



Board Votes to Raise Taxes

At today's meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted on the FY2013 advertised budget. The Board voted 8-2 (Supervisor Cook and I voted against adoption) to adopt a \$1.075 real estate tax rate and a \$0.02 storm water tax rate, meaning the average homeowner will see an increase of around \$80 in their tax bill.

Earlier this year the County Executive told the Board that based on current spending and revenue levels, we are facing a \$100 million shortfall each year over the next 3-4 years. This budget does nothing to plan for that future. Instead it returns us to a period of budget growth. We have many, many challenges facing us:

- Funding Tysons transportation requirements.
- The impact and cost of the Silver Line, including an increased need for police presence in Tysons Corner.
- Pending cuts in federal employment and government contracting.
- Our aging infrastructure.
- Pending cuts in federal and state aid.

I could not support this budget because it raises the tax rate at a time when our homeowners are still struggling. Over the last four years we had made progress on this front, in the years between 2000 and 2007 your taxes doubled and that was something I promised I would work hard to reverse - and I did - taxes were actually lower last year than when I took office in 2008, but this budget returns us to the days of free-spending, and ignores the fact that we still have a very economically uncertain couple of years ahead of us.

In addition, it continues to focus some of our valuable resources in the wrong places, such as the \$40m funding for affordable housing that is serving people who make up to \$120,000 a year. Supervisor Foust (Dranesville) took issue with this point calling those in our affordable housing program making \$120,000 a year "outliers", but the facts are clear - according to our very own housing authority the blueprint for affordable housing includes providing 20% of the \$40 million in proposed affordable housing units to those making between \$60,000 and \$120,000 a year - that's hardly an outlier. I have no problem with helping those that cannot help themselves and

the neediest in our community, but I do take issue with the county subsidizing those who have many options in the private sector.

Ultimately I am disappointed at this budget, we had a chance to demonstrate our commitment to fiscal restraint during tough times, good foresight, and to show taxpayers that we would not use them as the easy way out - unfortunately we fell short of that.

Join Me and The Springfield District Council for a Forum with School Board Member Elizabeth Schultz

Please join me in meeting your Springfield District School Board member Elizabeth Schultz for an opportunity to hear her thoughts on the biggest issues going on in the school system. Elizabeth will be sharing her opinions, and letting you know the things she is working on as your new school board member, and there will also be an opportunity for Q&A.

Date: May 9th

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Sydenstricker Little Red Schoolhouse
8511 Hooes Road, Springfield 22153
(Near intersection of Sydenstricker Road and the Fairfax County Parkway)

Smart Markets

In the February 17th Herrity Report I announced that a Smart Market would be opening up in May at the American Legion in Springfield (6520 Amherst Ave.) - the confirmed date for their opening is now set for the 26th of May.

Smart Markets, similar to farmers markets, are markets set up around Fairfax County that allow producers to sell their products on the market. Unlike our farmers markets, Smart Markets are not run by the Park Authority and do not make a profit. All the money made at Smart Markets, aside from a small portion of sales which goes back into growing the program, is retained by small farmers that grow their product locally. This program is a great example of innovation that benefits the community by providing low cost, healthy food options, while at the same time giving small farmers and producers access to markets and allowing them to grow their businesses. <http://www.smartmarkets.org/>