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# RCA: Reston's Independent Voice Community News

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## Greetings!

People are saying this year's Reston Association Board election is the most important in years. There are ten candidates vying for three open slots. As part of RCA's mission to be Reston's "independent voice", we are providing the public with information to help people decide for whom they will vote. RCA developed a set of three critical questions for the candidates to consider. The candidates were invited to answer additional questions extemporaneously and on camera during RCA's February Board Meeting. That meeting was shown live on Comcast Channel 28, on February 28.

Additionally, we submitted our questions and the candidates' answers to the three local newspapers. As of this writing I don't know if any of them are publishing the material, that RCA submitted. The featured article in this month's newsletter outlines the responses of all ten candidates to one of the questions. That question related to what suggestions the candidate had to improve RA's communication and procedures to make RA more responsive to residents' needs. The answers to the remaining questions can be found on RCA's website at: [click here](#)

Ballots will be mailed to homeowners and residents starting Friday March 5th and votes must be received via mail or online by 5 PM Friday, April 2, 2010. Please take the time to vote in this important election!

*Marion Stillson, RCA President*

## RCA Asks The Reston Association Candidates!



**Pictured left to right: RA At-large Candidate Rod Koozmin, Lake Anne/Tall Oaks District Candidate Kevin Danaher, RCA Board Member John Lovaas, RCA Board Member Tammi Petrine, RCA President Marion Stillson, North Point District Candidate Peter Greenberg, North Point District Candidate Rengin Morro and North Point District Candidate Mike Collins**

Every voter in Reston can cast one vote for an At-Large Director. Only voters in the Lake Anne/Tall Oaks and North Point Districts can cast votes in their respective Districts.

Editor's note: the candidates responses are in alphabetical order, within their particular grouping and do not reflect any judgement by RCA on the particular response. They are also copied verbatim from the Candidates written submissions to RCA.

**Question: Given the defeat of the RA Headquarters referendum and vigorous opposition to the Browns Chapel recreation center plan, what suggestions do you have for improving communications and procedures to make RA more responsive to voters' needs?**

***At-Large Directors' Responses***

Rod Koozmin's response: My main focus in running as a candidate is that Reston needs two-way communications between both citizens and citizens to the Board. In the past, we have mostly had intuitional communications from the RA that seemed hierarchal. Virginia mandates that home owners associations, which in many ways, the Reston Association is, should provide a means for citizens to communicate.

Joe Leighton's response: We need to eliminate the haste makes waste policy by having a large number of informal Board community wide meetings with two way dialogue. The meetings would take place at the pools, before regular Board meetings and at a site in each district. Also the community wide project should get started at the committee level instead of the Board level.

David Robinson's response: There are many ways technology can be used to improve communications; starting with identifying the preferred means of communication from RA (i.e. mail, e-mail, twitter, blogs, combinations, etc.). However, equally important is delivering the information in a way RA members can identify the key points to form an opinion without having to read hundreds of pages of material.

Patrick Shipp's response: RA meetings have been scheduled and residents who wish to participate should attend these meetings. Agendas and minutes of those meetings are posted on RA's website. With that said, it is the responsibility of individual Board Members to reach out to their constituents, as well. This outreach, through editorials, e-mail and community engagement, will improve communication between the Board and residents.

**RA Elections - Ask the Candidates!**

**Lake Anne - Tall Oaks Candidates Respond!**

**Question: Given the defeat of the RA Headquarters referendum and vigorous opposition to the Browns Chapel recreation center plan, what suggestions do you have for improving communications and procedures to make RA more responsive to voters' needs?**

Kevin Danaher's response: The RA is responsive to the residents. The planning for the indoor recreation center was stopped due to the residents' opposition. The headquarters referendum failed because the residents didn't support it. I don't understand why these actions are considered to be unresponsive. My process suggestion for the future with any possible changes is to being with input from the affected neighborhood.

Ken Knueven's response: As a business leader, transparency and accountability are ingrained principles I adhere to. I state in my candidacy statement, I will "introduce and promote transparency and accountability guidelines within the RA decision- making process." RA must

behave as a high- performance organization, where all decision making is carried out publicly and the interests of RA and the community are made freely available.

Guy Rando's response: The question is how do you change Reston Association so that it works as it was designed to work -- a representative homeowners association. Right now, RA hides information from homeowners. What have we been told about redevelopment? Nothing. They need to tell us what's going on and find out what it is that WE want to do about it.

#### **North Point District Candidates Respond!**

**Question: Given the defeat of the RA Headquarters referendum and vigorous opposition to the Browns Chapel recreation center plan, what suggestions do you have for improving communications and procedures to make RA more responsive to voters' needs?**

Mike Collins' response: While I don't believe these vents indicate the degree to which RA is "responsive to residents' needs," I agree that both issues may have been resolved differently if RA had communicated more effectively. I pledge to seek more input and provide more information earlier through technology and open meetings. When opposition appears, I will encourage honest and respectful debate.

Peter Greenberg's response: I was at the center of the Recreation Center fight. I am one of the many residents whose needs were not dealt with sensitively. My suggestion is to directly approach the most immediately affected stakeholders, especially homeowners, early in the process and be as honest and forthcoming as possible. The legal rights of individual homeowners have to be respected.

Rengin Morro's response: As a professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, I believe there is always room to improve communication. I have first-hand experience on how lack of communication might lead to conflicts and the expertise on how to prevent that. When elected, I will work with the communications committee to launch an online "involvement forum" to ensure that RA is inclusive of every resident's needs.

