

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALLS CHURCH

THE FALLS CHURCH NEWS PRESS



The League of Women Voters®

SPRING 2008 VOTERS' GUIDE

LOCAL ELECTION ON TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2008 POLLS OPEN 6:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The League of Women Voters of Falls Church is cooperating with The Falls Church News Press to produce this Voters' Guide to assist citizens in the City of Falls Church choose candidates for election to the City Council and School Board. Registered voters who live within the City of Falls Church are eligible to vote at the following polling places:

Ward One	Thomas Jefferson School 601 South Oak Street
Ward Two	Oakwood Apartments 501 Roosevelt Boulevard
Ward Three	Scout House 128 South Spring Street
Ward Four	Falls Church Community Center 223 Little Falls Street
Ward Five	American Legion Post 400 North Oak Street

Polling places are accessible to persons with disabilities. The polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The League of Women Voters of Falls Church sent

a questionnaire to all candidates whose names were qualified to appear on the May 6, 2008 ballot. Biographies and responses to the questions appear as written by the candidates and are not edited except to comply with Voters' Guide style and stipulated word limitations. A "///" at the end of the biography and/or responses indicates that the word limit was exceeded. The candidates' original responses are on file with the League of Women Voters of Falls Church. Candidates are listed in the order in which they will appear on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of Falls Church is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League of Women Voters does not support any political party or candidate.

For additional information on the Spring 2008 Voters' Guide, or the League of Women Voters of Falls Church, please visit www.lwvfallschurch.org.

For additional information on the May 6, 2008 election, voter registration, or where to vote, contact the Falls Church Registrar of Voters at 703-248-5085 or visit www.fallschurchva.gov.

IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED TO VOTE

All voters are required to present identification at the polls. **PLEASE BRING YOUR IDENTIFICATION WHEN YOU COME TO VOTE ON TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2008.**

Acceptable forms of identification can be any ONE of the following:

- Virginia voter identification card
- Original Social Security card
- Valid Virginia driver's license
- Military identification
- Identification issued to you by a government agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, one of the Commonwealth's political subdivisions, or the United States
- Valid employee identification card containing your photo and issued by your employer in the ordinary course of the employer's business

If you do not have an acceptable form of identification you must complete an Affirmation of Identity form BEFORE you can vote.

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CITY COUNCIL

THE OFFICE

TERM: The City Council is comprised of seven members who are elected at-large for staggered four-year terms; elections are held in May of even-numbered years for three or four members.

SALARY: \$9200.00 per year, as of July 1, 2008

DUTIES: The City Council enacts ordinances and resolutions, approves City budgets, sets tax rates, and establishes policy.

In formulating decisions and policy, the Council members act as a group.

BIOGRAPHY AND QUESTIONS

BIOGRAPHY: Background provided by each candidate.

THE QUESTIONS

If Falls Church voters and the Virginia General Assembly ap-

prove the proposed amendment to the City charter as provided in the May **REFERENDUM**, how do you think the City will be affected?

Why do you think the recently approved City Center **PROJECT** has generated so much controversy?

What do you think is the biggest **CHALLENGE** facing the City in the next four years, and how would you address it?

CANDIDATES FOR THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CITY COUNCIL - Vote for Not More than Three (3)

Nader Baroukh Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: I am a senior attorney with management responsibilities at the Department of Homeland Security and a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law. I recently served on the City's Major Design Team for the City Center Project. I am a Board Member of the Winter Hill Community Association.

REFERENDUM: Our City must expand its tax base in order to maintain its independence and exceptional schools. While the Special Exception ordinance can be an important tool in promoting commercial development, it has not been used appropriately. The criteria used to grant Special Exceptions do not set clear economic development guidelines. This has led to artificially inflated values in properties, because own-

ers realize that the current majority of Council will approve almost any project, including those that are disproportionately residential and add significant new public service costs.

The referendum provides clear guidance to the Council, developers, and landowners that if a project is to be approved for commercially zoned land, it must be balanced and provide a more diverse source of revenue.

PROJECT: The notion of a "true" city center was supported by many citizens. However, the approved project misses the mark. It fails to deliver on many of the principles provided in "Street-Works," which had wide community support. The approved project has fundamental problems and does not meet the City's own expectations. Moreover, the Council missed a historic opportunity to leverage the two acres it owned to create a "public square" or "commons," which was strongly

supported by the public, or to get a better project.

CHALLENGE: It is critical that the City's commercially zoned land be used predominately for commercial purposes. A healthy city tax-base target is 50% commercial/50% residential. Despite mammoth new developer-friendly projects that threaten our neighborhoods and add significant new public service costs, commercial properties only comprise approximately 25% of the City's total tax assessments. We must follow a development strategy that both retains a sense of proportion and is economically sustainable. Rather than simply responding to what developers bring to the table, our City must pursue developments that preserve the City's many unique qualities.

CONTACT:
www.friendsofnaderbaroukh.com

Robin S. Gardner Incumbent



BIOGRAPHY: Mayor, City of Falls Church 2006-present; City Councilmember 2000-2006; Strategic Account Manager, GTSI; MA, the George Washington University; BA, Ithaca College; Member, Falls Church City PTA; Member, Falls Church Housing Corporation; Resident of Falls Church since 1996; married with 6 year old twins attending Mt. Daniel Elementary School.

