

Arlington County Civic Federation

The civic voice of Arlington for 82 years

Newsletter

February, 1999

Volume 83, No. 6

February Meeting:

Schools Budget Preview Plus Parks Issues and Update

7:30 pm, Tuesday, February 2nd
John T. Hazel Conference Center
Arlington Hospital
1701 N. George Mason Drive

Our February program will begin with a Schools Committee summary of the recently-released Arlington County Schools Budget for next year. This will be a good time to hear neighborhood views on the size of the Schools budget, the level of teachers' salaries and the results of the state Standards of Learning testing.

The Parks Committee will follow with a run-down on current park issues and the conclusions of its County-wide park maintenance survey. Your neighborhood park may be included!

We will begin at 7:30 and end by 9:30. To facilitate that schedule, we ask that you please contact President Randy Swart if you have new business to raise.

Joining in the Federation's Budget Work is Rewarding

This is the month when the Federation's two committees concerned with the County's budget get revved up into high gear. The Revenues and Expenditures Committee will be meeting every Sunday in February to develop the budget recommendations it will present at the Federation's March meeting. Members will be attending other meetings as well, making phone calls and submitting written questions to the County Staff to gather the information needed for a thorough analysis. Members of the Schools Committee will also be meeting and working during the month to prepare its analysis of the School Board's budget proposal to be plugged in to the R&E Committee budget.

The most difficult challenge to all members of the two committees is to develop a broad Arlington consensus on the budget from a neighborhood point of view, representing their civic associations rather than narrower personal views.

(Continued on page 2)

Budget (continued from page 1)

When the two committees have finished their work, the result will be a balanced budget, with our taxes rising or falling (unlikely!) to meet the gap. In light of the complexity of the task, and the difficulty of making a budget balance during action on the ACCF floor, the we have adopted in recent years a rule requiring a vote on the total budget package presented by the R&E Committee as a first step. If this vote is positive, no amendments are made from the floor. If the vote is negative, amendments would then be considered. That rule will be offered again for approval by the delegates this year, and we anticipate that it will be adopted again.

The point of this article is to make it clear that anyone who has strong feelings about particular aspects of the budget should participate in the meetings of one or both of the two Federation committees. You can join the hard-working members of R&E or Schools and help make sure that our budget recommendations this year again reflect a broad-based Arlington consensus. For the R&E Committee, please call or fax Chair Bob Atkins at 527-8859. You can contact either of the two Co-Chairs of the Schools Committee: Roger Meyer (671-3655 rdmeyer@aol.com) or Terri Prell (820-3782 prellth@webtv.net). We think you will find that detailed examination of the Arlington County Budget is an eye-opener. It requires a lot of work to understand the programs and Departments. The cuts don't leap out at you as easily as you might think, and you probably know of something already that you believe the County could improve with more funding. Get your association's oar in now!

Federation Adopts Radio Antenna Resolution

At our January meeting the Federation adopted a resolution on amateur radio antenna restrictions. The County has taken up this subject following a change in State law that makes it necessary to permit the towers up to 75 feet. Amateurs had asked for higher towers on a case-by-case basis. The Federation resolution calls for a 75 foot height limit, screening for the lower ten feet, no towers in front yards, no towers above 35 feet in side yards, regular inspections to ensure compliance with building codes and no lighting unless required for safety reasons. The resolution has been forwarded to the County Board, and ACCF Land Use and Zoning Chair Bill Gearhart presented it to the Planning Commission on January 25th. The Planning Commission has deferred action.

Chesapeake Bay Regulations Under Study by Task Force

Following a controversy over a developer's undergrounding of Rock Spring Creek, the County has appointed a task force to reconsider our regulations implementing the State's Chesapeake Bay Ordinance. One issue is the possibility of identifying Arlington's unmanned neighborhood streams to make it possible to protect them from infill development. The Task Force is headed by environmentalist Joy Hecht, and includes citizens and representatives of various organizations. The ACCF is ably represented by Patrick Smaldore, Chair of our Environmental Affairs Committee. Patrick would be pleased to hear your association's views .

