

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JUNE 13, 2024

Bryant Teacher Recognized for Making a Difference in Mount Vernon

By Mike Salmon
The Mount Vernon Gazette

Being the Director of Student Services at an alternative high school in a low income area comes with its challenges so Florence "Pipi" Harrison met the challenges head on to make an impact in this area of Mount Vernon. Those efforts did not go unnoticed, so she was recently awarded the 2024 'You Make A Difference' Award from the Mount Vernon Rotary Club.

"We made the presentation at Bryant in front of the faculty, she was so surprised," said club member Helen Walutes.

Harrison gets involved with several of the charity efforts in the area such as the D.C. Diaper Bank, Project Opportunity at Bryant, Food for Neighbors and the coat drive in the winter. As part of the award she received, \$1,000 will be donated to an organization of her choice, and she has opted to use it to "stock the Bryant food pantry," she said. She even lines up the resources on an

individual basis so when students graduate, they have the resources and guidance for the next step.

Bryant Principal Karen Hertel nominated Harrison with the Mount Vernon Rotary Club, noting her efforts that make a tangible difference in the lives of students and families. "She is a true champion for Bryant High School and a highly deserving recipient of the 'You Make a Difference' Award," Hertel wrote.

Bryant School

Bryant High School is named after William Cullen Bryant, a writer, poet and founder of the Republican party. In 1825, he went on to become the editor of the New York Evening Post. He was an abolitionist who was pro-immigration.

In 1956, the school was Groveton High School before it closed in 1976 and turned into Bryant Intermediate School when the county first had an intermediate school system. Bryant closed in 1985 and reopened in 1986 as the county's alternative education



Florence "Pipi" Harrison was surprised to get this award from Rotary President Mike Jones.

center. The common curriculum of math, English, social studies and PE. varies a little at Bryant.

According to the description, "Bryant High School inspires and empowers a diverse student population to earn a high school diploma in a non-traditional setting."

This non-traditional setting has flexible scheduling around outside requirements, caters to different learning styles and offers vocational, technical and career training for those not in the regular high school path.

Bryant allows students to ex-

plore new education pathways and succeed through different learning styles, said Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D), one of the forces behind the efforts at Bryant. "I have championed career and technical education and career development opportunities crucial to every student reaching their full potential. Going to Bryant graduations and hearing the powerful stories and journeys of Bryant students has been the highlight of graduation season for me for more than 20 years," Storck said.

Pregnancy is one of the challenges where Bryant helps out. They have "Project Opportunity" that supports pregnant and parenting students to get a high school diploma with greater individual attention and child development classes. They provide an opportunity for new parents to interact with existing community programs such as the health department, Department of Family Services and other sources of support. Project Opportunity is one of the programs on Harrison's agenda.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Two Local Students Compete in Scripps Spelling Bee 2024

Team Storck Volunteers at Food Pantry.

By Mercia Hobson
The Mount Vernon Gazette

The Fairfax County Council of PTAs sponsored two county spellers to the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee, Chantilly Pinnacle Academy student Nargiza Muzhapaer and Fairfax County Public School student Ankita Balaji of Rachel Carson Middle School.

Nargiza reached the semifinals at the 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee held two weeks ago at Gaylord National Resort. She was the first Uyghur American to participate.

Nargiza said she was extremely nervous about the national spelling bee, "From the first round to my last, the waiting and anticipation beforehand was unbearable." Nargiza said the spellers' camaraderie, "who all shared the same rollercoaster of emotions," calmed her and boosted her microphone confidence. "I knew that it wasn't just me going through



On June 7, Fairfax County Supervisor Dan Storck (D) and his team stocked shelves and unboxed items, assisted clients, and had fun at United Community's food bank for their spring volunteer day. Do you want to volunteer, too? Visit <https://www.united-community.org/volunteer/> for volunteer opportunities.

this; we were all in it together."

Nargiza prepared for the spelling bee by

studying word patterns and origins, using spelling software, and having her mother

quiz her. She's preparing for next year, but wants "to have fun with the process."

Nargiza's mother, Zohra Musabay, was "absolutely overjoyed" when her daughter reached the national spelling bee semi-finals. "This milestone is not only a testament to her hard work and dedication ... it fills our hearts with immense pride to see her represent our community on such a significant platform." Musabay praised supporters and hoped her daughter's success would inspire other young Uyghur Americans.

Ankita Balaji of Rachel Carson, MS, is the 2024 Fairfax County Spelling Bee Champion, and she competed in the 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee, following in the footsteps of her older sister, Ashita. Carson Middle School Principal Gordon Stokes said, "We are incredibly proud of Ankita. Her accomplishment is proof that hard work can pay off with a wonderful experience. She did an excellent job of representing herself, her family, and the RCMS community." Before Anika got to the national spelling bee, she explained she wanted to "take it all in."

"I will look at where I am and look at how far I've come and just feel really happy," she said.

Ankita was eliminated in Round 4, finishing in 60th place (tied).

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Attendees at the dedication ceremony for the Clara B. Plein Memorial Garden included: Matt Zuccari (Ruppert), Sophia Ciallela (Ruppert), Cole Stoy (Ruppert), Scott Plein (White House Farm Foundation and American Horticultural Society), Joan Honeyman (Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture), Kris Alvarez (KT Enterprises), Matt Teese (South Riding Nurseries), and Matt Deivert (South Riding Nurseries)



The Plein Family (from left): Stewart Plein, Chris Plein, Zaidee Plein, Paul Plein, Scott Plein, Jacqueline Plein and Mark Plein

River Farm Unveils New Native Garden: Clara B. Plein Memorial Garden

A new garden showcasing native plants in a traditional Virginia landscape setting now resides at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society (AHS). Inspired by the backyard of a beloved gardener, the Clara B. Plein Memorial Garden was unveiled on June 7 with a reception of donors, dignitaries, horticulturists, River Farm friends and AHS Board members and staff. The wonderful new garden addition enhances River Farm's 25 acres of scenic landscape along the Potomac River.

Inspired by her grandson, Scott Plein, Chair of the AHS Board of Directors, in partnership with numerous horticultural companies and experts, the Clara B. Plein Memorial Garden features 2,400 individual plants across 30 species, consisting of 68% native plants and 32% native cultivars. Plants were selected for their ability to support pollinators, create habitat, improve air and soil quality, and provide food for humans and wildlife.

Says Scott Plein, "The Memorial Garden is a tremendous palette of plantings that is definitive of both our cultural and natural past. It pays homage to River Farm's wondrous history as part of George Washington's original farmland and exemplifies the AHS's focus on best gardening practices."

A showcase for horticultural excellence, the garden's layout was thoughtfully planned around the preservation of existing large trees and five distinct planting areas: woodland deciduous azalea and viburnum plantings, wood's edge plants, meadow, shrubs and edible garden, and shade garden. Plantings are layered to provide year-



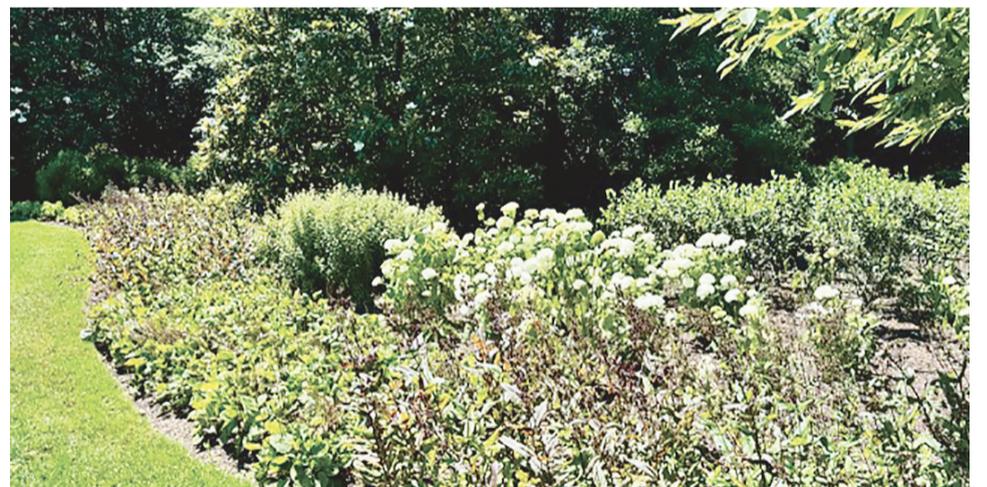
Scott Plein, Chair of the AHS Board of Directors, made a toast and cut the ribbon to celebrate the garden that is dedicated to his beloved grandmother.

round interest through varied colors, textures, and structures.

The Clara B. Plein Memorial Garden reflects the collaborative achievement and generous support of multiple landscaping and nursery companies from across the region, as well as funding from the White House Farm Foundation. The following 15 companies leveraged their landscape design and installation capabilities, and generous funding, to transform the area into a vibrant, ecologically-minded oasis that will be enjoyed by visitors for years to



The new garden addition enhances River Farm's 25 acres of natural beauty and scenic landscape along the Potomac River.



A new garden showcasing native plants in a traditional Virginia landscape setting now resides at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society.

come: Ruppert Landscaping - Installation; KT Enterprises - Donation Procurement & Project Coordination; South Riding Nurseries - Delivery Support; Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture - Landscape Design; Babikow Nursery (Baltimore, MD); David's Nursery (Exmore, VA); Hanover Farms Nursery (Rockville, VA); Ingleside Nurseries (Colonial Beach, VA); Kurt Bluemel Nursery (Baldwin, MD); Riverbend Nursery (Riner, VA); Sandy's Plants (Mechanicsville, VA); Saunders Brothers Nursery (Piney River, VA); The Perennial Farm (Glen Arm, MD); White House Farm

Foundation (Bristow, VA); Willoway Nurseries (Avon, OH).

