

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

### Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, July 25, 2019

#### COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

**Hon. Victor S. Angry**

Hon. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Hon. Sharon Bulova

Hon. Kelly Burk

**Hon. John T. Chapman**

**Hon. John C. Cook**

**Hon. Matt de Ferranti**

**Hon. Laurie A. Dirocco**

Hon. Ken Elston

**Hon. Libby Garvey**

**Hon. Penelope A. Gross**

Hon. Pat Herrity

Hon. Geary Higgins

Hon. Catherine Hudgins

Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay

Hon. Lisa Merkel: alternate Hon. Bill McKenna

Hon. David Meyer

Hon. Cydny A. Neville, NVRC Vice Chairman

Hon. Martin E. Nohe

**Hon. Frank J. Principi**

Hon. Phyllis J. Randall

Hon. Jeanette Rishell

Hon. Kathy L. Smith, NVRC Treasurer

**Hon. David Tarter, NVRC Chairman**

**County of Prince William**

*City of Alexandria*

*County of Fairfax*

*Town of Leesburg*

**City of Alexandria**

**County of Fairfax**

**County of Arlington**

**Town of Vienna**

*City of Manassas*

**County of Arlington**

**County of Fairfax**

*County of Fairfax*

*County of Loudoun*

*County of Fairfax*

*County of Fairfax*

*Town of Herndon*

*City of Fairfax*

*Town of Dumfries*

*County of Prince William*

**County of Prince William**

*County of Loudoun*

*City of Manassas Park*

*County of Fairfax*

**City of Falls Church**

#### STAFF PRESENT

Robert Lazaro

Linda M. Tenney

Peggy Tadej

*Executive Director*

*Deputy Director*

*Director of Community and Military Partnerships*

#### OTHERS PRESENT

**Panelists:**

Dana Kauffman, moderator

Stephanie Landrum

Cathy Lange

Marian Marquez

Buddy Rizer

Patrick Small

Christina Winn

*Northern Virginia Community College*

*Alexandria Economic Development Partnership*

*Fairfax County Economic Development Authority*

*Arlington Economic Development*

*Loudoun County Economic Development*

*City of Manassas Economic Development*

*Prince William County Economic Development*

**Other Guests:**

Mary-Claire Burick

Terry Clower

Julie Coons

Eileen Ellsworth

Emily Guerrero

Mike Longhi

Clayton Medford

Laszlo Palko

Steven Partridge

*Rosslyn BID*

*George Mason University*

*Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce*

*Community Foundation for Northern Virginia*

*Prince William County*

*Northern Virginia Transportation Authority*

*Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce*

*City of Manassas Park*

*Northern Virginia Community College*

**OTHERS PRESENT, continued**

Scott E. Pedowitz  
Sue Rowland  
Tom Rust  
Russell Seymour  
Ross Snare  
Heather Wienke

*Arlington Chamber  
GO Virginia Region 7  
GO Virginia Region 7  
Town of Leesburg  
Prince William Chamber  
Janssen*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Tarter called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**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.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:  
Economic Development Roundtable**

Chairman Tarter introduced the discussion topic and the moderator and panelists.

Referring to a handout describing three regional economic development partnerships in Virginia and Michigan, Mr. Kauffman posed a question about whether any of those models might be desirable in this region – and if so, which?

Mr. Small spoke in favor of having a regional alliance similar to the one in Hampton Roads.

Ms. Landrum said that Northern Virginia is unique, and would need its own solution, but not having a regional organization is a detriment.

Ms. Lange acknowledged that Fairfax County's Economic Development Authority was in the process of changing leadership, and said there would be a need to give the new group a chance to provide leadership in this matter. It is likely that some customization would be wanted.

Ms. Winn said that all the Northern Virginia economic development groups know each other, and have worked together. It would take baby steps to work toward formalizing a regional organization, and would need to be evaluated as it goes along.

Mr. Rizer said the existing groups communicate more than people realize, and work informally without creating another layer.

Ms. Marquez said that Arlington always has been collaborative and operates so that the region benefits.