Welcome to the Virginia General Assembly

by delegate Karen Darner
(prior to the opening of the current session)

The toll-free number while the General Assembly is in session is 1-800 889-0229. This is a number to register your position on an issue. The operator will relay your comment to your delegate or senator, but you cannot speak directly to the legislator this way.

All of the phone numbers changed in 1998, so if you know your delegate district number, then you dial 1 804 698-10_; senator numbers begin 698-75___. (James Almand 698-1047, Robert Brink 698-1048, Karen Darner 698-1049, Janet Howell 698-7532, Patsy Ticer 689-7530, Mary Margaret Whipple 698-7531).

The budget has been presented by Governor Gilmore. During this session, amendments will be offered and debated, and the budget will be adopted by the time we adjourn on February 27. New laws and the budget take effect on July 1, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

Numerous subcommittees reviewed carryover bills prior to Dec. 20 to revise (or kill) them prior to the Jan. 13 session. During the session, committees meet on a specified schedule, and a bill can be passed, tabled, or killed (otherwise known as Passed By Indefinitely). Once a bill passes the House or Senate, it must go through the same process in the other house. The final action is the approval by the Governor.

Issues coming before the legislature in 1999, in addition to the budget revisions, might be:

- privacy on the Internet.
- discussion of "Living Will/Advanced Directives" and family members honoring them.
- funding for school construction & other education concerns throughout the Commonwealth.
- gradual repeal of sales tax on food.
- ensuring access to technology.
- funding & programs for institutions of higher education.
- update on charter schools beginning in Virginia.
- public process of VDOT decisions.
- childcare programs & access throughout Virginia.
- review of SOLs, SOA, & school safety (ESOL concerns)
- tobacco settlement.
- access to guns, gun safety

Coming Up!

**March 2nd ACCF Meeting:
Budget**

**ACCF Banquet: April 23
Please mark your calendar!**

Arlington County Civic Federation
c/o Swart
4611 Seventh Street South
Arlington, VA 22204-1419

D AAUW

FRANCES FINTA

D MYWD

FRANCES FINTA

3317 23RD ST N

ARLINGTON VA 22201-4310

USA H
First-Class Rate

Committee Chairs

Bylaws

Jean Mostrum, Chair 532-0452
Scott McGear, Vice Chair 968-7352

Community Relations

David Foster 276-0206 dfoster@fulbright.com

Cultural Affairs

Herschel Kanter 536-6286 hkanter@juno.com

Environmental Affairs

Patrick Smaldore 528-3935

Housing

Reid Goldstein 271-0431 rgoldstein@stratsight.com

Legislation

Nancy Graham 243-4650 nagraham@msn.com

Membership

Frances Finta 528-2882

Parks & Recreation

Robert Nester 524-5418 105330.3672@compuserve.com

Planning & Zoning

William Gearhart 522-2276

Public Services (Co-Chairs)

Rebecca Gray 549-3277 gray-jones@erols.com
Stan Schachne 522-1358 schachne@aol.com

Revenues and Expenditures

Robert Atkins 527-8859

Schools (Co-Chairs)

Roger Meyer 671-3655 rdmeier@aol.com
Terri Prell 820-3782 prellth@webtv.net

Special Events

Ann Rudd 536-8270

Transportation

Vacant (Randy Swart acting)

ACCF Officers

President Randy Swart 521-2080 randy@bscl.org
Vice Pres. Jim Pebley 525-0766 (email below)
Treasurer Frances Finta 528-2882
Secretary Tim Wise 243-8345 timwise@dgsys.com

Executive Committee

Chairman Jim Pebley jimpebley@worldnet.att.net
Vice Chair Rebecca Gray gray-jones@erols.com
Member Robert Atkins 527-8859
Member Darnell Carpenter 243-5188
Member Robert Rackmales rackmary@erols.com
Member Ann Rudd 536-8270

Newsletter Editorial Committee

Editor: Randy Swart 521-2080
Committee: Jim Pebley, Ann Rudd
News email: civicfed@bscl.org
Fax: 486-0576