



Absolute Ban on Guns in Public Places **September 9, 2020**

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- **Board Moves Toward Absolute Ban on Guns in Public Places** - At the July 28th Board meeting, I was the only opposing vote to moving forward with a public hearing to enact an absolute ban on guns in public places. This ban was pushed forward without going through our traditional committee process. If you are interested in testifying at the public hearing on September 15th at 4:30pm, you can sign up [here](#) through the Clerk's office. More information below.
- **COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults** - On Tuesday, July 28th, the Board unanimously approved my motion to pause the SHAPE the Future of Aging plan and have staff focus on their continuing efforts to support the needs of our older adults during the pandemic as well as looking at actionable, affordable and achievable ways to address the impact of COVID on our older adults. The pandemic has hit our older adult community particularly hard. Case rates and fatality rates among older adults are the highest. Through June about 75 percent of COVID deaths in Fairfax County were from long term care facilities that serve our older adults and it is likely that the impact will continue for some time.
- **Public Hearing on Confederate Monuments Located at the Courthouse** – The Board will hold a public hearing on the removal, relocation, contextualization, or covering of the Civil War Monuments and Memorials at the Fairfax County Judicial Complex on September 15th at 4:30 PM. Details on how to provide comments are below.
- **Drug Take Back Boxes to Reopen September 14** – I have been working with the police department to get the drug take back boxes located

at our police stations reopened after they were closed because of the pandemic. I am happy to report they will reopen on September 14th.

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Board Moves Toward Absolute Ban on Guns in Public Places

At the July 28th meeting, I was the only opposing vote to moving forward with a public hearing to enact an absolute ban on guns in public places. I was surprised that this ban was moved forward without a discussion in our Board Committee structure which normally happens before we undertake major ordinance changes. Absolute bans are often tricky and have unintended consequences if not carefully considered. Our neighboring jurisdictions are now considering altering their absolute bans to address the public safety concerns of many in the community.

I shared that I will not support an absolute ban on guns in public places. Because this did not go through the committee process with our usual discussion, I have asked staff to provide any independent research studies that show banning guns in public places results in greater public safety ([see my comments on video beginning at 1:15:14](#)). Some members of the Board indicated that research studies are not going to change their minds on what they believe is the right thing to do. Fairfax County needs to continue to look at how to make our community safer in public spaces.

From the research I have done, absolute bans have inconsistent and inconclusive results that do not always improve public safety and may in fact reduce it. Some residents have shared great concern with me on how they believe this ban will affect the safety of their religious gatherings. Because it is expensive to contract with off duty sworn law enforcement officers they rely heavily on some of their armed and well trained membership. For other vulnerable groups, including those with restraining orders, not being able to carry in a public place may discourage them from attending these public places out of fear. There is also an unknown fiscal cost for signage at public places and security at our buildings. For these and many other reasons, I voted against proceeding with the ban. There needs to be more discussion on how to keep our public spaces safe for our community, but an absolute ban is not the answer to this complex issue.

The Board voted 9 to 1 to move the absolute ban forward and will hold a public hearing September 15th at 4:30pm. If you are interested in testifying at or before

the public hearing on September 15th at 4:30pm, you can sign up [here](#) through the Clerk's office. The draft ordinance is available [here](#) beginning on page 208.

COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults

At our last meeting, the Board unanimously approved my joint motion with Supervisor Walkinshaw to pause the SHAPE the Future of Aging plan and have staff focus on their continuing efforts to support the needs of our older adults during the pandemic as well as looking at actionable, affordable and achievable ways to address the impact of COVID on our older adults. As Chairman of the Older Adults Committee, I am working with county staff, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Neighborhood and Community Services, and the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging to develop a COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults that prioritizes those needs. The pandemic has hit our older adult community particularly hard and it is likely that the impact will continue for some time.

Case rates and fatality rates among older adults are the highest. Through June about 75 percent of COVID deaths in Fairfax County were from long term care facilities that serve our older adults. Because of the pandemic many of the volunteer and other activities older adults participate in have been closed or severely cut back. Many of our older adults are living in isolation due to COVID restrictions and fear of the disease.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, county staff, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, and Neighborhood and Community Services have worked tirelessly to serve the exacerbated needs of the many vulnerable older adults in our community. They have set up meal and prescription delivery services, delivered over 12,000 meals per week, distributed over 5,300 shelf stable meals for emergencies, provided more than 500 gift cards for clients and family caregivers, and set up virtual social engagement activities, caregiver webinars, and even a virtual chronic disease self-management class (see graphic below). In addition, Neighborhood and Community Services has led the effort to create the Virtual Senior Center program.

Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Helping Older Adults and Family Caregivers during COVID-19

\$2,141,122



Emergency
Funding
Secured for
Older Adults

Senior Medicare
Patrol &
Medicare Fraud
Prevention



More than
12,000
Meals Delivered
Per Week

90



Caregiver Toolkit
Books for Family
Caregivers

1,000



Care
Packages
for Clients

More than
500



Gift Cards for Clients
and Family Caregivers



More than
5,300
Supplemental
Shelf Stable Meals
Delivered



Consultation
Support:
Insurance,
Ombudsman
and Information

Grocery Shopping &
Pharmacy Pick-Up
Services



Virtual Senior Center
Partnership for over
500 Participants



Virtual Case
Management and
Social Visits



7 Caregiver
Webinars



Virtual Chronic Disease
Self-Management Program



Caregiver Text Alerts
to over
400
Caregivers



March 9 - June 30, 2020



Where a TTY number is not indicated, use 711/
Virginia Relay. Reasonable accommodations
provided upon request, call 703-324-5870.