"This stunning new garden showcases how Virginia's gardening legacy can inspire landscapes that are not only visually captivating, but also resilient and environmentally conscious, requiring less maintenance," said Suzanne Laporte, President of the AHS.

Founded in 1922, the non-profit American Horticultural Society is headquartered at River Farm, a 25-acre site overlooking the Potomac River that is part of George Washington's original farmlands in Alexandria, Virginia. www.ahsgardening.org

Unremitting Data Center Demand Pushes County to Act

Balancing an economy that can't happen without data centers with homeowners' rights and quality of life.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The relentless march of data center growth in Northern Virginia has reached a reported 70 percent of the total number of data centers on our planet. Data centers have encroached on neighborhoods, such as the data center in Fairfax County along Route 50 in the Sully District, raising resident fears of deflating market value and sales prices of homes. The 110-foot-tall, 402,000-square-foot data center facility by Penzance drew criticism during the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors public hearing on Jan. 23, 2024. The planning commission had already given the project the green light in the fall of 2023. The supervisors approved the plan, despite the size of the structure and intense resident opposition.

In reaction, on May 7, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution for the advertisement of public hearings during which the Planning Commission and the Board would consider a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, including Chapters 112.1 and 112.2. The approved resolution stated, "Data centers can provide significant economic development opportunities and are important facilities to support the modern digital world."

As for what data centers are and what they do, they are austere, huge rectangular structures that store computing machines and related hardware equipment.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond describes data centers' interiors and what they make possible saying, "Interiors are packed with rows and rows of computer servers, vast quantities of cables and switches, and the considerable electrical power and HVAC hardware necessary to keep it all working. ... In many ways, data centers are like utilities, where the main interest for outsiders often lies in what the utility makes possible for its customers rather than in the functioning of the utility itself. But, as with water and electrical power utilities, a lot of things in the economy simply cannot happen without data centers."

The demand for more data centers is growing for more than just commercial reasons. Consumer Affairs reported that in 2023, U.S. homes had an average of 21 gadgets from 13 categories connected to the internet. The number of smart gadgets like Alexa, Echo Show, Wi-Fi video doorbells, robot vacuums, and smart baby monitors that warn anxious parents if their infant stops breathing has grown, feeding data center demand. This reporter has over 70,000 photos uploaded to the cloud and tells Alexa each night, "Play ocean sounds." Households, startups, enterprises, and organizations in-

novate with generative AI, which depends on data centers.

Local jurisdictions and their governing bodies, such as the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, depend on data centers for revenue. For the jurisdictions, data centers function as an alternative piggy bank stashed with tax revenue streaming which largely comes from assessments of computer equipment inside warehouses. Because of a Virginia legality commonly called the Dillon Rule, Virginia's localities lack true home rule and only have the powers expressly granted to them by the Virginia General Assembly.

In 2022, tax revenue in Loudoun County from data centers totaled \$663 million. Fairfax, with a fraction of Loudoun's data centers, collected \$20.28 million in data center revenue in 2022. (Source: Freedom of Information Act request by DC News Now, "In Northern Virginia, growing data center revenue is volatile, tax records show.")

Due to tight state restrictions, Fairfax County, like other local jurisdictions, has limited ability to raise revenue to pay for providing services, including revenue needed for public schools and public safety.

The Connection reported on Feb. 6, 2024, that multiple Fairfax County priorities could not be funded, such as baseline funding for IT initiatives; increased investments in affordable housing, environment, and energy; basic need assistance; and for schools, implementation of secondary security audit recommendations, expansion of middle school athletics, and the impact of federal government lowering the CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) that allows high poverty schools and divisions to offer breakfast and lunch percentages from 40 percent to 25 percent.

As for the current Fairfax County data center zoning ordinance, it allows among other things, data centers up to 40,000 square feet by right in the C-3 and C-4 office districts and up to 80,000 square feet in the I-2 and I-3 industrial districts. If a developer wishes to consider a larger building in those districts, they can obtain special exception approval or repurpose the existing building(s).

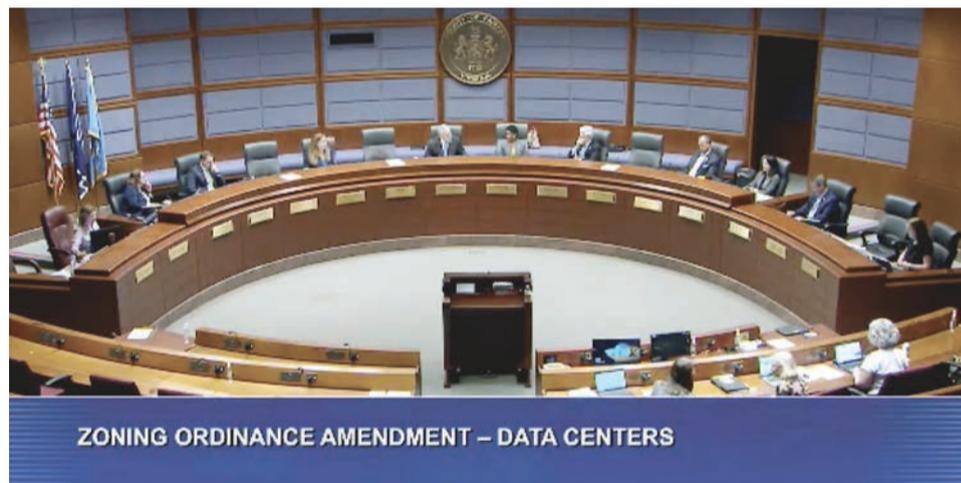
There are several data center applications pending review by Fairfax County, including the 70-foot-tall Plaza 500 project in the Alexandria area, a by-right land-use application. The proposed location is close to Edsall Road and South Pickett Streets. Residential and planned mixed-use buildings surround the area. Disallowing data centers by-right in the county would require an amendment to the zoning ordinance.

The Planning Commission's goal is to provide the Board of Supervisors with recommendations on land use policies and plans that will result in orderly, balanced, and



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Another Northern Virginia data center is constructed.



SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County Planning Commission

equitable county growth. The Commission recommended approval of a more restrictive zoning ordinance on data centers to address issues of compatibility with surrounding uses, noise, and aesthetics at its Thursday, June 6 meeting.

After considering the staff report by Carmen Bishop, deputy zoning administrator, the commission kept by-right in certain commercial and industrial districts unless they exceeded size, height, or other standards and required any equipment, such as generators, to be at least 500 feet from residences. A football playing field is 300 feet long, with a 30-foot-deep end zone on each end. However, a data center structure could be within 200 feet of residences. The equipment would face the industrial side, reducing noise.

At the Planning Commission meeting on

Thursday, June 6, Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, the chairman, provided his perspective on a zoning ordinance amendment aimed at enhancing the existing provisions. He acknowledged, "Northern Virginia sees data centers as integral to its future economies." However, the county needs to address the energy issues associated with data centers.

Niedzielski-Eichner said that it only made sense that regional and local governments advocate for solutions to the energy issue. "The energy required to operate data centers is enormous, and demand is quickly outpacing supply," he said. The solution to this challenge lies not within the county's jurisdiction but rather at the state, regional, and, to the extent that the electric grid spans the nation, national levels. The commissioner advocated for a carbon-free energy mix, including nuclear power, to meet data center demand.



Congratulates the Class of 2024!



Photo courtesy of Musa Visual Media

Back Row L-R: Nathaniel Gray, Ethan Reynolds, Parker Evans, Zoe Mandel, Charlie Bearce, Max Burnett, Max Bryan, Sean Campbell

Second Row L-R: Eileen Hagan, Ava Lyubinsky, Charlotte Torborg, Katherine Whitman, Kate McGrew, Lucy Queen, Sevda Muradkhanova, Alexander Kocsis, Finn Empey

Front Row L-R: Salwa Seman, Aidan McGrew, Lucas Kratovil, Juliet Galicia, Vivi Wayland, Xavier Peri, Ben Kuntz, Luke Wazorko

Members of the Class of 2024 have been offered admission to and/or will be attending the following high schools:

Alexandria City High School, Bishop Ireton High School, Bishop O'Connell High School, The Field School, Flint Hill School, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, Gonzaga College High School, Immanuel Christian School, St. John's College High School, and St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School

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A Connection Newspaper



Advancing Tenant Rights and Affordable Housing

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

July 1st is rapidly approaching, which means that we are on the cusp of a new fiscal year and most of the new laws passed during the 2024 General Assembly session will go into effect for the first time. Each year, I like to provide my constituents with a highlight reel of these new changes so that they remain informed and well-prepared for the year ahead.

One of the key areas that saw progress this year is tenant rights and affordable housing. In a recent column, I discussed in-depth my work related to reforming the Virginia Manufactured Home Lot Rental Act and how these changes will help preserve existing manufactured (mobile) home parks as critical affordable housing and give park residents protection and more options when facing a park closure.

Several other efforts to protect residents facing eviction and to reduce overall evictions passed. The Eviction Diversion Pilot Program was extended for an additional year. This program is designed to create local and regional coordinated safety net to prevent evictions. In the event that an eviction cannot be prevented, the system

works to divert evictions once a household has received an unlawful detainer. Another bill passed will give tenants the right to be notified by landlords of any increases in payments requested during the eviction process. Finally, HB 73 requires that courts automatically expunge dismissed eviction cases after 30 days. Having evictions on record can significantly impact a household's ability to find new housing.

Several conditions already exist in law that afford tenants the right to terminate a lease agreement early, including active military service. As of July 1st, domestic or sexual abuse victims who have obtained a permanent protective order will gain this right if they need to move for their safety. Under current law, there must be a family abuse protective order or a conviction before a tenant may terminate their lease agreement.

