

NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, October 22, 2009

COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

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

STAFF PRESENT

G. Mark Gibb	<i>Executive Director</i>
Linda M. Tenney	<i>Deputy Director</i>
Linda Summerall	<i>Executive Secretary</i>
Ken Billingsley	<i>Director, Information & Demographic Services</i>
Samantha Ference	<i>Regional Planner</i>
Normand Goulet	<i>Sr. Environmental Planner</i>
David Schwengel	<i>Director, Regional Emergency Preparedness Planning</i>
Michelle Simmons	<i>Director, Human Services</i>
Aimee Vosper	<i>Director, Environmental & Planning Services</i>

GUESTS

Tom Blaser	<i>Prince William County Transportation Department</i>
Lillian Brooks	<i>Alexandria Court Services</i>
Jesse Harman	<i>Alexandria Police Department</i>
Joe Price	<i>Chief of Police, Leesburg</i>
Dave Rohrer	<i>Chief of Police, Fairfax County</i>
Sue Rowland	<i>NVRC Legislative Liaison; SR Consulting, Inc.</i>
Charles "Cody" Smith	<i>Greenhome & O'Mara, Inc.</i>
Toussaint E. Summers, Jr.	<i>Chief of Police, Herndon</i>
Hon. Charlie E. Waddell	<i>Herndon Town Council</i>
Hon. Jane Woods	<i>Driftwoods Consulting</i>

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Parrish called the meeting to order at 7:34 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 Gross moved approval of the minutes of the September 24, 2009, meeting of the Commission. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION NORTHERN VIRGINIA JUVENILE GANG REGIONAL ASSESSMENT 2003-2008

Chairman Parrish welcomed Joe Price, Chief of Police for the Town of Leesburg and Co-Chair of Northern Virginia Juvenile Gang Regional Task Force.

Joe Price Chief Price explained that Task Force Co-Chair Chief Charlie Dean is out of town. Chief Price stated that Northern Virginia has taken a unique approach to dealing with gangs, one that is multi-disciplined and multi-jurisdictional. The Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force was formed in 2003, teaming police departments, court services and educational services to promote prevention and intervention to keep young people from joining or remaining in gangs. The regional assessment measures the success of the Task Force.

Chief Price turned the floor over to Ken Billingsley, NVRC's Director of Information & Demographic Services, who compiled the assessment.

Ken Billingsley This is the first juvenile gang assessment nationally that examines gangs within a regional setting. In 2008, the crime rates in Northern Virginia decreased, falling substantially below national averages and dramatically below levels found in U.S. metropolitan areas known for a gang presence. While the police estimate 5,000 gang members in Northern Virginia, the study shows that gangs have failed to gain an entrenched foothold in the region. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many gang members from Northern Virginia are moving to Maryland, D.C. and to western and southern parts of Virginia to avoid dealing with the Northern Virginia police.

Over the five-year assessment period gang crimes average slightly less than five incidents per day, one of which is a PART I crime (violent crimes plus burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft) and four of which are less serious violations (drug offense, graffiti, simple assault). Graffiti, a daily occurrence, accounts for half of all reported offenses. Based on 15 offenses for which gang-crime statistics are tabulated, gangs are responsible for approximately two percent of overall crime and five percent of violent crime. The most common gang crimes involve violent crimes against people (frequently against other gang members rather than random citizens), drugs, weapons, simple assaults, and graffiti. Gangs account for seven percent of homicides, aggravated assaults, and weapons offenses in Northern Virginia.

Gang activity in the schools was also assessed. The school findings are consistent with regional crime trends (overall and gang), which reveal positive and downward trend lines over the five-year period. There is no evidence in the data suggesting a worsening of conditions in Northern Virginia public schools, or that public school children are becoming less safe, or that gangs, dangerous weapons, illegal drugs, or physical violence are becoming more prevalent. The incidence of gang activity in Northern Virginia public schools is down, with about one reported gang incident per school day region wide. Historically, most reported gang activity occurs with the region's public high schools. However, the emerging trend is an increase in gang recruitment and activity in the middle schools. Also, suspension and expulsion rates in Northern Virginia public schools — both the number of occurrences and of individual students disciplined — have dropped each of the past four years, reaching a low during the 2007-08 school year.

Mr. Billingsley reviewed the factors contributing to Northern Virginia's success in fighting gangs, such as a strong regional economy, strong law enforcement initiatives, strong political leadership, an educated community, and the involvement of the public schools.

Lillian Brooks

Ms. Brooks, Director of Court Services for the City of Alexandria, reviewed community resources for gang members and at-risk youth, such as counseling, employment and job training, job placement, education and vocational training, mentoring, recreational opportunities, after-school programs, youth development programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and a regional program for tattoo removal. However, no trade schools and few opportunities for on-the-job training were identified in the analysis. Ms. Brooks added that the Court Services personnel work very closely with the juvenile gang detectives.

The comprehensive gang assessment is available as a PDF (5MB) on NVRC's website, <http://www.novaregion.org/gangs> .

questions & answers

Commissioner DeBenedittis thanked Chief Summers for his leadership as chairman of the Task Force for the past few years.

Commissioner Favola asked how to best use funds for prevention. Ms. Brooks said after school programs, early childhood education, and outreach to children and their families. Children typically join gangs when they are 12-15 years old but the age is getting younger.

