

Farmington Civic Association

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The President's Letter

Hello, Farmington Neighbors!

Spiritual teacher and writing coach Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew has been quoted as saying "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." I think this sentiment speaks to the members of this association and community.

The members of the Farmington Civic Association (FCA), including those who serve on the board and those who do not serve on the board, have been working together on multiple projects. FCA member Colita Fairfax took on the bulk of the work in developing a "Farmington at a Glance" information sheet that was mailed out with the membership drive letters. We have been working on the fall membership drive. In accordance with the drive, and in keeping with the majority opinion from the resident survey, the board voted to approve an increase in dues to \$60 for 2025, the first increase in dues since 2007. The board also organized several events, including a candidate forum with the mayoral and city council candidates, our annual National Night out Event, and a community yard sale.

We appreciate your support. Payments can be mailed to the P.O. Box or sent via PayPal from our website. Membership is only \$60/yearly, a low ask for the myriad benefits of the civic association including the lovely landscaping on the medians, events, this newsletter, scholarships for our young residents, and the organization of various community events. Thank you to all who support the work of making Farmington a wonderful place to live.

Stay safe and see you around the neighborhood,

Connie Vatsa, President

Local Candidate Forum



Gray



Campbell



Harper



R. Bowman



Weaver

The Farmington Civic Association (FCA) hosted a General Membership meeting on Monday, Sept 23rd. The meeting started with President Connie Vatsa and Board Member Pam Kelly discussing the resident survey results, National Night Out, and the neighborhood yard sale. A candidate for mayor and numerous City Council candidates attended to speak to residents about their campaigns.

Jimmy Gray, the only mayoral candidate, spoke first. As the current Vice Mayor and an incumbent city council member, he spoke about building on the progress he's made with the current mayor Donnie Tuck and expressed three priorities for his first Mayoral term: improving city services, neighborhood safety/engagement, and providing transitional services for the homeless to help move them off the streets. After Mr. Gray, the rest of the candidates who spoke were running for City Council. The incumbent candidates who attended were Chris Bowman, Hope Harper and Billy Hobbs: the rest of the council candidates were running for their first term.

Carolyn Campbell was the first city council candidate to speak, which is fitting since she was the first challenger to qualify for being on the ballot.. She is centering her campaign around the ethos of bringing a breath of fresh AIR (Accountability/Integrity/Respect) to city govt. She emphasized her desire for accountability from the city govt and for fewer regulations/barriers for small businesses, specifically calling out higher taxes as one of those barriers.

Hope Harper discussed the importance of advocating for city employees, ensuring that the city covered their increase in health insurance premiums. One of her primary issues is working to prevent youth violence.

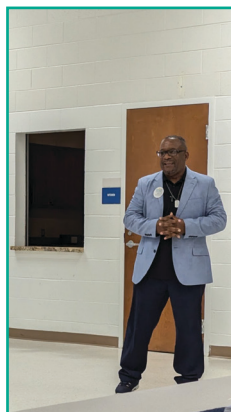
Randy Bowman is a local business owner (and resident of Farmington!) who you might have seen at previous FCA Summer Picnics. He is endorsed by Congressman Bobby Scott, and one of his primary issues is working to bring affordable housing to the city. He would like to setup a "one stop shop" to address issues that hinder businesses being able to start up and/or expand in the city of Hampton.



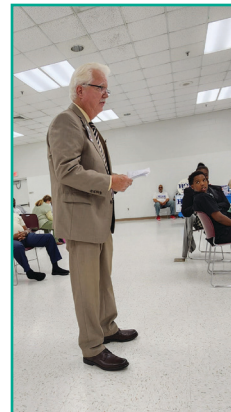
Fleming



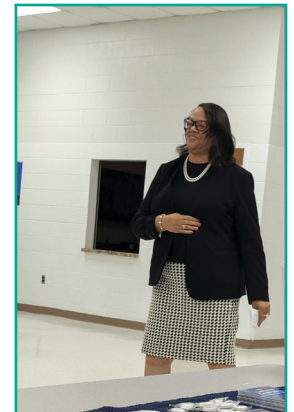
Hobbs



McDew



C. Bowman



Richison

Aaron Weaver discussed his experience with the city working for 311 and how, as a resident of Wythe, he advocated for the residents there by pushing back against an industrial warehouse being constructed in that area. He bemoaned the dearth of vibrant businesses on Mercury Blvd these days and said he'd work to improve that situation.

LaToya Fleming spoke passionately about services to aid in addiction recovery and believes strongly in neighbors organizing in Neighborhood Watch programs, not only for the good of public safety, but also to promote community.

Billy Hobbs is a 12 year veteran of the city council who is "sick to death of young people being shot". In addition to addressing public safety, he wishes to improve the customer service involved in city services and would like to broaden our sales tax base to lower property taxes for Hampton residents.

