



December 7, 2007

Arlington County Board
Arlington County, Virginia
#1 Courthouse Plaza, Suite 300
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Honorable Paul Ferguson, Chairman

Subject: Resolution on Imposition of a New Tax for Stormwater Management

Dear Paul:

At the Federation's meeting of Tuesday, December 4, 2007, the Civic Federation's membership approved the attached resolution calling on the County Board to find other ways to fund proposed Stormwater improvements other than the imposition of a new real property tax. Given the short timeframe for consideration by the County Board, the membership took the unusual step of unanimously suspending the rules to allow immediate consideration of the resolution. The resolution passed by a vote of 36-3.

At the meeting, considerable concern was expressed as to the timing and method the Board used to advertise the proposed new tax. Members of our Revenues and Expenditures Committee were also frustrated in their ability to get minutes of the Board meeting, or any explanation of the proposed \$57 million expenditure. We trust this information will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

In short, our members believe that not every need requires the imposition of new or increased taxes. We urge you and the Board to carefully consider alternatives to this new tax.

As always, we appreciate the Board's consideration of our views, resolutions and positions. Please feel free to contact me via telephone at: 703-525-8921, or via email at: larrymayer@civfed.org.

Sincerely,

Larry Mayer

Lawrence R. Mayer

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President, Arlington County Civic Federation
3108 4th Street North
Arlington, VA 22201-1614

Attachments: Resolution on Imposition of a New Tax for Stormwater Management
(Passed December 4, 2007)

CC: Ron Carlee, County Manager
Burt Bostwick, Chair – Revenue and Expenditures Committee

**Resolution on Imposition of a New Tax for Stormwater Management
(Passed December 4, 2007)**

Whereas:

1. At its next meeting on December 15, 2007 (or at the recess session on December 18, 2007), the Arlington County Board has scheduled a hearing on the imposition of a new tax for stormwater management; and
2. The Board voted to advertise this hearing at its 11/27/07 recess session, without any prior public notice, which allows only 18 days for public consideration; and
3. This new tax is at a proposed rate of \$.014 per \$100 of assessed real property value, and hence is the equivalent of a 1.4 cent increase in real estate taxes (raising the current calendar year rate of 81.8 cents to 83.2 cents, resulting in a 1.7% increase in real estate taxes); and
4. This new tax will provide approximately \$8 million dollars in new revenue to the County, and will be dedicated to the upgrade and expansion of the County's stormwater drainage and sewer infrastructure; and
5. Heretofore, funding for such stormwater costs has been provided for from the County's General Fund, and has never had a separate, dedicated revenue source for support; and
6. At its recessed meeting on November 27, 2007, the County Board voted on the close-out of the County's FY 2007 finances, which showed a surplus of over \$40 million - of which \$2.9 million was allocated to unnamed capital projects and \$9.6 million was not allocated to any specific use in FY 2008; and
7. There is no emergency or pressing need to adopt this new tax at this time; and
8. The Arlington County Civic Federation, in its report on the FY 2008 Arlington budget, supported the County Manager's initiative for additional spending for stormwater management (most of which was not funded by the County Board), but "strongly oppose(d) funding through a special taxing district or separate, new utility" for stormwater management (pg. 10 of the report);

Therefore, be it resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation:

- Supports increased County spending on our stormwater system; and
- Urges the County Board to utilize either some of the available surplus described above and/or other already existing general fund revenues to fund such spending through the normal budget processes, so that core services receive the highest spending priority; and
- Opposes the imposition of the new 1.4 cent tax as unnecessary, given the funds already available, and urges the County Board to vote against such imposition.