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Many of the initiatives of the 50+ Community Action Plan have become important tools in serving our older adults including:

- 50+ Community Ambassadors – located within our communities, these ambassadors have been key for sharing resources with those that need them and keeping lines of communication open
- Silver Shield – focusing on preventing older adults from falling prey to COVID scam
- GrandInvolve – shifting to a virtual tutor mode to keep the program and support for our at-risk youth as school activities are reduced
- Neighbor to Neighbor – the 12 active villages in place in the County are working with the Health Department and county staff to communicate information and meet community needs

- NV Rides – providing critical rides to seniors but needs new drivers as many volunteers were in the vulnerable older adult population

Our Board approved plan was to spend this year primarily developing the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan that would follow-up on the initiatives of the community-driven 50+ Community Action Plan. However, the pandemic has required resources to shift toward the greatest needs of our older adults. While the plan could continue to be developed with virtual community input, the COA, AAA, county staff, Supervisor Walkinshaw and I believe our time would be better spent developing a short term plan that addresses the nearer term challenges of our older adults relating to the pandemic including the isolationism brought on by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults (working title) will support older adult needs for the near future as we expect the pandemic will continue to drastically affect daily life for anywhere from six to 18 months and beyond. This plan will prioritize the key needs we have identified for older adults during the pandemic, specifically resources focused on mental health, reducing isolation through connectivity, technology access and training, IT support and others. It is anticipated that working with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging and county staff we are scheduling at least two focus groups to get community input on concerns and approaches to address them. These focus groups will include our 50+ Community Ambassadors, village coordinators, the Health Department as well as medical and mental health professionals from Inova and focus on achievable, actionable and affordable initiatives to address the concerns of our older adult community as a result of the pandemic.

I look forward to providing you an update on this plan in in the near future.

Public Hearing on Confederate Monuments Located at the Courthouse

The Board will hold a public hearing on the removal, relocation, contextualization, or covering of the Civil War Monuments and Memorials at the Fairfax County Judicial Complex on September 15th at 4:30 PM. The public hearing on this item will include the potential removal, relocation, contextualization, or covering of any or all of the publicly owned Civil War related monuments or memorials located at the Judicial Complex. These include the Marr monument, two howitzer cannons, and a memorial marker where the first Confederate officer was killed.

If you are interested in speaking at the hearing, you can sign up through the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors [here](#).

Drug Take Back Boxes to Reopen

I have been working with the police department to have the drug take back boxes located at our police stations reopened after they were closed because of the pandemic. I am happy to report they will reopen on September 14th. To prevent

the spread of COVID through the drug take back boxes, the health department has asked that there be a dispenser for tissues next to the bin for constituents to use when touching the handle to dispose of drugs with a sign by them indicating their intended use. In addition, employees will wear PPE when emptying the box and dealing with the contents.

If you are unable to make it to a police station, you can see a list of other drop off locations [here](#). The National Drug Take Back Initiative will be October 24th, more details to come.

Other Helpful News & Information

Stuff the Bus Starts This Weekend

On Saturday, September 12 and Saturday, September 26, Fastran buses will again be parked at 21 locations across the county from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to collect food donations. In the Springfield District, buses will be located at the West Springfield Government Center and Centreville High School. For more information about Stuff the Bus and the Community Partners we will be helping, please see this [link](#).

Become an Election Officer

In response to predicted demand to staff satellite voting sites as well as to sort ballots sent by mail, Fairfax County continues to recruit members of our public to serve as Election Officers. Deadline to apply for these positions is Friday, October 9. To fill out your application today, please apply at this [link](#).

FCPS Launches New Tech Support Hotline

FCPS has launched the Parent Technology Help Desk at 833-921-3277 (833-921-FCPS) to assist parents and family members with technology-related issues as the County starts its first week of virtual instruction. Calls will be answered by staff members between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week. For more information about this service, please see this [link](#).

Upcoming Low-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics

No contact, low-cost rabies vaccination clinics will be available through The Department of Animal Sheltering on:

- Sunday, September 13
- Sunday, October 18
- Sunday, December 6

Pet owners may bring dogs, cats, and ferrets on each of these clinic dates. There is a high demand for these clinics and pre-registration is required. For sign up and more information please click on this [link](#).

On the Lighter Side

A toothless Chihuahua Dog in California is an unexpected therapy dog that comforts patients at a Dental Clinic. Kismet, the Dental Therapy Dog (pictured below) is there to help patients ease their anxieties as they await dental procedures. Click [here](#) to learn more.



Four-Legged-Friend of the Month



September's four-legged-friend of the month is Leo! Leo is a one-year old German Shepherd mix. Leo is still young and learning, this means that he can be timid and shy at times. Leo could use a more experienced owner who will take the time to train him and make him feel welcome. Leo is an energetic dog that would be a good match for a high-energy owner. If you would like to learn more about Leo, [please click here](#) for more information.