Whalan McDew is an Army veteran who's been mentoring kids for 15 years and coordinates the Fresh Start Job Readiness Program. He has been endorsed by Congressman Bobby Scott and Senator Mamie Lock, and he proudly states that he "has a heart for service, his family, and the community".

Chris Bowman mentioned his 4 years on the City Council were instrumental in lowering property taxes and violent crime in the city of Hampton. He referenced his LGBTQ-friendly policies and that one of his top priorities is continuing the city's recent progress in lowering crime.

Janice Richison is an HU (Hampton University) graduate, whose original goal was to be a lawyer. She taught math/science before eventually becoming an Assistant Principal. Her passion for education shone through in her speech as well as her policies, which include a desire to open a new STEM school.

For further information about the city council candidates, please visit:
<https://www.pilotonline.com/2024/09/17/hampton-city-council-election-2024/>

Note that, as of this writing, you do not need to be a subscriber to read the above article.

Vik Vatsa, Editor



Scholarship

The Farmington Civic Association (FCA) is excited to announce the two awardees for our first scholarship, Daylon Smith and Natalie Fairfax. The scholarship was developed with a goal to assist young residents who are community minded. Both Daylon and Natalie had donated their time to multiple volunteer and community efforts. We are excited to be able to support these civic-minded students in their college endeavors.



Connie Vatsa, FCA President

Resident Survey Highlights

A survey was mailed to all residents in May; below are some highlights from those responses. Thanks to all who provided feedback! The FCA Board has been reviewing the survey responses and is discussing how we can incorporate this feedback, prioritizing items that align with our charter and for which we have the resources.

1. In your opinion, what are the top three areas within Farmington that require improvement or attention to enhance overall livability and resident satisfaction? There were a variety of answers to this question; however, the top answers included efforts to limit or ban renters, focusing on road and sidewalk repair, maintaining the camera system, having social events, focusing on property owners maintaining the property, maintaining common areas, and focusing on lighting in the neighborhood.

2. What can the FCA do to better support residents? The top answers for this question included organizing/arranging volunteers so residents can get help/assistance, advocating to stop rentals, and better communication.

3. From your perspective, what barriers or challenges do you think prevent residents from consistently paying dues? Answers for this question included the FCA not being able to enforce the covenants, residents not being aware of how dues are used or not seeing a benefit, residents being financially overextended, failure of the FCA to demonstrate the FCA is looking out for their interest, and resident apathy. **What do you think we can do to increase participation? (follow-up from last question)** Answers included impressing the importance of

Upcoming FCA Events

- **National Night Out** - This event has been rescheduled for **Tuesday October 29th at 5:45pm**. Walks will start at the corners of Collinwood and Farmington; Ardmoor and Castle Haven; and Diamond Hill and Estate (the intersection closest to the dead end of Estate). Walkers will all meet under the powerlines on Whetstone. Feel free to walk or drive to Whetstone. Hampton Police will be joining us. Please bring flashlights or reflective gear as the event will likely end after dusk or dark. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided! We can't guarantee this, but the PD generally brings toys for children, so bring the kids.
- **General Membership Meeting** - We will have a general membership meeting **Tuesday November 12th 6:00pm** at the Northampton Community Center.
- **Holiday Median Decoration** - The board is planning to decorate the median at the entrance on **Saturday November 23rd at 10:00am**. Please join us in hanging/stringing lights.
- **Holiday Decorating Contest** - The FCA Board will be conducting the contest this year (thanks to the Garden Club for their years of diligent work). FCA members who have their home decorated by December 20th will be eligible to win. Please email farmingtonhptva@gmail.com with nominees.

new residents serving on FCA, door to door communication, more reminders, community events, providing budget information, raffles, and "expressing projects that absolutely need to be done".

[The last item in quotations seemed unclear. Resident is encouraged to contact the Board directly to clarify their comments - Editor]

4. Looking ahead, what do you envision as the most critical steps the FCA should take to ensure long-term sustainability and financial stability? Feel free to share your thoughts on potential revenue streams, cost-saving measures, or other strategies.

Some highlights from these responses annual yard sale, sending out annual bill to all residents, *[Doesn't the annual fundraising letter already function as a bill of sorts? Resident is encouraged to contact Board directly -Editor]* community events,

transparency in reporting to residents, combining capabilities of residents and FCA Board, posting streets that haven't paid or gold star on blocks that have, better communication/engagement, fun raisers, offering discounted rates to new dues-paying residents, and the FCA providing services to residence at a reduced cost with FCA receiving a percentage of the service cost. *[Unclear how the logistics of the FCA providing services would operate in practice. Resident is encouraged to contact the Board directly to clarify their comments -Editor]*

5. Since 2007, the FCA dues remained have at \$50; due to inflation and increased costs in goods and services, would you support an increase to \$60 starting? 76% were in support of the increase, 11% were opposed, 4% had a conditional approval, and 4% were unsure.

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