

News from...

SUPERVISOR PENNY GROSS



MASON DISTRICT GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
6507 COLUMBIA PIKE, ANNANDALE, VA 22003

PHONE: 703-256-7717 TTY: 711 FAX: 703-354-8419
E-MAIL: MASON@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV

March 2017

A few items of information for you or your association newsletter:

The Board Corner: Perspectives from Penny – The unusually warm weather in February seems to be teasing us. County budget time, which was the subject of my message in last month's e-newsletter, usually fills up the cold months, and we celebrate the conclusion of the adopted budget as spring flowers bloom. The topsy-turvy weather, however, does not soften the hard decisions that must be made by the Board of Supervisors to maintain a balanced budget and provide needed services in the community. The proposed budget presented by County Executive Ed Long is responsible, focused, and spare, reflecting the realities of very modest growth in real estate assessments (the real estate property tax accounts for 65 percent of all county revenues). Sources of revenue in Fairfax County are controlled or capped by the Virginia General Assembly; together, the real estate tax and the car tax account for 80 percent of revenue available for schools, county services, and programs mandated, but often unfunded, by the state and federal government.

Mr. Long's recommended budget would transfer almost \$2.2 Billion to schools, an increase of almost \$51 million, or 2.41 percent above last year. Schools have asked for \$112.54 million more, or 5.7 percent above last year's transfer. Bridging the difference would mean an additional 2.5 cents on the tax rate. Approximately 72 percent of the local school budget is funded by Fairfax County's General Fund, a much higher rate than most local school districts in Virginia, which receive up to 60 percent of their funding from the state. Mr. Long's budget is based on the existing tax rate of \$1.13 per \$100 valuation. He did not recommend a tax increase this year. The proposed budget is posted on line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb. **Budget Public Hearings** will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, **April 4, 5, and 6**, at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax. To sign up to speak, contact the Clerk to the Board's Office by calling 703-324-3151; TTY 711, online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker_bos.htm, or by e-mail at clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov.

[Speakers List Sign-up - Fairfax County, Virginia](#)

www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Speakers List Sign-up. Online requests to speak before the Board of Supervisors must be fully completed by 10 a.m. on the day of the hearing to ensure your place on ...

Department of Management and Budget - Fairfax County, Virginia

www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Tell the Budget Office what additional information you would like posted on this page to help you better understand the budget

As noted in last month's Board Corner, the **Mason District Budget Town Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, March 9**, beginning at 7 p.m., at the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. County Executive Long will be present to discuss his recommended budget, followed by a question and answer period. I look forward to seeing you there.

AARP Tax Aide Filing Returns at Mason District Governmental Center – Free tax assistance by AARP Volunteers is available at the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. Walk-in service is available **through April 18: Mondays and Thursdays from 1 to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.; Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.** All returns are filed electronically. Because Emancipation Day (April 16) is a holiday in the District of Columbia and will be observed on **Monday, April 17**, the deadline for federal taxes this year is **Tuesday, April 18**. File Virginia taxes before the deadline on **Monday, May 1**. Remember to bring documents, such as last year's tax return, a photo ID, and Social Security cards for taxpayers and all dependents. Residents with illnesses or infirmities, which confine them to their homes, may schedule appointments with AARP for tax preparation services by calling 703-594-6576. For more information about AARP Tax-Aide, visit www.aarp.org/money/taxaide, or call 1-888-227-7669.

Senior Citizen Real Estate Tax Relief 2017 Workshops Coming to the Mason District Governmental Center – Supervisor Penny Gross, in collaboration with the Department of Tax Administration (DTA), is hosting free tax relief workshops on **March 8 and 10, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon both days**, at the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. DTA staff will be on-site to assist residents with completing the 2017 Tax Relief application form and answer questions. No appointment is necessary. Bring your 2016 tax returns or proof of 2016 gross income from all sources, and all asset information as of

December 31, 2016. **Real estate tax relief is available for older adults and people with disabilities who meet certain qualifications.** Qualified residents also may be eligible for car tax and rent relief. For more information, visit the Web site www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta, or call 703-222-8234; TTY 703-222-7594.

2017 Real Estate Assessments Available – Countywide residential [real estate assessments](#) are **up an average of only 0.68 percent** for 2017, with the average assessment for all homes at **\$533,168**. By comparison in 2016, the countywide average was \$527,648, with an average increase of 1.64 percent.