Bills were passed to increase the maximum fine that localities can impose for repeated violations of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). The USBC sets the building regulations that must be complied with when constructing a new building, structure, or an



Krizek

addition to an existing building and must also be used when maintaining or repairing an existing building or renovating or changing the use of a building or structure. This change will hold landlords accountable for holding up their end of lease

agreements to provide safe and well-maintained dwelling units for their tenants. Additionally, an advisory group on Virginia's USBC was created to revise the code to permit single-exit staircases in multi-family residential buildings under six stories tall. Single-staircase multi-family buildings are often easier to build on the irregularly shaped lots available in cities and allow more flexibility for units with multiple bedrooms suitable for families, making them another tool in the toolbox to address the housing shortage.

We increased tax credits available to landlords who rent to Housing Choice Voucher holders from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The program earmarks \$100,000 of these funds for use in the more rural regions of Virginia.

In addition, policy groups were established to study current law and recommend changes in fu-

ture legislative sessions. These include a workgroup on creating a Virginia Residential Development Infrastructure fund, which would cover costs associated with building roads, water and sewer extensions, and other utilities to support the construction of new needed housing development, especially in rural areas of the Commonwealth.

Finally, we passed bills to allow all localities in Virginia to set up their own Community Revitalization Funds to prevent neighborhood deterioration and address blight. Richmond is the only jurisdiction allowed such a fund under current law.

As we approach the new fiscal year on July 1, it's clear that the strides we've made in tenant rights, including for mobile home owners, and affordable housing will foster stronger, more secure communities throughout Virginia. These legislative advancements represent our collective commitment to ensuring that every resident has access to safe, affordable housing and the necessary protections to thrive. As we implement these changes, we can look forward to a future where housing insecurity is a thing of the past. We should all embrace these opportunities with optimism and continue to work to build a more inclusive and supportive Commonwealth.

Free Summer Fun in the Mount Vernon District



Free Summer Entertainment Series, Fridays at Grist Mill Park and Saturdays at the Workhouse Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Stop by Fort Hunt Park every Sunday at 7 p.m. in Pavilion A.



National Museum of the United States Army.

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

Whether you are traveling, have family visiting or enjoying a stay-cation, summer is the best time for FREE outdoor fun in Mount Vernon. The Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series, Mount Vernon Nights

is a beloved MVD tradition. Every Friday at Grist Mill Park and Saturdays at the Workhouse Arts Center at 7:30 p.m., bring a blanket, chairs or a picnic dinner and listen to local artists and bands. Stop by Fort Hunt Park every Sunday at 7 p.m. in Pavilion A to listen to a collection of well-known local orchestras and

bands performing your favorite music.

Our office, in partnership with School Board member Mateo Dunne, Neighborhood and Community Services and the Lorton Community Action Center, invite you to our Back-to-School Community Day on Saturday, August 3 from 10 a.m.

– 2 p.m. at the Lorton Community Center. In preparation for this event, we are accepting donations until July 21 of school supplies. Drop off contributions in the designated bin outside our office at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center.

Stay tuned and join us for our SEE FREE SUMMER FUN, PAGE 7

OPINION

Free Summer Fun in the Mount Vernon District

FROM PAGE 6

social media Summer Series: Tourism Tuesday! Every Tuesday, we'll spotlight a Potomac Banks partner, showcasing upcoming events and tourism sites you can enjoy throughout the year. When you visit any of the Potomac Bank's locations, download your FREE Potomac Banks Savings Pass to receive discounted admission and more.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Nextdoor to stay up to date and learn about all our Potomac Banks partners and let's explore Fairfax South together!

Summer offers many opportunities to enjoy the vast nature, parks and trails we have here in the MVD. Stop by any Park Authority or NOVA Park to walk the numerous trails such as the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail or the 5k loop trail at Occoquan Regional Park. If you are looking to get the wind blowing through your hair, check out the Meadowood Mountain Biking Trails in Mason Neck or for something more leisurely, the Mount Vernon Trail is a great path for everyone. Looking for indoor fun? Immerse yourself in history at our free museums such as the National Museum of the United States Army



When you visit any of the Potomac Bank's locations, download your FREE Potomac Banks Savings Pass to receive discounted admission.

and the Gum Springs Museum and Cultural Center. Enjoy an outdoor picnic along the water at Dyke Marsh, Riverside or Pohick Bay Regional Park. Playgrounds are a great opportunity for family time and can be found in various parks in the MVD, like, MLK, Jr. Park, North Hill Park, Laurel Hill Central Green and many more. There are countless opportunities to have a summer filled with fun activities. And the best part ... it's all free!

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As the newest addition to our Cardiology team, Dr. Gates specializes in treating various cardiovascular conditions, including coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, and arrhythmias such as atrial fibrillation, supraventricular tachycardia, and premature ventricular beats. Dr. Gates is a member of the American College of Cardiology and holds board certification in Cardiovascular Medicine. Originally from Pennsylvania, Dr. Gates has called Northern Virginia home since 2011. He obtained his undergraduate education at Pennsylvania State University. Following his graduation from PSU, he attended medical school at Uniformed Services University in Bethesda and ultimately completed cardiology fellowship training at Walter Reed.

He served honorably for 26 years in the United States Army before retiring from military service, including positions as the chief of cardiology at Womack Army Medical Center and Fort Belvoir Community Hospital. He is pleased to continue serving the medical needs of the National Capital Region following his time in the military.



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FILE PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION, JUNE 10, 2020

Fairfax County residents protest the death of a Black man, George Floyd, killed by a white Minneapolis police officer in May 2020, sparking protest for police reform inside the Fairfax County Police Department as well as across the nation. The sign the young Black boy carries says, “When I grow up I want to be an actor; not a hashtag.”

County Supervisors Act Now

Increase Trust, Preserve Sanctity of Life, Reduce Disparity.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed Kevin Davis as the county’s chief of police on April 23, 2021. According to the 13-page report, “Next Steps on Police Reform in Fairfax County, May 12, 2024,” by members of the County’s Police Reform Matrix Working Group, the Fairfax County Police Department has displayed adverse reactions to requests for community co-production on policy revisions, refused to share information concerning its studies, and witnessed an increase in its use of force, primarily against people of color.

Also, “a dramatic rise in police shootings [in Fairfax County] over our ten-year average is cause for concern and warrants reflective conversation about the sanctity of life,” said Dr. Vernon C. Walton, senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Vienna and one of ten members of the county’s Matrix Working Group. Walton said this one year earlier, on May 16, 2023, when he and one of his colleagues on Matrix Working Group, Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, convener of the Matrix Working Group, presented the group’s 45-page “Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County: an Action Plan” (Action Plan 2023) to the Board at its Safety and Security Committee Meeting. The Action Plan 2023 included 52 recommendations for FCPD to the Board. Less than two years after the Board appointed Davis as the county’s police chief, it as-

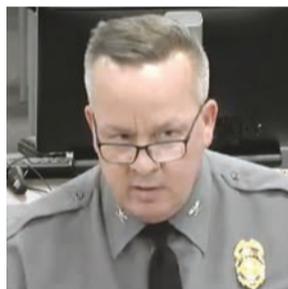
signed the Matrix Working Group’s ten members to author and present a report.

Diane Burkley Alejandro, Sadaf Atashbarghi-Nehr, Prince Howard, Mary Kimm, Adrian Steel, and Vernon Walton collaborated and authored the comprehensive Next Steps 2024. Burkley Alejandro promptly submitted it to the Board and others on the same day, and the Connection received a copy. They remain dedicated to the equity-focused action plan of the Matrix Working Group.

Three of the five individuals who authored Next Steps 2024 —Diane Burkley Alejandro, Atashbarghi-Nehr, and Pastor Walton — represent ACLU People Power Fairfax, Fairfax NAACP, and Voices of Black Fairfax. The other two, Mary Kimm and Adrian Steel have been actively involved in various county police reform committees and groups for the past decade, contributing to the creation of several critical police reform documents and studies presented to the board.

What Are ‘Next Steps 2024,’ in 13 pages?

First, Next Steps 2024 begins with a detailed background on the national scene and its impact on Fairfax County. The murder of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white Minneapolis police officer in May



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE VIDEO, MARCH 12, 2024, FAIRFAX COUNTY SAFETY AND SECURITY MEETING

Chief Kevin Davis of the Fairfax County Police Department at the March 12, 2024, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Public Safety and Security Committee Meeting

For example, when the Matrix Working Group requested co-production with FCPD on the 52 recommendations in their Action Plan 2023 before the agency formally responded, FCPD refused.

The Working Group requested co-production again, with a foot pursuit policy. FCPD denied them, as the agency did a third time when the group asked for co-production on a proposed change to the “proportionality” standard governing the use of force policy. Ed Roessler Jr., Fairfax County’s police chief from 2013 to 2021, coined the word “co-production,” which in this case meant “community-FCPD engagement to understand each other’s concerns with a policing practice, with the goal of reaching a consensus through redrafting and compromise.”

