

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, April 24, 2008

### COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

<b>Hon. Sharon Bulova</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Gerald E. Connolly, NVRC Chairman</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Joan Cross</b>	<b>City of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Steve DeBenedittis</b>	<b>Town of Herndon</b>
<b>Hon. Barbara A. Favola</b>	<b>County of Arlington</b>
Hon. John Foust	County of Fairfax
<b>Hon. Penelope A. Gross</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
Hon. Pat Herrity	County of Fairfax
Hon. Catherine Hudgins	County of Fairfax
Hon. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.	Town of Purcellville
<b>Hon. Harold Lippman</b>	<b>City of Falls Church</b>
Hon. Michael C. May	County of Prince William
<b>Hon. Martin E. Nohe, NVRC Treasurer</b>	<b>County of Prince William</b>
Hon. Harry J. Parrish, II, NVRC Vice Chairman	City of Manassas
Hon. Redella S. Pepper	City of Alexandria
Hon. Frank J. Principi	County of Prince William
<b>Hon. M. Jane Seeman</b>	<b>Town of Vienna</b>
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg	City of Alexandria
<b>Hon. Linda Smyth</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. J. Walter Tejada</b>	<b>County of Arlington</b>
Hon. William J. Treuting, Jr.	City of Manassas Park
Hon. Kristen C. Umstatt	Town of Leesburg
Hon. Lori Waters	County of Loudoun
Hon. Fred E. Yohey, Jr.	Town of Dumfries
Hon. Scott K. York	County of Loudoun

### STAFF PRESENT

G. Mark Gibb	Executive Director
Linda M. Tenney	Deputy Director
Linda Summerall	Executive Secretary
Ken Billingsley	Director, Demographics
Barbara Gordon	Communications Director
Normand Goulet	Interim Director, Environmental & Planning Services
Laura Grape	Coastal Resources Program Manager
Dale Medearis	Senior Regional Planner
David Schwengel	Director, Regional Emergency Planning Services
Michelle Simmons	Director, Human Services

### GUESTS

David Robertson	Executive Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
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CALL TO ORDER Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 7:35 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.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Commissioner Smyth moved approval of the minutes of the March 27, 2008, meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION

*BUILDING ON OUR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE*

*Mark Gibb*

Before beginning his PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Gibb noted that he heard from many conference participants that this was an extraordinary event, and he relayed some of the unsolicited comments he received. The conference aimed to highlight the mutual environmental and economic benefits to be realized among U.S. and European metropolitan regions through long-term cooperation and learning; 170 participants represented 40 regional councils from the U.S. and Europe.

The keynote speaker was syndicated columnist Neil Peirce; his column on the conference was published in several newspapers and a copy was distributed. Mr. Peirce, an international authority on metropolitan regions, affirmed that these regions are the key to addressing economic development and climate change on both sides of the Atlantic. Other highlights included remarks from Hon. John Bruton, European Union Ambassador to the U.S. and former Prime Minister of Ireland; and Rep. James Oberstar. Ambassador Bruton noted that the Transatlantic relationship is the most vigorous in the world with profound implications for subnational/regional actors. For example, the three German powerhouse states of Hesse, Northrhine-Westphalia, and Baden-Württemberg invest more in the United States than they do in the rest of the EU.

Rep. Oberstar pointed out that U.S. regional metropolitan planning organizations need to be the direct recipients of federal transportation funds, and that there is much to learn from Europe in all matters of regional transportation planning. Chairman Connolly commented that Rep. Oberstar is a passionate supporter of rail to Dulles as well as bike trails.

*Session Highlights:*

• Advancing Economic Development

- Many European regions have integrated climate change and regional economic development activities. Germany will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 21 percent (against 1990 levels), but its energy consumption per dollar of GDP is 50 percent that of the United States!
- In Germany, the renewable energy sector employs over 215,000 people. If growth trends continue, by 2020, renewable energy will employ over 500,000.
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Commission has been successful in reclamation of brownfields and utilizing development that met LEED standards, improving the local economy.

• Innovative Transportation Planning

This discussion highlighted the successes of regions that have adopted climate change strategies in the context of sustainable transportation planning. Specifically, the Sacramento region has developed a Blueprint Project, which is a vision for growth that promotes compact mixed-use development and more transit choices. This plan has reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled in the Sacramento Region. Also notable is Stockholm's success in utilizing congestion pricing. The congestion tax scheme was tested for a seven-month trial period and has shown to decrease emissions and increase accessibility.

• Regional Climate Action Plans

- Helsinki has linked climate, economic development and regional transportation planning. Sixty-two percent of all trips in Helsinki are on public transportation.
- The Washington, D.C., region emits 65.6 million metric tons for a population of 4.9 million. The entire country of Finland emits 57.0 tons and its population is 5.2 million.
- By 2050, the Paris region plans to meet one-third of its energy demands through renewable energy.

- Climate Change and Water Management

This discussion warned of the impacts climate change will have on potable water supplies, and how regions can make efforts now to prepare for adaptation. Panelists agreed that solid data is necessary to support the development of mitigation and adaptation action plans. Rotterdam, experiencing rising sea level, has already implemented mitigation strategies to reduce the negative impacts of run-off on potable water and agriculture. Atlanta produces a holistic plan to reduce stresses on water supply, using techniques such as conservation pricing and reuse technologies.

- Greenhouse Gas Inventories

- Many U.S. regions have challenges developing accurate greenhouse gas inventories at the *regional* level (individual inventory efforts are sometimes disparate).
- EU Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory Program (GRIP) has been developed to establish inventories in 23 EU regions and seeks to inform stakeholders about practical policy alternatives.
- GRIP could potentially be applied for the Metropolitan Washington region and Northern Virginia.