More than **350,000 updated real estate assessments** for 2017 are available online (and are being mailed to all property owners). Approximately **45 percent of residential property in the county increased in value** during the past year due to equalization. **Nonresidential real estate values** (commercial, industrial and rental apartments) **increased 1.85 percent** on average due to equalization.

Of the 353,695 taxable parcels in Fairfax County:

- 232,280 have an assessment change
- 121,415 have no assessment change

Here's the breakdown of average home property assessments (averages are not necessarily indicative of individual properties or neighborhoods):

- **Countywide average for all homes** – **\$533,168**
- **Single family-detached homes** – \$639,468, up 1.10 percent
- **Townhouse/duplex properties** – \$398,166, up 1.37 percent
- **Condominiums** – \$260,617, down 0.32 percent

For additional information about real estate assessments and to view your assessment online, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/real-estate-assessments.htm.

Making Smart Choices for Easy Living – Small changes can make your home a space that enables you to thrive as your living situation changes, and make life easier for visitors to your home – from grandchildren to adult children and friends. AARP is teaming up with Rebuilding Together Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church, Fairfax County Area Agency on Aging, and Fairfax County Building for All Committee (BFAC) to offer a **free community workshop**, *Staying Home: Making Smart Choices for Easy Living*, which will include a panel of experts that will share practical tips to minimize the financial costs of home modifications, how to maintain a safe and healthy home, and available local resources. Find out how simple changes to your home can create an environment where everyone is welcome, and everyone can flourish. This free workshop will be held on **Saturday, March 25, 2017**, from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 3022 Woodlawn Avenue in Falls Church. Light refreshments will be served. Register at 1-877-926-8300. For more information, visit <http://states.aarp.org/march25/>.

Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter E-Newsletter – Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) and the staff of the Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter are preparing a monthly e-newsletter, which will help to keep neighbors informed and updated about programs and services at the shelter. The first edition will be available in early March. If you would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list, send your contact information to Meaghan Perkins, NVFS, at mperkins@nvfs.org.

Lincolnia Planning District Study – The Lincolnia area forms the southeast section of Mason District, adjacent to I-395 and the City of Alexandria. A current Planning Study of the area is entering its second phase (the first phase was an editorial update to Comprehensive Plan language for the area), which will review proposed changes to Comprehensive Plan guidance (Plan Amendment 2013-I-L1) for the [Lincolnia Planning District](#). How should the areas near the intersection of Little River Turnpike (Route 236) and Beauregard Street be transformed for the future? A community task force for the Lincolnia Planning District Study has been formed to seek public input. Among the items the Task Force will consider is whether to designate a portion of the area as a Community Business Center (CBC) within the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. The Task Force is conducting a series of public meetings, extending into late spring. Information about the study, including the meeting schedule, can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/lincolnia. Subscribe to the Lincolnia Planning District Study by e-mail at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/lincolnia/listservsubscribe.htm. Questions may be directed to Faheem Darab, senior planner, at 703-324-1351, or faheem.darab@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Mark Your Calendar: Fairfax Animal Shelter Hosts Low-Cost Rabies Clinic for Pets in Annandale – The Fairfax County Animal Shelter and Pender Veterinary Clinic, in partnership with the Office of Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross and the Mason District Station of the Fairfax County Police Department, will host a low-cost rabies clinic on **Sunday, April 23, 12 to 2 p.m.**, for dogs, cats and ferrets, in the Main Community Room of the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. All dogs **must** be on leashes, and cats and ferrets **must** be in carriers. Vaccination cost is \$15 per pet. Fairfax County 2017 dog licenses will be sold separately and cost \$10. Cash and checks **only** will be accepted for payment at the clinic. For more information, call 703-830-1100, or visit the Fairfax County Animal Services Division Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/animal.

Spring 2017 Culmore Cleanup – Every year a spring and fall cleanup of the Culmore area in Falls Church is organized. The objective of the cleanup is simple - to rid the streets of litter and bring awareness to keeping the community clean. The spring 2017 Culmore Cleanup is scheduled for **Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. to Noon**. Help out by cleaning up, picking up trash on cleanup day, and keeping our community clean all year long. For more information please visit Culmore Cleanup Day on Facebook, www.facebook.com/culmorecleanupday. You also may contact Supervisor Gross' office at 703-256-7717, or e-mail: mason@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Save the Date: Big Plant Sale at Green Spring Gardens – The Big Plant Sale at Green Spring Gardens will take place on **Saturday, May 20, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** More than 40 local garden vendors descend on Green Spring Gardens with beautiful and unusual plants to fill your

spring gardening needs. Growers and Master Gardeners are on hand to help with plant selections and gardening advice. FROGS members receive 10 percent off plants in the Garden Gate Plant Shop. Free admission. For more information, call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, VA 22312 (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring).

