

e. Guest Speakers

(1) Congressman Gerry Connolly, United States House of Representatives:

(a) He lauded Tawny for her leadership and service and presented her with a framed copy of the Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 112th Congress, First Session, which praises her for her contributions to our community over her ten-year tenure as SCA President.

(b) **Counter-terrorism and aid to Pakistan.** Having spent the day with wounded warriors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he was inspired by their bravery, dedication and spirit, and left there with great pride in our military. Their injuries show that although the war in Iraq is winding down, Afghanistan is still very dangerous. He said the death of Osama bin Laden makes a difference, making it harder for al-Qaeda by sending the message that, when attacked, America won't stop until justice is exacted. Learning that bin Laden lived in Pakistan for years as we searched for him, he has questions before we renew further aid to Pakistan. There's work to be done on weighing the risks and benefits of that relationship.

(c) **The federal budget and debt.** The budget reflects values, so that's what the budget debates will be about. For example, do we dismantle Medicare or make it more efficient? Do we invest in education programs like Head Start, invest in infrastructure like roads and transit, or do competing needs have greater value and take priority? He doesn't want programs killed that protect people. We've hit our national debt ceiling and the vote on whether to raise that ceiling is not a vote on the merits of debt; it's a vote on whether we will meet our obligations. Defaulting on those will have serious consequences.

(d) **Mark Center.** He's consistently opposed the BRAC relocation to Mark Center, both while on the Board of Supervisors and in Congress. I-395 traffic is already bumper-to-bumper and the building isn't even open yet. Currently, the rules require traffic to double before federal help is available, but he got legislation in the Defense Authorization Act coming before Congress to change that, and with Congressman Moran, he got \$150M for county transportation needs for the BRAC expansion of Ft. Belvoir.

(2) State Senator Barker:

(a) **Budget.** In the past two years when revenues were down, the state managed to balance the budget without increasing taxes and with minimal cuts to public education and safety. This year, they actually increased funding for public education and safety, making positive steps to restore prior cuts.

(b) **Legislation.** He got 20 bills passed this year, including:

(1) **Economic development bills** to foster job creation in NoVA. We lost good paying jobs at companies like Facebook and Google because we couldn't offer them the same incentives as MD and NC. He got legislation passed so VA will be better able to compete for these kinds of jobs.

(2) **Protective orders** against family members or others sharing the same household. If you weren't in this type of relationship, it was nearly impossible for you to get a protective order against an abuser. Working with the Crime Commission, he got legislation passed to extend access to protective orders to include dating partners.

(3) **Amendments to the VA Constitution.** Two amendments he proposed were passed and approved by voters last November: increasing the Rainy Day Fund from 10% to 15% of the yearly tax revenue, and granting counties and cities flexibility to give property tax relief to disabled and elderly citizens. Now he'll work to make sure these amendments are put into practice.

(4) **Immigration.** As the lone immigration bill passed by the General Assembly, his bill requires companies with State contracts to participate in the E-Verify Program to ensure that their workers are here legally.

(c) **Redistricting.** Next year, SCA's members will no longer be in his district but he'll be happy to continue to assist us any way he can.

(3) State Delegate Watts:

(a) **Redistricting.** Unlike Senator Barker, she will continue to represent us.

(b) **Budget.** After not voting for the House budget because the amount per child for education went down, in Conference, funds were put back so education came out just a bit ahead.

(c) **Education.** Kids can do great in K-12 only to find they can't get into VA colleges. She's working on a long process to add 100,000 slots over the next 15 years. This year's budget includes \$70 million for 350 more slots.

(d) **Wounded Warrior Program.** Five positions were added, most to help the intellectually disabled because of their critical need for mental health services. 40% of those who've served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan have mental health issues leading to domestic violence, depression, etc.

(e) **Veterans Service Officers.** Seven more positions were funded. She's trying to get one for Alexandria to help these veterans and their families.

(f) **Human trafficking bill.** Her bill to make penalties for human trafficking very strong passed. She now needs to ensure enforcement.

(g) **Transportation bill.** She voted against it due to the \$4B in borrowing it proposed, including \$1.8B in 25 year bonds, when here's no revenue to pay back those bonds.