Commissioner Hudgins commented on the need for better prevention and coordination among the schools, local government and the community. Commissioner Tejada agreed, citing the need for more resources for after school programs, suggesting that this may be a role for the nonprofits as well.

Commissioner Gross said she has heard there is an up tick in gang activity in the schools and wondered if this is a result of the downturn in the economy. Chief Rohrer said he is waiting for the 2008-9 school data, but overall, Part I crimes are down. He added that the police strongly support the prevention/intervention programs. Ms. Brooks added that the IP workers are seeing a little increased gang activity but it is anecdotal.

Commissioner Washington wanted to know if children escape legal punishment due to their age. Ms. Brooks said the courts often put them in diversion, depending on the crime.

COMMUTER
FERRY STUDY

Commissioner Principi reported that VDOT funded this feasibility study, which included bringing a high speed catamaran ferry from Boston for trial service runs. The Prince William Board of County Supervisors has endorsed the study. He recommends formation of a multi-stakeholder task force, working through NVRC and MWCOG, to look at the ferry as a regional transit option. He turned the floor over to Cody Smith of Greenhorne & O'Mara, the consultant that performed the study.

Cody Smith

The study looked at 13 service points — eight in Virginia, three in Maryland, and two in the District (Anacostia Waterfront/Nationals Stadium and the Southwest Fish Market) — and covered seven goals:

- 1) Obtain actual run times between the potential service points
- 2) Obtain vessel wake measurements during run times
- 3) Obtain noise measurements at various points along the Potomac River
- 4) Observe operations to determine feasibility of docking locations
- 5) Determine likely capital and operating costs for service
- 6) Determine likely fares and ridership using VDOT 2000 feasibility study model
- 7) Apply data to previous 2000 ferry study and provide conclusions and recommendations

Mr. Smith added that Greenhorne & O'Mara is working with Charles County, Maryland, and Ft. Belvoir to determine ridership at these military installations.

The study concluded that changing the type of ferry to a multi-hull vessel and obtaining a waiver of the no-wake zones will decrease the run times. The fare would be \$11 per person round-trip, with 140,000 round-trip passengers per year needed to make this transit option feasible. Based on the 2000 VDOT model, 170,000 round-trip passengers per year are predicted. The ferry would need public financial support. The consultant firm recommends performing a much more rigorous market analysis.

questions & answers

Commissioner Favola asked if the ferry would divert funds from other transit. Mr. Smith replied there is a unique source of funding for water transit.

Commissioner Smyth inquired about the number of days the ferry would be unable to run due to inclement weather. Mr. Smith said one week of downtime in a year.

Commissioner Tejada wanted to know if the consultants worked with the feds on the study. Commissioner Principi said federal, state and local government officials rode the ferry and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood's office is enthusiastic about this option.

Commissioner Gross pointed out the study results presented tonight do not include the environmental impacts on the water. Mr. Smith replied that a lot of the commuter ferries are going green and use solar power, and it should be kept in mind the number of cars taken off the roads.

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

- A. Financial Reports for June 2009
- B. Resolution No. P10-05: NVRC Appointment to the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia Board of Directors
- C. Adoption of Commission Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2010

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Gibb distributed a copy of his report, which included updates on:

- Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant Funds — Mr. Gibb thanked Aimee Vosper for coordinating this with the Dept. of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the Planning District Commissions for jurisdictions not receiving direct funding.
- Regional Water Supply
- Rain Garden Workshop
- Coastal Program Highlights
- Success of Northern Virginia HOPWA Program — Mr. Gibb reported that the NVRC-administered HOPWA grants for Northern Virginia have met or exceeded their target goals and are not experiencing any of the problems the program has encountered under the District of Columbia's administration, as reported in *The Washington Post*.

Commissioner Pepper, Operations Committee Chairman, reported the committee met tonight and recommends adoption of the FY 2011 Preliminary Budget. Mr. Gibb added that the purpose is to submit this information to the jurisdictions so they can include the dues in the jurisdictions' budgets. The work plan remains essentially the same as the current year, with the addition of the Regional BRAC Coordinator position and expanded regional emergency service planning.

Mr. Gibb advised the members that the committee agreed on the benefit of forming an *ad hoc* committee discuss regional service delivery with the chief administrative officers.

Commissioner Pepper moved adoption of Resolution No. P10-06. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION

NO. P10-07

Renewal of NVRC's International Partnership With the Verband Region Stuttgart

Mr. Gibb stated this partnership has been in effect for over ten years; it has been renewed once before. The Verband Region Stuttgart is very supportive of our partnership.

Commissioner Nohe moved adoption of Resolution No. P10-07. The motion was seconded. Commissioner Bulova added that this has been an outstanding program, exceeding all of our expectations. The motion carried unanimously.

LEGISLATIVE

REPORT

Commissioner Gross, Legislative Committee Chairman, reported the committee met immediately before the Commission meeting and asked the members to turn their attention to the updated draft platform distributed by staff. The committee's final draft platform will be presented to the Commission in December for adoption.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Parrish adjourned the meeting at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

G. Mark Gibb
Executive Director

Approved by:

Harry J. Parrish II
Chairman