Same-Day Walk-In Mental Health Screenings and Assessments Now Available – Are you not feeling quite right? Know someone in need of help? The [Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board \(CSB\)](#) now offers same day, in-person screening for mental health and/or substance use concerns to both adults and youth. Individuals of any age seeking help for a mental health and/or substance use concern may walk in, without an appointment, to the [CSB's Merrifield Center](#) (8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031) and speak with a staff member face-to-face, rather than initiating contact over the phone. If the individual appears to qualify for CSB services, they may be able to receive a more in-depth assessment for services that same day. Each CSB assessment clinician is trained to assess for substance use disorders, as well as mental health and co-occurring disorders. You are welcome to visit [CSB's Merrifield Center](#) and speak with a staff member face-to-face about concerns between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, if a family and/or individual prefers to schedule an appointment for a screening or assessment, they may do so by contacting 703-383-8500, TTY 711 (an appointment may eliminate potential wait-time). Additional information is available on-line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/about/merrifield-center.htm.

Quilt Display at Mason District Governmental Center – For the next several weeks, Supervisor Gross is displaying quilts made by local quilter Linda Cooper. Ms. Cooper has been quilting nearly 30 years! Please stop by to view her artistic journey! – Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. Supervisor Gross welcomes the opportunity to feature the works of local artists. If you are interested in participating in the Mason District Arts Program, please call Fran Tunick, Art Exhibit Coordinator, at 703-256-7717 or send an e-mail to mason@fairfaxcounty.gov.

New "Adopt-A-Hydrant" Program – Our firefighters need your help to potentially save lives. A new "Adopt-A-Hydrant" program is underway to combat obstacles created by snow, ice and winter weather, or weeds, leaves and shrubs in warmer weather. It's simple: If you're a resident or business owner, then consider adopting a fire hydrant close to your home or business, and pledge to keep it clear for firefighters to access in case of emergency. Immediate access to a water supply helps to swiftly extinguish the fire and prevent loss of life and property. In the event of winter weather, please **clear a three-foot area around the hydrant** and ensure there is a path to the roadway so the hydrant is visible and easily accessible. To participate in the Adopt-A-Hydrant program, simply fill out and submit an online application at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/outreach/adoptahydrant/adoptahydrantform.htm. After registering, a crew from the participant's closest fire station will deliver an "adoption certificate" identifying their hydrant. Important note: Fire hydrants are the property of the Fairfax Water Authority — so do not paint, personalize or change the appearance of the fire hydrant.

Mason Matters! The Television Show – On February 14, Fairfax County Executive Edward L. Long, Jr. released his proposed county budget for Fiscal Year 2018. This year, as in the past, Fairfax County continues to streamline county programs, and optimize efficiencies in county-wide operations, while maintaining its Triple A Bond rating. However, changes in the global and national economy can affect state and local budgets. Careful planning at the local level is how Fairfax County has maintained a balanced budget, and preserved its Triple A Bond rating. The **March** edition of *Mason Matters!*, the television show that brings you news and information about our Mason District community, hosted by Supervisor Penny Gross, features Fairfax County Executive Ed Long, who discusses the county budget. *Mason Matters!* airs on Cable Channel 16 every **Thursday at 7 p.m.**, and every **Friday and Sunday at 6:30 p.m.**, and daily on-line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mason.

Mason News and Updates – If you know individuals who would like to receive news and updates about Fairfax County services and events in Mason District, ask them to send an e-mail to mason@fairfaxcounty.gov to subscribe. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, or the news and updates, please send an e-mail and include unsubscribe in the subject line to remove your e-mail address from the subscription list.

The Quick 411 – I have some visitors coming in to town and I would like to show them some local attractions. Are there resources available to help me plan? Yes. Fairfax County has a number of resources available to visitors and residents alike. Find local accommodations, arts, attractions, entertainment, history, parks and recreation, shopping and more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/visitors. Further information also is available by visiting the *Fairfax County/Capital Region Visitors Center* at Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean, VA 22102 or by calling 703-752-9500 or 800-732-4732, e-mail: FXVA2@fxva.com.