RMWG RECOMMENDATIONS	FCPD Status Assessment	RMWG Status Assessment
A. RETHINKING POLICING		
1. Co-responder Expansion	Concur	Agree
2. Expand “Behavioral Health First” Approach	Completed	Disagree
3. Increase Mental Health Resources	Non-applicable	Applicable
4. Expand Crisis Receiving Center Services	Non-applicable	Applicable
5. Increase Community Service Board Outreach	Non-applicable	Applicable
6. Be Open to Other Models of Policing	Unclear	Not addressed
B. USE OF FORCE (UoF) POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY		
7. Respond to CAC Recommendations	Completed	Mostly completed
8. Adopt “Necessary and Proportional” Standard	Nonconcurrency	Needs discussion
9. Use Force Only So Long as Required	Completed	Partially completed
10. Classify Pointing of a Firearm as UoF	Concur	Agree; need details
11. Revise De-Escalation Standards	Completed	Partially completed
12. Clarify Levels of Resistance	Completed	Disagree
13. Remove Self-Harm from Aggressive Resistance	Nonconcurrency	Resolution needed
14. Strengthen the Duty to Intervene	Completed	Disagree
15. Restrict Prone Restraints, Spit Hoods, etc.	Completed	Disagree
16. Adopt Foot Pursuit Policy with Community Input	Under review	Resolution needed
C. INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT		
17. Expand Civilian Oversight of Police	Nonconcurrency	Resolution needed
18. Independent Criminal Investigations of Officers	Nonconcurrency	Revisit later
D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION		
19. Strengthen Officer Relationships with Residents of Color	Completed	Disagree
20. Establish Community Participation Protocols	Completed	Disagree
21. Conduct Customer Service Audits of Stops	Completed	Disagree
22. Enhance Diversity on Policy Group Initiatives	Completed	Disagree
23. Community Feedback on FCPD Training	Completed	Disagree
26. Incentivize and Reward Positive Policing Behaviors	Completed	Disagree
27. Enhance Officer Wellness Programs	Completed	Defer to FCPD
28. Drug Test Officers if Force Results in Serious Injury	Nonconcurrency	Resolution needed
29. Independent Assessment of Wellness Programs	Nonconcurrency	Revisit later
30. Create an Early Intervention System	Completed	Revisit later
31. Officer Physicals & Wellness Session Frequencies	Completed	Revisit later
32. Independent Means to Assess Officer Feedback	Completed	Agree
F. TRANSPARENCY, DATA REPORTING, AND DATA ANALYSIS		
33. Online Searchable Database for Key Police Actions	Completed	Disagree
34. Disaggregate Latinos of All Races; Combine Race/Ethnicity	Completed	Disagree
35. Monitor Offenses Linked to Behavioral Health	Under Review	Need discussion
36. Capture UoF Instances Sequentially	Completed	Partially completed
37. Follow-up to UTSA to Assess Changes in UoF Disparities	Completed	Disagree
38. Assess Stops Escalating from Minor Charge to UoF	Completed	Partially completed
39. Publish Multi-Year Disparity Analyses on Key Actions	Unclear	Resolution needed
40. Independent Study of Stops	Not addressed	Should address
41. Release BWC Footage within 10 Days	Nonconcurrency	Revisit later
42. Establish a Data Control Board	Unclear	Revisit later
43. Use BWC to Assess Disparities, Race/Ethnicity Mislabeling	Completed	Partially completed
44. Create Officer Misconduct Database	Under Review	Needs discussion
45. “Predisposition To Disclose” FCPD Public Records	Completed	Disagree
46. Disclose Personnel Records and Investigatory Files	Completed	Disagree
47. Training Topics and Schedules in General Orders	Completed	Partially completed
G. SPECIALIZED POLICE UNITS		
48. Evaluate Specialty Unit Roles, Responsibilities	Completed	Disagree
49. Limit Role of SROs to Serious Violent Offenses	Nonconcurrency	Resolution needed
50. Report Specialty Unit Disparity Data	Completed	Disagree
H. MONITORING AND EVALUATING PROGRAM PROGRESS		
51. County Executive Report on FCPD Progress	Non-Applicable	Applicable
52. Independent Monitoring of Reform Implementation	Non-Applicable	Applicable

SCREENSHOT FROM “NEXT STEPS ON POLICE REFORM IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, MAY 12, 2024,” BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY’S POLICE REFORM MATRIX WORKING GROUP

Comparison of FCPD’s and RMWG’s (Reform Matrix Working Group) Assessment of Progress of the 52 recommendations

2020 sparked nationwide outrage and protests, but the impact on Fairfax County was significant because it “energized Fairfax residents to seek holistic reform of local law enforcement,” according to the report.

Additional background material describes an uncooperative culture in the FCPD as recently as 2023.

The Working Group then requested access to given FCPD studies; however, the agency denied their request and advised them to go through the Freedom of Information Act.

In Next Steps 2024, the authors recommended that the Board of Supervisors take immediate action on six of the 52 Working Group recommendations with the “greatest potential to increase trust, preserve the sanctity of life, and reduce disparity.” They urged the Board to take “action on issues that are ripe for resolution and referral to the One Fairfax Roundtable on matters that could benefit from further study.”

Next Steps 2024 provides the board with a clear plan.

It concisely summarizes the six recommended steps, downsized from the group’s 45-page Action Plan 2023. The six steps describe recommendations for Board action and first steps for the recently formed One Fairfax Roundtable. Reportedly, the Roundtable convened for the first time in April of this year. No record of its meetings and actions appears to be available online.

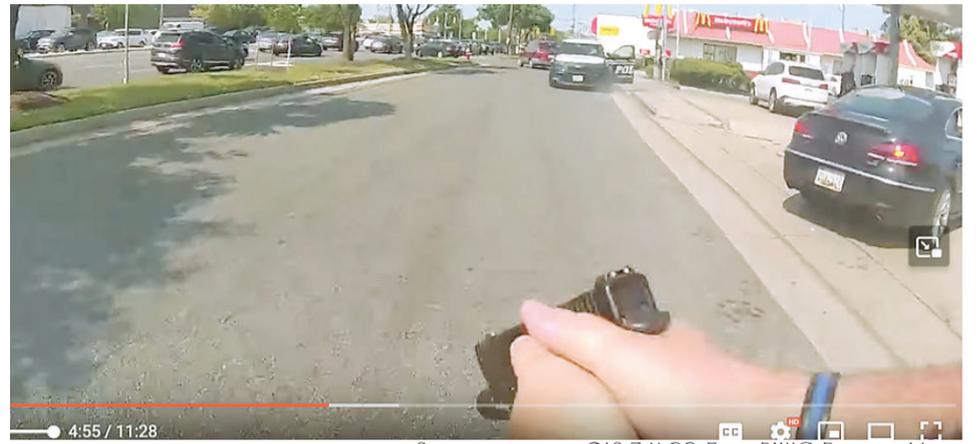
The six next steps proposed by the Matrix Working Group: “1. Evaluate and Improve Current Civilian Oversight of Police; 2. Clar

NEWS ANALYSIS



SCREENSHOT VIA OIS:5.11.23 FULL BWC RELEASE VIDEO, NOT INCLUDED AT PRESS CONFERENCE

FCPD policies in action, proportionality standard governing authorized use of force
Body Worn Camera (BWC): Officer #4- At (10:14/11:28) Lemagne is on his back; legs down. Officer Kenyatta Momon has the barrel of his gun farther down. Three additional pops are heard between 10:13 and 10:14. Blood and wound visible on Lemagne's temple. Leamagne is fatally wounded.



SCREENSHOT VIA OIS:5.11.23 FULL BWC RELEASE VIDEO

FCPD policies in action, proportionality standard governing authorized use of force and foot pursuit policy: On May 11, 2023, a Fairfax County Police officer on foot draws his weapon as he sees the FCPD SUV with a kidnapped FCPD officer trapped inside with the driver as the vehicle speeds backward out of the gas station parking lot; the driver's door is open.

Police Reform Recommendations Sit on a Shelf

Inaction by Supervisors compounded by FCPD stalling on life-saving measures.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
 THE MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

In the past year, the Fairfax Board of Supervisors has yet to act on 51 of 52 police reform recommendations presented to them by County Supervisor Rodney Lusk's board-appointed Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group in their May 12, 2023, report, "Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County: A Proposed Action Plan."

Seeing a lack of Board action in police reform over 12 months, the Matrix Working Group followed up with a 15-page report, "Recommendations to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Next Steps in Police Reform."

The members of the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group remain committed in 2024 to updating of Fairfax County Police Department policies, although the group is no longer a formal county entity. The Matrix Working Group continues to engage with the Board of Supervisors and attempts to engage with the Fairfax County Police Department on an ad hoc basis, particularly on reform recommendations that deal with the proportionality in the use of force; foot pursuits, civilian review; expansion of behavioral health care resources, efficacy and disparity analyses, and deadly policing practices that target communities of color and individuals experiencing mental health crises.

However, the Matrix Working Group is essentially locked out of further discussions with the FCPD, as evidenced by the department's repeated denials of the group's requests for co-production on policy development as well as requests for information and documents, instructing them to file Freedom of Information Act requests instead. FOIAs can come with a bill for research time and copies; documents can be refused or redacted.

The recommended policies proposed by
www.connectionnewspapers.com

the Matrix Working Group in Action Plan 2023 and revisited in a condensed roadmap-form in Next Steps 2024, aim to increase trust, ensure data and information transparency, create co-production opportunities, hold police officers and the Fairfax County Police Department accountable, and push for access to documentation. Next Steps 2024 cites disagreement with Chief Davis' belief that the newly established One Fairfax Roundtable can replace co-production. Next Steps 2024 explains that the One Fairfax Roundtable lacks the necessary tools and design to offer significant guidance on police policies and practices and it is not designed to do so.

The Matrix Working Group based many of its 52 recommendations published May 12, 2023, on FCPD policing incidents since 2021, categorized into eight subsets. FCPD reports indicated that there had been eight police shootings in the prior 15 months, six in 2022, and two in 2023, as stated Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County: A Proposed Action Plan by the Police Reform Matrix Working Group, May 12, 2023 (Matrix Working Group Recommendations 2023).

"There have been three deaths caused by Fairfax police in the past nine months, the most recent involving a February 2023 foot pursuit of an unarmed Black man, Timothy Johnson, who allegedly stole a pair of sunglasses at Tysons. Another death occurred on April 5, 2023, of a kidnapping victim where a FCPD canine officer came to the assistance of the Virginia State Police, although it is unclear who fired the fatal shot," reported Matrix Working Group Recommendations 2023.

The day before the Matrix Working Group dated and published its recommendations, on May 11, 2023, Fairfax County Police fatally shot Brandon Lemagne, 38, after Lemagne attacked and attempted to disarm another

FCPD's Response lists 62% (32/52) of our recommendations as completed; Chief Davis at our meeting stated the completion rate is 85%. We assess that only 25% of our proposals (13/52) have been even partially adopted or agreed to.