#### **RCA Reston 2020 Blog Use Surges!**

**By the end of February, the Reston 2020 blog had passed a number of significant thresholds for readership and posts!**

- **The blog has had more than 1,800 visits or 'hits' since we began tracking usage on January 30, roughly 60 visits per day**
- **More than 900 readers have visited**
- **Some 100 items were posted on the blog in February**
- **About 150 items have been posted since the blog started up in December 09.**
- **More than 20% of visitors stayed on the blog for more than an hour!**

**Here are some interesting facts about our blog's visitors:**

- **Other than the blog administrator, the most frequent visits have been from the Fairfax County Government computer system - more than 20 visits!**
- **We've had visits from 5 foreign countries - Germany, Italy, the Philippines, Russia and Switzerland**
- **From the US, we've had visitors from as close as Richmond, VA and Durham, NC to as far away as Beverly Hills, CA and Bremerton, WA**
- **As you'd expect though, the vast majority of visits come from individual subscribers in Reston or nearby**

**A key reason for the rapid growth in blog usage is the volume, comprehensiveness, timeliness and relevance of the material on the blog to the ongoing review of the Reston-area Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.**

### Blog posts in February included:

- All official County, RA and RCA announcements of Task-Force related activities within hours of their availability
- Many news items, columns and local press 'letters to the editor' regarding Reston efforts and related articles on the finalizing of the Comprehensive Plan for the Tysons Corner area
- RCA has attempted to access all of the Reston Civic Groups' proposals relating to the Reston Planning Principles. We have successfully included draft and/or final versions of those from the County, RCA's Reston 2020 Committee, ARCH, WATCH and Reston Citizen's Working Group #1

**RCA is proud to be citizen's one-stop shopping point for all public information on current Reston planning efforts!**

**Submitted by: Terry Maynard, RCA Board Member and Blog Administrator**

### RCA February Board Actions



'Responding to concern that RCA leaders do not always, when interacting with the press, mention RCA early and clearly enough, Board leaders practiced saying RCA committee names prefaced by "RCA." Next the Board followed RCA's Reston 2020 Committee's recommendation, and formally 'commended' the Reston planning principles prepared by our ally group, Reston Citizens Working Group #1. We hope that reciprocal commendations will create a degree of "speaking in

one voice" which was not otherwise attained. The photo shows RCA's Operations Committee at work in a local restaurant: this Committee reported next to the Board. After the RA candidates' presentation (kudos to Tammi Petrine and John Lovaas), the Board engaged in a detailed discussion of land use and Reston Master Plan Special Task Force matters. '

The next Board meeting is March 29 and can be seen live on Comcast Channel 28 beginning at 8 pm.

Participants in the Operations Committee, pictured from left: George Kain, Dan McGuire, Hank Blakely

**Submitted by: Marion Stillson, RCA President**

### Marion Stillson Speaks to Task Force



**Below is an excerpt from Marion Stillson's testimony before the Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force. She provided this testimony on February 23, 2010.**

**Supervisor Hudgins stated her intent to involve the maximum number of**



citizens in the work of the TF. RCA is disappointed that actions and inactions of the TF and the County's Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) have inhibited the ability of Reston citizens to contribute. My statement provides some key

examples, which I will highlight here.

1. Most of all, the County DPZ has failed to deliver an Existing Conditions and Current Plans Report, promised by the end of September 2009. We understand that the DPZ is underfunded and shorthanded and we admire the professionalism with which they act nevertheless. We also understand that the DPZ expects to publish this Report before the TF makes any decisions. But ordinary citizens who want to grapple with its implications need more time than that.
2. The TF has failed to utilize those citizens who participated in Supervisor Hudgins' Reston Land Use College in September, 2009. Early in February, TF Chair Nicoson rejected Reston 2020 Committee's offer to organize them into working groups at no taxpayer cost.
3. The DPZ has consistently failed to publish TF meeting agendas and related materials in a timely manner, denying citizens the opportunity to understand what will be discussed and to plan their own participation. Today's meeting was, as late as yesterday, advertised as taking place in two different venues. A journalist went to the wrong place in January because of a last-minute change of venue.
4. Finally, the TF and DPZ have failed to inform affected residents in and around areas that will be discussed in either their informational or community meetings. RCA's Reston 2020 Committee had to inform residents of Polo Fields, close to Herndon- Monroe TOD area, that their area will be discussed at the February 23 and 26 meetings of the TF.

Picture: Members of RCA's Reston 2020 Committee discuss issues relating to the Reston Master Plan Task Force.

### Announcements

*March Board meeting will feature Rob Jackson, President of McLean Citizens Association, on the Tysons Task Force experience.*

*RCA's April Board meeting will feature Tammi Petrine on green retro-fitting in Reston.*

*RCA's Reston 2020 Committee is now using Twitter.com to provide timely updates on events and links to its blog entries along with other web links. [Click here for the link](#) If you are not already on Twitter, you can create a free account and log on for instant delivery of Reston planning information.*

### Reston License Plate



Q. How do I apply for a Reston license plate?

A. Send your completed application with \$10 to Reston Citizens Association, PO Box 2851, Reston VA 20195. We must have 350 requests for the plate for it to be produced. RCA will send one check and all the applications to the DMV, once this requirement is met.

**NEXT ISSUE**

- **Use of Reston's Wetlands**
- **Task Force meetings focus on Metro Stations**
- **Buying 'local'**

## **NEXT ISSUE**

- First actual decisions of the Reston Master Plan Special Task Force
- RCA election questions for Reston Association's Board candidates
- Latest Reston license plate activities

Editor  
Reston Citizen's Association

email: [sbowman@thehaefergroup.com](mailto:sbowman@thehaefergroup.com)

web: <http://www.restoncitizensassociation.org>

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