Ms. Landrum observed that most Northern Virginia communities have economic development staff, which is not so in other regions.

Mr. Small said a regional organization could make the most of each component's strengths. Or a regional organization could package certain

information, but the local entities could make the incentive deals.

Commissioner Garvey mentioned an innovation center in Germany that focuses on attracting talent and is supported by the government.

Mr. Rizer said that workforce is a regional issue: attracting, developing and retaining workers, and providing affordable housing.

Ms. Lange agree that “talent is everything” and said that the Board of Supervisors had allocated funds for research on how to attract and educate needed talent.

Ms. Winn described an instance where a business relocating to Northern Virginia got help from an area realty group, and others, to keep workers despite the move. A retention rate of 15% was expected, and 40% was realized. The difference was collaboration.

Mr. Small, Mr. Rizer and Ms. Landrum agreed that talent is a huge issue, as is affordable housing, in attracting new businesses. New people want amenities and attractive lifestyles. Recognizing these factors is part of the economic development job today.

Commissioner Gross said this region is unique. The Greater Washington Board of Trade is focused on the District of Columbia. Fairfax County has been competitive and monolithic. This will change, but it will be a challenge for leaders who are used to business as usual. We should be competing with other regions, not among ourselves. We also should not forget to cultivate the service trades.

Mr. Kauffman asked where would cooperation help? What opportunities have we missed?

Ms. Landrum said that, despite their differences, all the panelists probably agree that there would be a benefit to adopting some regional model in the future.

Ms. Winn noted that the state has stepped up marketing and promotion.

Ms. Lange said it could be useful to bring businesses and Chambers to the table around workforce issues. A single platform for all internships could be helpful.

Ms. Marquez said a lot of initiatives will take a long time to build. What can we do in the short term?

Speaking to the benefit of a regional organization, Mr. Small said such a group could report on the leads, resulting deals and results, along with the returns brought to the area.

Other panelists pointed out that the existing economic development entities do have relationships that have led to partnerships, as with the attraction of the Amazon HQ. A plus in addressing the global market is that the whole

DC area can take advantage of the international context of Washington, DC.

Commissioners Cook, Chapman, Garvey and Principi commented on the possible advantages and challenges of establishing a regional economic development organization.

Chairman Tarter recognized Terry Clower, a guest from George Mason University.

Mr. Clower said that the Virginia Economic Development Partnership had a great set of data that probably is expiring, and wondered who would invest in updating it. He said that having a regional organization, if driven by the private sector, could take the issues of tax base, and politics, out of economic development.

Ms. Landrum said it would be good to talk about a future structure, but that things probably will continue to rely on the informal relationships for a while where there is consensus.

Commissioner de Ferranti suggested that the panel return in a few months to talk further about how the Commission can help them.

Commissioner Chapman commented that each local group should keep its elected officials informed.

Chairman Tarter recognized Russell Seymour from the Town of Leesburg.

Mr. Seymour, recently relocated from the Hampton Roads area, spoke in favor of regionalism. He said that from outside, Northern Virginia already is considered a region. He suggested not looking to other regional models to adopt, because we are different – we have a lot of assets, but we also have the problem of being a target. The state may provide support to other parts of the Commonwealth because “we don’t need them.”

Mr. Kauffman invited the panelists to make closing remarks.

Ms. Winn said she was glad everyone seemed interested in a regional effort.

Mr. Small said he sees a regional organization as an opportunity

Mr. Rizer said that economic development operated in the shadows for a long time, and this is a chance to step out in the open. There’s no one way to do this. He hoped to keep having the conversation and working on doing better.

Ms. Lange was happy to have had this conversation. She looked forward to working with the County’s new Economic Development director.

Ms. Marquez thanked Commissioners Angry and Garvey for being part of the conversation.

Ms. Landrum said she was more optimistic today than ever, and hoped elected officials would be listening.

Chairman Tarter thanked Mr. Kauffman and all the panelists for participating and for striving for excellence. He looked forward to continuing these conversations.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Tarter adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.  
Executive Director

Approved by:

David Tarter  
Chairman