RMWG RECOMMENDATIONS	FCPD Status Assessment	RMWG Status Assessment
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22. Enhance Diversity on Policy Group Initiatives	Completed	Disagree
23. Community Feedback on FCPD Training	Completed	Disagree

SCREENSHOT

Partial comparison of FCPD's and the Matrix Working Group's assessments of progress on police reform recommendations.

Fairfax County police officer in Mount Vernon. The average for officer-involved shootings for the prior 10 years was 1.5 annually, according to the Message from Chief Davis, Chief of Police.

Recommended policies are new or clarifications of existing ones, such as: a policy on the use of force and proportionality; pointing a firearm with further clarifications or appropriateness; and others.

In 2020, the Chair of the Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee, Supervisor Rodney Lusk (Franconia) had sought community input on necessary reforms for the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD). The committee ultimately received 315 practice and policy recommendations from the community. These recommenda-

tions, compiled into a matrix, are available for online viewing at FCPD and BOS Police Reform Tracker. This is the source of the Matrix Working Group's 52 recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, ripe for impactful implementation.

According to Next Steps 2024, six recommendations are immediately pressing: "Evaluate and Improve Current Civilian Oversight of Police; Clarify the Roles of the One Fairfax Roundtable and FCPD-community Co-production to Expand Engagement with Communities of Color; Expand Resources and the Role of Behavioral Health to Reduce Low Level Offenses; Measure and Assess Progress on Police Reform; Re

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 11

Are Supervisors Leaving Police Reform Efforts to Languish?

**Stymied by FCPD,
'We need the board
to act.'**

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE MOUNT VERNON GAZETT

During the public comment portion of the Tuesday, May 21, Board of Supervisors meeting, Diane Burkley Alejandro spoke on behalf of ACLU People Power Fairfax. She is also a member of the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group. Adrian Steel, Alejandro's colleague on the Working Group, also commented. Each had three minutes.

Alejandro said that the Board of Supervisors has yet to address 51 of the 52 police reform recommendations in the Matrix Working Group's 2023 45-page report, Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County: A Proposed Action Plan (Action Plan 2023), authored by the Police Reform Matrix Working Group.

She said that the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) had only "partially adopted about 25 percent of the report's recommendations. She questioned why it did not adopt policies for the use of force and data transparency.

Alejandro said the only adopted recommendation was to establish a permanent community advisory group on equity, the One Fairfax Roundtable, Chairman Jeff McKay's brainchild.

"We do not need serial advisory committees rehashing these concerns. We need the board to act," said Alejandro.

Alejandro directed the Board's attention to a recent report, the 13-page Recommendation to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: Next Steps on Police Reform in Fairfax County, May 12, 2024," which she had conveyed to them the same day, May 12.

"Last week, we [members of the Matrix Working Group] gave you a list of the six most pressing recommendations," Alejandro said to the Board. "First, we asked for more community involvement in police policy, not less.

"Chief Davis is ending it instead," Alejandro said. She opined that Davis believes the Roundtable can achieve the same results as co-production with community members who had expertise in police reform, and questioned the learning curve members of the Roundtable would face.

"Do you really want the Roundtable to become an expert in best practices on things like foot pursuits and probable cause? You won't find that listed in its charter," she said.

Alejandro addressed four assessment measures used by the Fairfax County Police Department. "If this is the country's safest jurisdiction (of its size), then police stops and arrests should also be safer, and performance measures can tell us that," she said.

She said that the University of Texas at San Antonio discovered a discrepancy in FCPD's use of force from 2018 onward. This prompted her to pose a rhetorical question to the Board: What steps had been taken to try to



Diane Burkley Alejandro testifying May 21, 2024.



Adrian Steel speaks before the Board of Supervisors on May 21, 2024.



The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors listens to public comments on issues of concern.

reduce the use of force? Alejandro's findings suggested that FCPD should correct its flawed methodology and refrain from "lumping Latino and white people together." Researchers worldwide have abandoned the practice.

"It is up to the Board to implement these changes," Alejandro said, concluding her three-minute allowed speaking time.

Adrian Steel said that the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission's original intention regarding civilian oversight in 2015 was to structure it according to best practices of the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement. While they intended to revisit civilian oversight in three to five years, it did not happen in Fairfax County.

The Matrix Working Group suggested conducting a study comparing FCPD practices to established best practices, citing examples from other Virginia jurisdictions. "The study would take a year," said Steel. "That's one of our first things, but we think that's important."

Steel's second item encompassed three immediate proposals on which the Matrix Working Group wanted the Board to take action. The first is proportionality in the use of force standards. "Everybody, including the chief, PERF (Police Executive Research Forum), the committee, and the (Independent Police) Auditor agrees that proportionately should be playing a bigger role," said Steel. "They haven't done a thing about it."

Steel addressed the absence of a revised foot pursuit policy, particularly in light of the lessons learned from the Tysons incident, in which an FCPD police officer shot and killed unarmed Timothy Johnson, a Black man, during an outdoor, night-time foot pursuit.

FCPD officers suspected Johnson of shoplifting sunglasses.

"It's been 15 months; we have no foot pursuit policy," Steel said. He added that FCPD drafted a foot policy but was unwilling to share it with them or anyone else. FCPD said they intend to submit it to the new One Fairfax Roundtable.

"It's not really the time when we need our policy now," said Steel, "so it doesn't happen again." Steel pointed out that the new foot pursuit policy would also protect the officers so they know what to do and not do.

Third, Steel discussed the pointing of a firearm. He said that Chief Davis announced in November that FCPD was changing the policy; pointing a firearm would be considered a reportable use of force. But since then, "we have seen nothing about what that policy might be," Steel said.

"We need all three of them; we've seen evidence in the police's activities that they will help make us a safer place," Steel said.

Steel said it would be beneficial for FCPD to publish critical incident reports detailing events and concerns following investigations, such as the McLean fatal police shooting of Jasper Lynch in 2023. (Lynch armed himself with a bottle during a mental health crisis.)

Lynch's parents raised questions, such as why the officer who shot and killed their son did not have his electronic control weapon (Taser) with him. "And the proportionality ... when the incident is over, what can we learn so we avoid those situations from happening again?" Steel said.

Alejandro is the lead advocate for ACLU People Power Fairfax and a member of the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Work-

ing Group (Matrix Working Group). Fairfax County Board Supervisor Rodney Lusk, chair of the Safety and Security Committee, charged the Matrix Working Group to transform the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix, a "compendium of (300+) community-based ideas, offered in a range of formats... into an action plan."

Alejandro was also key in the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopting a trust policy in 2021 to prohibit voluntary cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The policy forbids county employees, including police and schools, from asking about or disclosing a person's immigration status unless required by law, a judicial warrant or court order.

Steel was the chairman of the inaugural Police Civilian Review Panel. He has 10 years of police reform work. He served as one of 42 diverse members on the Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity, convened by Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The task force provided 20 recommendations to the Board on equity issues, leveraging the insights, experiences, professional networks, and industry and institutional understanding within the community to better understand the county's drivers of inequity to accelerate the county's progress towards becoming One Fairfax.

Supervisor Sharon Bulova and the Board of Supervisors established the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission in March 2015 in response to public frustration over the shooting death of John Geer by FCPD officer Adam Torres. Steel served on this commission. The Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission evaluated over two hundred recommendations conveyed to the Board of Supervisors in October 2015. Geer, an unarmed Springfield man, was standing in his doorway talking with FCPD police following an alleged domestic dispute when Torres shot and killed him. On July 31, 2015, FCPD fired Torres for violating the department's policies and procedures on the use of force. In 2015, Torres was indicted and charged with second-degree murder. He was sentenced in 2016 to one year of imprisonment, with time served. Torres' release occurred five days after his conviction.

On May 17, a spokesperson for Chairman McKay responded to a request for comment on his reaction to the report, Next Steps 2024, emailed to him on May 12, saying in an email, "Chairman McKay asked that I respond to let you know we've received their report but have not had the opportunity to review it in full yet. We appreciate their continued advocacy and will respond once we are able to review their latest."

The police did not make Chief Davis or other FCPD staff available for an interview, responding instead with a statement. "The FCPD remains proud of our enormous progress over the last several years. As policing continues to evolve and as the FCPD serves as a best-practice police organization, we look forward to collaborating with the newly formed One Fairfax Roundtable as its members work with us and other Fairfax County agencies."

County Supervisors Act Now

FROM PAGE 8

ify the Roles of the One Fairfax Roundtable and FCPD-community Co-production to Expand Engagement with Communities of Color; 3. Expand Resources and the Role of Behavioral Health to Reduce Low Level Offenses; 4. Measure and Assess Progress on Police Reform; 5. Require Disclosure of Key Reports in the Public Interest; and 6. Restart Co-Production on Current Pressing Concerns, with BOS Resolution if Needed.”

Example 6: “Restart Co-Production on Current Pressing Concerns, with BOS Resolution if Needed,” includes explicit directions for the Board, as do the other five steps. “(a) Use of Force- The BOS should adopt the (Matrix Working Group’s) proposal on proportionality if no ... consensus is reached through co-production by July 1, 2024; (b) Foot Pursuit Policy. Reject FCPD’s proposal to refer the issue to One Fairfax Roundtable. Require and complete co-production on development of a policy by July 1, 2024; (c) Pointing a Firearm. Key issues such as what level of force pointing a firearm is considered should be subject to co-production.”

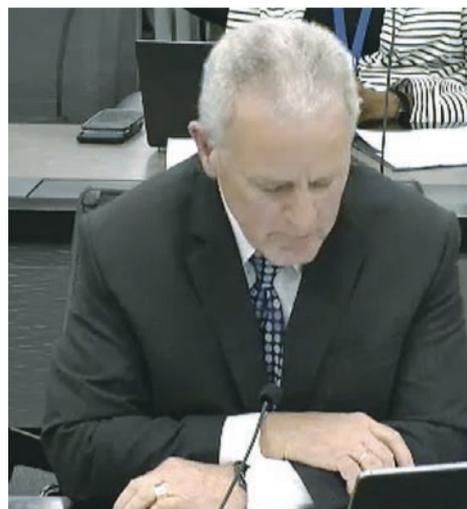
Working Group’s Next Steps 2024 describes the need for reform within FCPD.