(4) Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova:

(a) Thanked Tawny for her outstanding service in the civic association level of government, the level closest to the people, saying her own experience, as President of a civic association is what led her to run for the Board of Supervisors.

(b) Adoption of the 2012 Budget. The average homeowner's tax bill is less in FY 2012 than three years ago when this Board took office. Property values are down, car sales are down, so tax revenue is down, but the Board worked hard to maintain the quality of the county's services and education system by covering annual projected budget shortfalls through efficiencies. This year, we're actually seeing an up tick in commercial values and, for the first time in three years, an increase in residential values. However, real estate taxes should remain steady because the real estate tax rate has been reduced. The County School Board will adopt their budget by the end of this month.

(c) Redistricting. Only seven precincts in the county were moved.

(d) Mark Center. The Board of Supervisors opposed this site choice since there were other sites that could have been served by mass transit and a more adequate transportation network. She's asked the Board staff to explore legal and legislative remedies available to delay the Sep. 15th occupancy date in order to address means of improving the transportation impact.

(5) Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay:

(a) Expressed his thanks to Tawny, saying she's a legend in the county, saying that other civic associations are not like ours. He's bringing her before the Board of Supervisors on May 24th to be officially commended for her leadership and service.

(b) Budget. He's grateful for our county workforce. The Board managed not to cut them in the budget, but without increases, all workers – the Sheriff, Police, Fire and Code Enforcement Departments – are all carrying heavier workloads.

(c) Local economy. He's pleased to see the businesses coming in, e.g., Hilton, Northrop Grumman, and others.

(d) Redistricting. He's proud he'll still be Supervisor of Lee District, which will gain about 2000 Woodlawn folks.

(e) Pallone Chevrolet site. You'll see cranes there working on a Class A office development, several big buildings that will house good jobs, spurred by the relocation of the Geo-spatial Intelligence Agency to the Engineer Proving Grounds. It's a great revitalization of the gateway to Springfield at I-95 and Backlick Road and another sign of things turning around in our community.

(f) Downtown blight eradication. He met with the owners of the Old Keene Mill Road blighted buildings and asked what it would take to get them to tear them down. They were never asked that before, and now all those buildings are down except for Long John Silver, which will come down in the next couple of months.

(g) Springfield Mall redevelopment. It was rezoned and replanned two years ago in record time. All regulatory reviews are finished. Their market analysis for this redevelopment is a no-brainer home run: they have metro next door, the potential is greater than at Fair Oaks, and the crime rate is actually lower than at Tyson's or Fair Oaks. But those malls communicate with their communities, giving explanations when crimes occur whereas Vornado doesn't respond at all. Perhaps that's because Vornado is a huge corporation with a bureaucracy corresponding to its size that moves slowly, and it's owned both the land and properties for only a bit over four months now. He's hopeful we'll see on-site work begin soon. Meanwhile, the manager of the property has been very community-oriented. The Mall is a Springfield Days investor and host of the weekend's FamilyFest.

(g) Springfield Gardens Apartments. The Board of Supervisors has approved the plan to tear them down and rebuild to higher density. Next is the rezoning process.

(h) Construction of Chick-fil-A next to Outback has been approved. He hopes construction will start this summer.

(i) Brookfield Plaza. He wants to see it redeveloped but there have been issues like the lengthy investigation of the fire as being of suspicious origins. Currently, the owners plan to rebuild the burned area, though no permits have been issued yet.

(j) Springfield 15K/5K race. He plans to run the 5K! And hopes to finish it.

CLOSING. President-elect Bruce Waggoner thanked our elected officials for coming to speak to us and answer questions. He followed with the drawing of tonight's door prizes. Sara B. won an \$80 gift certificate for a Swedish massage at Springfield Massage Center for Women. Alice M. and Denny S. each won \$20 gift certificates to Mark Russell's Metro Run and Walk store.

ADJOURNMENT. President-elect Bruce Waggoner adjourned the meeting at 9:22PM. Next meeting is September 20th.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
Alice Merrill
Secretary