*Next Steps – Actionable Plans:*

The Declaration of Cooperation signed by NVRC, MWCOG, METREX, NARC and the Verband Region Stuttgart, regional strategies, international sharing of best practices, cooperative activities and educational and technical exchanges, including:

- Potentially beta-testing GRIP in North America;
- Developing “community energy and plans” informed by METREX best practices for local authorities in Northern Virginia;
- Expanding exchanges among Northern Virginia regional businesses, technical and political leaders and EU counterparts in Stuttgart and Hamburg – June 2008;
- Exploring the concept of “solar region Northern Virginia”;
- NVRC Executive Director to speak at National Association of Regional Councils and Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions; and
- Discussing long-term cooperation; specifically, the “Transatlantic Civil Dialogues EU-USA,” and GRIP project in London, October 2008.

Chairman Connolly informed the members that the City of Berlin has committed to put solar panels on every government building.

*David Robertson*

Mr. Robertson commented that co-sponsoring this conference is the beginning of a great partnership between the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) and NVRC. The staffs at all levels worked well together and there was a good sense of collegiality.

U.S and European elected officials and staff were paired with each other on the panels, creating a good dynamic. Mr. Robertson added that he, too, heard only praise from the panelists and attendees.

Mr. Robertson remarked on the success of the two optional, half-day Saturday, mobile workshops at Four Mile Run and the Anacostia waterfront restoration.

*Hon. Penelope Gross*

Commissioner Gross reported that she attended both days of the conference and thought it was excellent, with excellent speakers and panelists. She relayed that a European participant said to her that the regional councils have “different structures but similar problems.”

Commissioner Gross found the presentation on PlaNYC especially interesting, since it is a private, non-governmental entity that performs much of that region’s planning. It had just gone through congestion pricing, which was not adopted by the State Assembly. She was also impressed to learn from the French panelist that in 1975, the City of Paris adopted

thermal regulations for households. Commissioner Gross said the discussions were very forthcoming.

Chairman Connolly noted that this conference will help deepen NVRC's relationship with the Verband Region Stuttgart.

CONSENT AGENDA Commissioner Favola moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items outlined below. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

- A. Financial Reports for March 2008
- B. Resolution No. P08-21: Authorization to Submit a Grant Proposal to Support Climate and Energy-Related Cooperative Efforts Following the First U.S.-European Conference of Metropolitan Regional Councils

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A copy of Mr. Gibb's report was distributed. He pointed out to the members that correspondence on upcoming awards for Ryan White Part A funding was emailed to them earlier in the day. Additionally, there are continuing problems with Whitman-Walker of Northern Virginia, as revealed by their latest audit. Staff proposes a partial award for them pending compliance with additional contract provisions. Both Commissioner Favola and Chairman Connolly expressed concern, saying Whitman-Walker must show accountability.

NVRC, member government partners and the Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance completed work on the initial \$2.9 million Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) in March. This partnership accomplished:

- Local plans for regional response to mass casualties
- Integration of public safety, public health, public information, private hospitals and others
- Equipment for fire and rescue, police and hospitals
- Pharmaceuticals
- Training video for first responders
- Exercises

Resolution No. P08-22, AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT UASI FUNDING FOR CONTINUED SUSTAINMENT OF MMRS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA, was distributed. Mr. Gibb pointed out that the region is entitled to \$930,000 as part of Virginia's 2007 "set aside" with the National Capital Region's UASI grant year. Commissioner Nohe moved adoption. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

After reviewing staff activities related to low impact development, Chairman Connolly and members agreed this would make an interesting presentation to the Commission.

Mr. Gibb reported he attended CrisisLink's annual gala, at which NVRC was honored as a long-time partner with local governments in the provision of human services I&R and for helping to bring 2-1-1 to Northern Virginia.

Chairman Connolly reported that the Fairfax-Falls Church CSB had proposed no funding in FY09 for CrisisLink, and suggested that NVRC contact the CSB regarding its decision. Commissioner Gross added that the Board has asked this question of the CSB and is awaiting the answer.

Additional highlights included NVRC's third rain garden seminar in Herndon on April 26, and the fourth consecutive year of the storm water campaign (the "talking" storm drain PSA) on local radio stations. Commissioner Favola reported that Arlington County will assess one cent of its real estate tax rate to upgrade its storm water system.

#### CHAIRMAN'S

REPORT

Responding to Commissioner Favola's inquiry, Chairman Connolly said it is not known what the Governor will propose for transportation. He added that with the state Supreme Court ruling, the Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads localities have lost their capacity for bonded indebtedness. For Northern Virginia, that means \$1.7 billion of new debt investment for transportation has been lost, and dedicated funding for Metro and VRE needs to be addressed.

Under the April 23 veto session, the General Assembly adopted \$1.5 billion in state bonds for higher education, including George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College.

Commissioner DeBenedittis moved that the Commission send a brief letter to the Speaker thanking him for his action on proffers and reminding him how important it is that local governments be included at the table during the study period. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE

Chairman Connolly appointed Commissioner Favola as chairman of this year's Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will report its slate of candidates for FY09 officers at the next Commission meeting on May 22; elections will be held at the June 26 meeting.

COMMITTEE  
REPORTS

*Operations*

Commissioner Nohe reported that the committee met immediately before the Commission meeting and discussed an amendment to the Bylaws. Since the language proposing to be deleted from the Bylaws is also included in the Commission's Charter, the Charter will need to be amended as well.

The proposed amendment was distributed. Commissioner Nohe recalled for the members that it was the Operations Committee's original intent that each member government be represented by its chief elected officer or that officer's designee. Therefore, he proposed that the phrase "...except when another elected official of the local governing body is designated by the governing body" be struck. There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

G. Mark Gibb  
Executive Director

Approved by:

Gerald E. Connolly  
Chairman