return by mail a form for each automobile, truck, motorcycle, camper, trailer, boat, motorhome, aircraft, or mobile home that taxpayers own.

Residents can report corrections, an address change, the sale or disposal of a vehicle, or unusually high mileage since these may affect the property's valuation or number of months to be taxed. The Commissioner asks that all changes be submitted by February 1, 2013, to assist in establishing accurate assessments for the 2013 tax year.

To avoid late filing penalties, newly acquired vehicles or those recently entering Loudoun County must be reported to the Commissioner of the Revenue within 60 days of a purchase or a move to Loudoun County. For information or filing assistance, please visit [www.loudoun.gov/cor](http://www.loudoun.gov/cor) or contact the Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue at [ppdcor@loudoun.gov](mailto:ppdcor@loudoun.gov) or 703-777-0260.

## **Commission on Aging Vacancy**

The Loudoun County Commission on Aging has a vacancy for a member from the Dulles District. This commission is made up of members appointed from each of the eight magisterial districts and one at-large member. The Commission provides oversight and awareness of senior living related issues in the County. The Commission has also served as an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors, providing insight on topics such as property tax relief, location of senior centers, and many other issues. Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month. If you would like to be considered for this appointment, please send a letter or email of interest to me at [matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov](mailto:matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov) or at 1 Harrison Street, SE, Mailstop #01, Leesburg, VA 20177.

## **Gum Spring Library Grand Opening**

The Gum Spring Library grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00am. This will be a great asset to our community on many levels—from access to books and internet to meeting rooms and story hours. I encourage you to join me at the grand opening for your first look at our new library. See you there!

## **Celebrate South Riding Registration Open**

Registration is now open for sponsors of Celebrate South Riding event being held on May 31 and June 1, 2013. The event is filled with rides, music, entertainment, food, drinks, fireworks, and provides exposure to over the over 25,000 South Riding residents. Details and registration information is available [here](#).

## **Business Expo and Community Wide Yard Sale**

The South Riding Business Expo will take place Saturday morning, May 4, 2013, along with the community wide yard sale. There will be over 95 business booths and 200 yard sale booths with over 3,000 people in attendance. I plan on attending and will have a booth at the Expo to hear your concerns and questions regarding issues in the Dulles district. You can reserve your booth and get more information by clicking [here](#).

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