One reason is the recent increase in the use of force and the FCPD’s heightened arrest rates of people of color.

The authors of Next Steps 2024 disagree with FCPD’s suggestion that their recommendations are based on national events. The authors state that concerns are locally based, saying, “FCPD’s use of force has primarily increased since 2021 against people of color.” Before that, “in 2021, the University of Texas at San Antonio’s “Investigation of the Use Of Force by the Fairfax County Police Department” (p. 53) found that, from 2016–2018, Black civilians were 2.1 times more likely to be subject to high level force (guns, tasers, etc.) than white civilians. Latino civilians were 1.4 times more likely than white civilians to be subjected to such force.”

The arrest rates of people of color increased during Chief Davis’s tenure. Black residents faced a 4.4 times greater risk of arrest in 2022 (up from 3.7 in 2020), according to Next Steps 2021. The risk of arrest for Latino residents increased by 3.5 times in 2022, compared to 3.0 times in 2020.

According to the Matrix Working Group’s “A Detailed Evaluation of Fairfax County



SCREENSHOT

Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, the convener of the Matrix Working Group, presents the group’s comprehensive “Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County: an Action Plan” (Action Plan 2023) to the Board during its Safety and Security Committee Meeting on May 16, 2023.

Police Department’s Response to the Recommendations of the Reform Matrix Working Group,” dated May 12, 2024, disparity is increasing.

An In-depth Discussion of the Six Selected Recommendations follows (pages 4–10).

Conclusion of Next Steps 2024?

The authors of Next Steps 2024 offer the Board direction. “Immediate action is needed on civilian review, expansion of behavioral health care resources, efficacy and disparity analyses, foot pursuits, and proportionality in use of force.” The report suggests that the FCPD’s “reluctance to engage with the RMWG (Reform Matrix Working Group) and their flat denial of any fear or distrust among residents of color indicate a lack of understanding of our concerns.”

Next Steps 2024 closes with a one-page FCPD and RMWG Assessment of Progress chart. The information presented by the members of the Matrix Working Group in the table is much-needed, concise, and visually appealing. It interprets the extensive and daunting data initially provided in the Matrix Reform Working Groups’ 45-page Action Plan 2023 with 52 recommendations compared to FCPD’s 81-page response to Action Plan 2023.



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE VIDEO BODY WORN CAMERA 1

A woman in a group home was shot in the abdomen and wounded by a Fairfax County Police officer on July 7, 2021, after she threatened him and another officer with a knife. She survived. She lived in a Springfield group home; neither officer carried a Taser. According to the story in The Connection, “Needed Tasers and De-escalation,” on Oct. 26, 2021, at the Safety and Security Committee meeting, Chairman Jeff McKay asked Chief Kevin Davis, “Can you help us understand what the challenge might be with getting a taser in the hand of every officer?” Davis said that the department is currently procuring 350 new Tasers. “It would just be a matter of looking at the finances and what it would take to outfit the entire police department, but we can certainly explore that ...”

“The officer in question was reasonable in fearing that the resident intended to either kill him or cause him serious bodily injury, and it was therefore legally permissible for him to use the level of force used to repel the assault,” said Commonwealth’s Attorney Steve Descano (in his report).



FILE PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION (MARCH 8-14, 2023)

Dr. Vernon C. Walton at March 4, 2023, NAACP Rally for Justice as he stands with the mother of Timothy McCree Johnson, a Black man, shot and killed by a Fairfax County Police officer following a foot pursuit. Officers considered him a shoplifting suspect. Johnson was unarmed. At the time, Walton served as one of ten members of the county’s Police Reform Matrix Working Group and is the senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Vienna.

FCPD Undercuts Police Reform

FROM PAGE 9

quire Disclosure of Key Reports in the Public Interest; and Restart Co-Production on Current Pressing Concerns, with BOS Resolution if Needed.”

Fairfax County’s police reform is under attack from two distinct angles.

Not only has the board not taken action on 51 of 52 recommendations in the last 12 months, the sole one acted upon being The www.connectionnewspapers.com

One Fairfax Roundtable. Also the Fairfax County Police Department, specifically Chief Davis, did not engage in a responsive manner with the Matrix Working Group after it released Action Plan 2023, thereby thwarting forward motion on recommendations.

By October 2023, NAACP Fairfax publicly condemned the FCPD’s lack of timely action on life-saving measures.

NAACP Fairfax witnesses FCPD’s inaction on life-saving measures; foreshadowing the

department’s responses to the Matrix Working Group

Through its Oct. 3, 2023, public release, the Fairfax County NAACP escalated awareness of FCPD’s lack of action on police reform, saying Police Chief Davis rejected what NAACP Fairfax called “life-saving measures.” The Connection reported that NAACP Fairfax issued the “urgent statement” on behalf of community leaders condemning Davis.

According to the 2023 release, Timothy

McCree Johnson, who was shot and killed by a Fairfax County police officer in February after a foot pursuit when police suspected him of stealing sunglasses from a department store at Tysons Corner Mall, would be alive today if the FCPD had established a best practices policy on foot pursuits earlier that year.

The now-indicted police department offi

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 15

Governor Says Virginia Is Exiting Clean Car Commitment

BY MERCIA HOBSON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) has no interest in a roadmap to a zero-emission future for vehicles in Virginia. Youngkin cites Attorney General Jason Miyares' official opinion, which "confirms that Virginians are no longer legally bound to follow the emission standards of California."

Walton Shepherd, senior attorney and Virginia director at Natural Resources Defense Council, said, "Youngkin is a governor, not a king. In a nation of laws, no one person can unilaterally halt a democratically passed and signed law. This is outrageous. Youngkin tried and failed three times to get his allies to repeal the Clean Cars law, but the legislature rightly stood firm on the side of public health and cleaner air. Now he's trying to bail out out-of-state big oil interests by going against the will of the people."

The Sierra Club Virginia Chapter agreed, saying in a release on June 5: "The response is despite the standards being adopted and twice reaffirmed by the Virginia General Assembly. ... If upheld, the decision will restrict Virginians' choice because auto manufacturers prioritize delivery of EVs to states that have adopted ACCII [Advanced Clean Cars II]."

In 2021, Virginia approved legislation signed by then-Gov. Ralph Northam (D) to adopt California's Clean Cars standard. The California Air Resource Board announced its "ride to zero emissions," adopting the new Advanced Clean Cars II regulations (ACC II) during its hearing on Aug. 25, 2022, which made the regulations more stringent.

At the June 5 videoed press conference, Youngkin said Miyares performed "amazing work" in finding that he could circumvent compliance with clean cars. Youngkin said that Virginia will exit California's electric vehicle mandate at the end of this year, "ending once and for all the California electric vehicle mandate in Virginia" [minute 30:57 YouTube video]. Miyares wrote in his AG Opinion, "EV mandates like California's are unworkable and out of touch with reality, and thankfully, the law does not bind us to their regulations. California does not control which cars Virginians buy."

But the standards were adopted in Virginia, in order to give Virginia car buyers more choices. Scott Surovell wrote that, "Governor Youngkin's reckless attempt to unilaterally undo Virginia's Clean Cars law is an autocratic and unlawful action that will hurt everyday Virginians and set our state back." The Senate majority leader offered this background: "The General Assembly and Governor Ralph Northam adopted Virginia's Clean Car Law in 2021 at the request of Virginia automobile dealerships who lacked access to a consistent supply of affordable electric vehicles. Fifteen other states had already joined a multi-state compact which caused manufacturers to send most electric vehicles to other states so they could meet



Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R): "Virginia will exit California's electric vehicle mandate at the end of this year."



Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares (R): "EV mandates like California's are unworkable and out of touch with reality, and thankfully, the law does not bind us to their regulations."

sales quotas. One purpose of the law was to provide Virginia consumers with more electric vehicle choices at lower prices so that they could enjoy the same choices and prices as other states."

California is the only state permitted to create emissions standards under the federal Clean Air Act and the first state to ban the sale of internal combustion vehicles. California is legally capable of setting stricter and different standards than federal standards. The Clean Air Act of the United States Environmental Protection Agency allows other states to adopt California's motor vehicle emission standards under Section 177. Among other requirements, federal Section

177 mandates that these standards match the California standards that have received a waiver, so other states' regulations change along with California's.

Youngkin said consumers could purchase whatever they liked — electric, hybrid, or gas — under his plan. "To be clear, I don't have anything against electric vehicles. But when today nine percent of automobiles in Virginia that are purchased are electric vehicles to turn around and mandate that 35 percent of them have to be electric vehicles, imposes an extraordinary economic burden on our dealers and on Virginians." [35:15]

An account in California's Gov. Newsroom on Aug. 25, 2022, confirms "yearly targets"

as "35 percent ZEV sales by 2026, 68 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2035." Twenty percent of sales can be plug-in hybrids that run on batteries and gas. California's policy does not ban cars that run on gas. People can keep their existing gas cars or buy used gas powered vehicles.

What speakers, like Dave Perno, at the press conference discussed, as well as what was quoted by others in a Friday, June 7 press release by the Governor's Office, was that Virginians deserve the freedom to choose which vehicles best fit the needs of their families, businesses, and the community's economy.

Perno, president of Loyalty Automotive in Chester, Virginia, emphasized Virginians' freedom of choice and the economic impact on local vehicle dealerships. He said the governor "recognizes that supporting small businesses and consumers is not a partisan issue but a community and economic imperative." (28:16). He added that this presents a chance to highlight the importance of empowering individuals to make decisions that are important to them.

"And that's what today is all about," Perno said. "Celebrating freedom."

Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears commented on the governor's action in a 29-word statement, indicating that the governor's action goes beyond exiting from the California Electric Vehicle Mandate. "I'm in full support of Governor Youngkin's actions to withdraw Virginia from REGGI and AG Jason Miyares' official opinion that Virginia is not legally bound to California's emission standards."

REGGI (pronounced "Reggie") is the first mandatory market-based program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. It is a cooperative effort among the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. It is the first implemented carbon cap-and-trade initiative in the United States (2009) to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. Within the 11-state region, REGGI compliance obligations apply to fossil-fueled power plants 25 megawatts and larger.

Neither the governor nor any speakers at the press conference or those quoted in the press release discussed a legal means to exit his predecessor's legislation. Nor did anyone discuss the environmental justice and equity impacts of air pollution from vehicle emissions affecting all Virginians, especially vulnerable residents in frontline communities who often face the most severe consequences.

No one addressed the disproportionate burden of air pollution on heavily urbanized communities and those near busy corridors. This is especially true of neighborhoods sandwiched between freeways, ports, and rail yards. Nor did anyone speak about air quality standards at levels that protect Virginians at the most significant risk: children, older adults, and people with lung and heart disease.

ENTERTAINMENT

POTOMAC HARMONY OFFERS HARMONY & LEARNING!

School may be out in June, but the learning gets started on Wednesday nights at Potomac Harmony chorus rehearsals! Learn the art of 4-part harmony treble singing while experiencing the joy of ringing chords! Together, guests and members will rehearse new music and create harmonies lead by the expertise of our talented director Allison Lynskey. Potomac Harmony members are women and nonbinary individuals from all walks of life, live around the DMV, and have various levels of musical and singing experience. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings, 7-9 p.m., at The View Alexandria, 5000 Fairbanks Avenue, Alexandria. Questions? Contact Jackie Bottash, backrowlead@aol.com.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

34TH SEASON OF THE LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) announces the 34th season of its Lyceum Chamber Series, under the guidance of Music Director Laureate Ulysses James. Hosted at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, located at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria, this series promises to offer an array of exceptional weekly performances throughout the summer. All concerts are at 3 p.m.; no tickets required. Suggested donation \$25.

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Martin Garfield-Levine, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra
Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director

MUSIC SCHEDULE

August 4: Alexandria Baroque
Michael De Sapio, Baroque Violin
John Armato, Lute, Baroque Guitar
August 11: Tapestry Cello Ensemble
August 18: Quodlibet, Flute/Clarinet/Bassoon
August 25: Samuel Runolfson, Cello
September 1: Michael De Sapio, Violin
September 8: Hai Jin, Piano
September 15: John Sutherland Earle: Piano & Friends

LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES SUMMER 2024 CONCERT SCHEDULE

June 16: Main Street Chamber Play-
www.connectionnewspapers.com

ers, Piano Quintet
Mozart: Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, K. 478
Popper: Concert Polonaise for Cello and Piano, Op. 14
Ravel: Ma Mère l'Oye
June 23: TBD
June 30: Luke Ratcliffe, piano
July 14: Crystal Lee, Flute | Brittany Pemberton, Clarinet | Eunae Han, Piano
Works by Emanuel, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, and Coleman
July 21: Sasha Beresovsky, Piano
July 28: Maxim Pakhomov, Piano
Works by Schubert, Dvorák, Poulenc, and Rachmaninoff

JUNE 1 TO AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, stone carving, jewelry, resin, mosaics, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria) unless noted. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

At Grist Mill Park
4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

JUNE

14 Chuck Brown Band (Go Go/Funk/Soul)
21 Munit Meslin with Qlatse Band (Ethiopian Music)
28 The Artimus Pyle Band - Honoring Ronnie Van Zant's Lynyrd Skynyrd (Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band)

JULY

5 Cecily (Soul, Jazz)
12 Strutman Lane (Funk/Pop)
19 Doc Robinson (Rock and Roll)
26 Bio Ritmo (Salsa)

AUGUST

2 Eastern Standard Time (Ska and Reggae)
9 Project Locrea (World Music)
16 Burn the Ballroom (Alternate Rock)
23 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)
30 Melissa Qinn Fox (Country/American)

AT WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton
Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

JUNE

15 Beginnings - a Celebration of the Music of Chicago (Chicago Tribute Band)
22 Wicked Sycamore (Contemporary Folk)
29 Workhouse Fireworks Festival (Ticketed event. Visit www.workhousearts.org)

JULY

6 EU Sugar Bear (Go Go/Funk)
13 Robin and Linda Williams (Folk)
20 Fast Eddie & The Slowpokes (Blues)
27 Bela Dona Band (Funk/Jazz)

AUGUST

3 The U.S. Air Force Strings (Alt-country/Roots rock)
10 Ocho de Bastos (Latin/Pop)
17 Alex Hamburger (Jazz)
24 The U.S. Army Band Country Roads (Country)

JUNE 6 TO AUG. 26

"Nature's Spirit." Nina Tisara's mosaics and Steven Halperson's photographs and etched copper will be exhibited in the Estate House at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard



PHOTO BY JACK-POWERS

Vaughn and Robyn Ambrose, Saturday's master of ceremony for Portside in Old Town Summer Festival, June 21-22. Vaughn and Robyn are Alexandria-based musicians and founders of the Yellow Door Concert Series. Vaughn is the Director of Jazz at St. Stephens St. Agnes Upper school and has toured the world performing and lecturing.

Drive, Alexandria. The public is invited to an Opening Reception on Sunday, June 23, 2-4 p.m. (RSVP: ninat@ninatisara.com). The Estate House is open to the public 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday - Friday and 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Since the Estate House will occasionally close for rental events the public is encouraged to call 703-768-5780, ext. 137, to be certain the exhibit is open for viewing.

JUNE 7-30

"All About Love" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that explores love broadly: romantic love, love of family, love of pets, strong friendships, etc. Works by dozens of local artists will be on display and available for sale. Opening Reception: Friday, June 7, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

FRIDAYS/JUNE 14 AND 21

Mask-Making Workshop with Artist David Camero. 1-3 p.m.

At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join in an exciting and artistic adventure at our Mask Making Workshop where you can design and create unique masks that reflect your creativity! Led by a talented artist, David Camero, who is currently exhibiting Coroto: Masks of Power at the Athenaeum Gallery, this workshop is divided into two parts for mask making and drying, and decorating purposes. This free workshop promises a fun-filled experience for participants of all ages. Please note that space is limited and your RSVP is required. Email admin@nvfaa.org to reserve your space!

FRIDAY/JUNE 14

Air Force Strings. 7 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. The Air Force Strings is a 16-member string ensemble that performs various musical styles including classical,

Broadway, classic rock, bluegrass, and patriotic music. A key element of its mission is to entertain audiences at high-level protocol events in a formation known as the Strolling Strings. Members of the Strings also regularly perform in educational outreach engagements, public concerts and high-level military and government events. Their musical virtuosity and sheer elegance has earned the recognition of world leaders. In addition to its wide-ranging flexibility and reputation for excellence, this ensemble aims to break down political barriers and encourages global cultural dialogue as international musical ambassadors.

SATURDAY/JUNE 15

Mount Vernon Flea Market and Arts and Crafts Fair. 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Masonic Lodge #219, 8717 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Up to 45 vendors, inside and outside, great variety, refreshments on site and inside the lodge. Crafters, Artisans, Antique, Vintage, Collectibles, and neighbors downsizing with practical items/household, furniture, misc. This event takes place every third Saturday of the month from March to December. Next Dates: June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 (+ bonus holiday market Dec 7 or 14). Visit the website: <https://mountvernonfleamarket.wordpress.com/>

SATURDAY/JUNE 15

Columbia Pike Blues Festival. 1-8 p.m. At the intersection of South Walter Reed Drive and Columbia Pike in Arlington. This year the Festival celebrates women in blues with a lineup of all-women-fronted bands offering a full array of blues, R&B, and funk performers of national and regional note that includes: headliner Bette Smith, Eden Brent, Mama Moon & the Rump Shakers; The Stacy Brooks Band and the Honeylarks.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 19

Annual Juneteenth Celebration. 6 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Join in the annual Juneteenth celebration in collaboration with The Carlyle House, and poet, author, and Athenaeum Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta. Discover the history of Juneteenth through hands-on activities, art, history, and poetry readings. Featuring hostess KaNikki Jakarta and three magnificent artists: Ayanna Gallant, 13 of Nazareth, and The Healacist HipHop Momma Princess Best.

JUNE 21-22

Portside in Old Town Summer Festival. A free festival of live music featuring the ALX Jazz Fest at Portside. Friday 6-9 p.m.; Saturday 1-8 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1A Prince St., Alexandria. Kick off summer with the return of the Portside in Old Town Summer Festival. This free festival features an array of live music, local craft beer from Port City Brewing Company and fun for the whole family on the Alexandria waterfront. The event includes Friday evening jazz performances and readings by Alexandria poets as part of the ALX Jazz Fest @ Portside. Saturday, the festival continues with an eclectic musical lineup, local food, hands-on art and history activities and more.

FRIDAY/JUNE 21

Wright at Twilight. 6:30-9 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, at twilight! Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, as you watch the changing light bring out the beautiful architectural details of the house. Play games in the yard, listen to period music, and tour the house at your leisure as the sun slowly sets. Tickets are \$25, with one drink included in the price of your ticket.

SATURDAY/JUNE 22

The Official Pride Bar Crawl in Alexandria. 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. At The Alexandria Bier Garden, 710 King Street, Alexandria. Celebrate Diversity, Be Bold, Be Colorful! Dress in vibrant attire and express your true self in a safe, welcoming space. This event is more than just a pub crawl; it's a celebration of love, diversity, and inclusion. Meet new friends and be part of a community that celebrates you!

SUNDAY/JUNE 30

Angels and Demons: Violin Masterworks performed by Michael DeSapio. 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Angelic sweetness and demonic fury have both been part of the violin's personality for ages. Violinist Michael De Sapio takes you down some lesser-known byways of the repertoire for solo violin. Hear works by Pierre Rode, Benjamin Godard, Arthur Honegger, Richard Rudolf Klein, and Eugène Ysaÿe's spectacular and haunting Solo Sonata No. 2 to mark the centenary of its composition.

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CALENDAR

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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar



Historic Pohick Church in Lorton will host an Independence Day Program on Thursday, July 4, 2024. (Pictured): Rev. Tom Costa and his wife Susan of the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild.

FROM PAGE 13

THURSDAY/JULY 4

Independence Day Program. Noon to 1 p.m. At Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Featuring a Special Reading of the Declaration of Independence. As part of the 250th Anniversary Celebration of Historic Pohick Church, the community is invited to a free public reading of the Declaration of Independence at Historic Pohick Church by historical re-enactor, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Costa, portraying the Rev. Mr. Massey, the Rector of Pohick Church in 1776. The reading will take place at 12 noon, with free docent tours of the Colonial church of George Washington, George Fairfax, and George Mason following the presentation. Visit the website at www.pohick.org.

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets

available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

JUNE

- Wed. 12: Eric Benet \$79.50
- Thu. 13: Marc Cohn \$55.00
- Fri. 14: Asleep At The Wheel 'Happy Trails Tour' \$39.50
- Sat. 15: Pieces Of A Dream \$49.50
- Mon. 17: Steve Earle: Alone Again - Solo & Acoustic \$65.00
- Tue. 18: Chayce Beckham w/ Pug Johnson \$29.50
- Fri. 21: Tarsha Fitzgerald Prod. Presents Voices of Motown 'Anniversary Show' \$39.50
- Sat. 22: Judy Collins w/ Oakland Rain \$59.50
- Sun. 23: Christian de Mesones aka Big New York \$39.50
- Mon. 24: The Wallflowers w/ Justin Trawick \$75.00
- Tue. 25: The Wallflowers w/ Justin Trawick \$75.00
- Fri. 28: Bela Dona Band \$39.50
- Sat. 29: Gary Puckett & The Union Gap \$45.00

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an OIS 2.22.23
 Screenshot
Chief Kevin Davis holds a press conference to discuss the fatal officer shooting of unarmed Black shoplifting suspect Timothy McCree Johnson.



SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING,
 MARCH 12, 2024
Supervisor Rodney Lusk



SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING,
 MARCH 12, 2024
Chairman Jeff McKay

FCPD Undercuts Police Reform

FROM PAGE II

cer killed Johnson fifteen months ago. However, other FCPD officers still lack formal guidance on when and how to conduct foot pursuits, determine the necessary and proportional use of force, and more. In an email shared with The Connection on Thursday, May 23, Adrian Steel, a member of the Matrix Working Group, said that the policy for pointing a firearm would benefit from co-production, and so too does Next Steps 2024.

Ongoing FCPD Stalling and Disruptions to Collaboration

The Next Steps 2024, details a list of Fairfax County Police Department denials of the Working Group requests for co-production and access to data. Alejandro provided the document to the board. The question remains: What is the root cause of FCPD's seemingly uncooperative, non-collaborative behavior toward the Working Group and Fairfax NAACP?

The Matrix Working Group submitted a separate 4-page report to the Board: "Key Components of a Foot Pursuit Policy, Recommendation to Chief Davis on August 22, 2023." It includes comments from Dr. Vernon C. Walton, senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Vienna, member of the Matrix Working Group; ACLU People Power Fairfax, whose lead advocate is Diane Alejandro; and Fairfax NAACP. The report analyzes policy suggestions proposed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (2019), the Stanford Center for Racial Justice Model Policy (SCRJ) (2022), and PERF (Police Executive Research Forum) recommendations on the recent FCPD shooting incidents, and other research. Members of the Working Group requested co-production on a foot pursuit policy, but the FCPD denied it.

On Nov. 13, the Working Group met with Chief Davis and Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold. They learned that the chief was willing to treat pointing a firearm as a use of force. According to Next Steps 2024, the Working Group requested from FCPD

the ongoing co-production of a proposed compromise to the proportionality standard governing authorized use of force, as well as a foot pursuit policy. Those too, FCPD denied. The Working Group sought access to the FCPD studies mentioned in its response but received direction from FCPD to pursue them through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

On March 22, 2024, the Working Group met with Chief Davis for what he described as the "last time." Next Steps 2024, states that Davis told them "all future engagement with community leaders and advocates — including on the new foot pursuit policy — would take place through the new One Fairfax Roundtable." The Roundtable reportedly met for the first time on April 25, 2024. An online search comes up empty.

Roundtable: No Substitute for Community Engagement

In Next Steps 2024, the Working Group cautioned that the One Fairfax Roundtable cannot be "a substitute for current co-production," as Chief Davis reportedly suggested. "Community engagement in substantive policing "best practices would effectively cease," states Next Steps 2024.

FCPD vs. Working Group Assessments of Progress

A bottom-line assessment of FCPD's Response to the Community Recommendations, with Chief Davis saying at the meeting with the Working Group "the completion rate is 85 percent."

The Matrix Working Group (denoted as

RMWG in charts of Next Steps 2023) "assesses that only 25 percent of our proposals (13/52) have even been partially adopted or agreed to, in the eight categories."

The Connection requested comment from Chief Kevin Davis by emailing him directly:

"I have received information that on Monday, May 13, Diane Burkley Alejandro of ACLU People Power Fairfax emailed you and others, subject line: BOS action on police reform. She sent you documents. I've attached them to this email.

"What is your reaction to the documents?
 "What next steps might you consider?
 "When could these steps be taken, and how?"

Katherine Hayek, FCPD Director of Public Affairs replied: "friendly reminder that all media inquires/request for comment should go through us at the FCPDMedia email you have, and not to individual officers. We prioritize and respond to them for you the quickest that way, as well. We'll have the media team review your inquiry and get back to you shortly."

FCPD did not make Davis or other FCPD staff available for an interview, responding instead with a statement, asking also that the statement not be attributed to anyone by name. "The FCPD remains proud of our enormous progress over the last several years. As policing continues to evolve and as the FCPD serves as a best-practice police organization, we look forward to collaborating with the newly formed One Fairfax Roundtable as its members work with us and other Fairfax County agencies."

Still Diverting (In Real Time)



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I had my PET scan today, Wed., June 5. I probably won't know the results until the weekend. That's when I'm likely to have received, electronically, the same radiologist's report that my oncologist will receive. And given that timing, and the time when my column is due in production makes it unlikely, I'll have anything of substance to report on my papillary thyroid cancer before I submit this column for publication. As such, this column will be like last week's: a little bit about cancer and a lot about nothing. Both of which I'm capable of providing.

What this initial paragraph means is that I'll be stuck not knowing, or if I do know (from the report), I won't exactly know its meaning, as it's written by a doctor for a doctor, not necessarily for the doctor's patient. As a result, if I receive the report sooner rather than later, I'll have more time to stress potentially over whatever substance I can semi understand. If on the other hand, I don't receive the report until later, I'll have more time to stress over what it might say — since the not-knowing is often worse than the knowing. For the moment however, to quote Sergeant Schultz from "Hogan's Heroes:" "I know nothing."

The radiologist's report that I will receive, though filled with medical jargon, does list some headings: "Findings" and "Impressions" that at the very least attempt to summarize the report. Having been through this scan/process many times before, the "impressions" and "findings" are helpful, but until I hear it from the oncologist's mouth, I try not to read too much into what little I do understand. After all, this is medicine, not arithmetic. The content generally doesn't provide a straight line to one's life expectancy. That comes from the oncologist. Thankfully, my appointment with my oncologist is first thing Mon. morning, five days after my scan, which is about as soon after a scan when an appointment would be scheduled. Therefore, I might be waiting early for the results, but not too late for the appointment. Us cancer patients tend to grasp at straws while we're looking for any port in a storm.

In the interim, while I still have unoccupied space in my brain, I will complete this column as I completed last week's column: cancer first, Kenny's minutiae second. Compared to last week's diversion about "backparking" — as opposed to headfirst parking, this week's topic is altogether different. Rather than written about the bane of my existence, as the parking issue is, this topic will be about my joie de vivre: resealable packaging on certain perishable items regularly purchased at a supermarket. This previous problem of opening a package (let's say Oreos for example) and not having an easy way to close the packaging to keep the item fresh after opening has been resolved. Previously, I would have used a paper clip or something similar. After 65-plus years of ripping open bags of cookies — as an extremely likely recurring example, the solution is here: the resealable flap. I can still remember the moment when this lifelong problem ended. It happened in Cambridge, Maryland where Dina and I were "weekending."

We were visiting good friends Martha and H.L. at their home. Typically, we'll eat more at their home than we'll go out. This weekend was no different. When Sunday morning came around, Maratha had set out a breakfast buffet: eggs, bacon, bread, coffee, et cetera. Et cetera included English muffins. As I grabbed my plate and walked over to the toaster to get an English muffin, I noticed they were not Thomas. They were a brand I did not know Bays: When I went to grab a muffin from the six-pack package, I had to open the package because it had been resealed. At the end of the bag was a resealable flap to efficiently and conveniently open and close and reseal the insides forever more — or certainly long enough for its contents to be devoured. "Wow!" I must have said aloud because at that moment, that exposure to the resealable flap, changed my life. Certainly, I'm exaggerating because cancer changed my life. However, for a cookie maven like me, discovering this packaging design affected my cookie consumption. No longer would I have to eat all the cookies because otherwise they'd get stale. And 'stale' because once open, the cookies edibility went down as the cookies lost their freshness — because the package wasn't resealable. (Although, I love a stale Oreo. They're soft and delicious.) Now, I could eat like a normal person, well, at least a 'normal person' like me who has more than a sweet tooth. I have sweet teeth.

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