REFERENDUM: Approval of the ill-advised Charter change would limit the City Council's ability to bring the best development into the City. We would lose the flexibility and tools that attract creative development.

Attractive, revenue-generating development would not come to the City. We would be resigned to by-right buildings, such as strip malls, fast food franchises, palm readers and check cashing stores on our major corridors. Property values would go down and residents' tax bills would go up.

PROJECT: Change is difficult, as are transitions. The citizens of Falls Church do not have a single vision of what a City Center or a great place should look like; there are many different ideas. With discussion and debate on these ideas comes disagreement. But the sharing of opinions also helps build consensus. That's what the City Center South project represents. It is the product of a deliberative process that was inclusive, open, and lengthy. It is a good first step toward giving

Falls Church a true, appealing downtown.

CHALLENGE: We are a community that is moving forward. We recognize that to retain our independence - something that our City fought for more than 50 years ago - we need to maintain strong neighborhoods, strong schools, and an active and prosperous business sector that can help ensure a healthy, reliable stream of revenue. I welcome the challenge of working to protect the things that define who we are - things such as the Farmers Market, the Memorial Day parade, and the Concerts in the Park. We need to incorporate the feelings and consider the needs of all generations in our community to sustain our "village" - the place we call home.

CONTACT: rgm101693@aol.com

CANDIDATES FOR THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CITY COUNCIL – CONTINUED

Vote for Not More than Three (3)

E. B. “Ed” Hillegass Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: Tidewater Community College, Associate in Science; George Mason University, one year, IT/Marketing; Member, Sons Of The American Revolution; member, United States Marine Corps League; member, Knights of Columbus, EDW Council #2473; past chairman of Security, St. James Bazaar; coach, AAU Baseball; coach, Arlington Babe Ruth Baseball; coach, Arlington Girls Softball.

REFERENDUM: The proposed amendment if passed will have a positive impact on our residential customers. By placing more and more residential units on commercially zoned property, the existing city council has continued to narrow the revenue base by placing

more of the tax burden on the homeowner.

PROJECT: The City Center project is nothing more than a downtown redevelopment that does not encompass a true City Center feel that will draw people from neighboring communities. Once again the city council has proposed a greater percentage (over 60%) of commercially owned property towards building residential units. We need a greater percentage of this property to be occupied by businesses (national chains) that will generate positive revenue for our city and increase the stop ability of people shopping in our City.

CHALLENGE: The biggest challenge facing our City in the next four years will be our Capital Improvement Plan. As I said earlier the existing city council has created a narrowing of the revenues that our city presently collects. I equate this to a person receiving a decrease

in their paycheck and instead of cutting back on city obligations (debt) this same person keeps spending as if nothing has occurred. As homeowners we make our decisions based off of the income we bring in. Then we adjust to make sure that we pay our obligations and buy the essentials that we need. Last but not least hopefully we have some money left over (savings) for a rainy day fund so we can pay for major renovations or appliances that may go. Our city council needs to build a lasting development plan for the City by retaining and attracting strong businesses to secure a reliable and stable foundation for future growth and increasing revenues.

CONTACT: www.friendsofedhillegass.com

M. R. “Lindy” Hockenberry Incumbent



BIOGRAPHY: Falls Church City School Teacher, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, George Mason Middle School, 1969-2000; Long-term substitute, GMMS, Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School, 2000-present; Falls Church City Council, 2000-present; Vice Mayor, 2006-present; B.S. Spalding University, M.A. George Mason University

REFERENDUM: The City Charter is our most important document of governance; changing it is not a matter to be taken lightly. The Charter change proposal on the May 6 ballot is nearly identical to the one that was overwhelmingly rejected by the City’s voters in

2002. If passed, it would essentially shut down future development in the City, killing our efforts to expand our revenue base and ease the tax burden on homeowners. Our business community would be put at risk and much needed revenues would greatly decline. As a result, the future of our independent City and our excellent school system would be in jeopardy.

PROJECT: Change is often difficult. The revitalization of our downtown is a complicated, multi-faceted task, and it is no surprise that not everyone agrees on the best way to proceed. I do believe that whenever a significant new development is proposed, we tend to hear most often from those who disagree with it. As I campaign door-to-door, I hear a huge amount of enthusiasm and support for creating a great City Center. I

hope that everyone will get involved in the final design decisions on City Center South, and help ensure that it becomes a vital and exciting part of our City.

CHALLENGE: Our biggest challenge is ensuring the future economic stability of our independent City and protecting our school system. Wise economic development decisions are essential for our City’s future economic growth. In order to broaden our tax base, we must work to help our business community flourish and grow. Also, we must strive to meet the affordable housing needs for our City’s work force and our senior citizens who want to remain in their City. To accomplish this, strong leadership will be needed to guide the City of Falls Church through the next four years.

CONTACT: www.votefallschurch.org

Margaret W. Housen Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: I have been a resident of the City for almost two years and was employed by the City in the Engineering Department for 27 months. This experience gives me a unique position to look at the challenges the City faces in the immediate future and to plan for the future.

REFERENDUM: With a 60 percent commercial occupancy, this will bring a great deal more money to the City coffers and lower tax rates for City Residents. It will also keep school enrollment down and classrooms small. Overall, the effect on the City will be excellent.

PROJECT: Because it produces limited short term gain in revenue for all its density and unknown long term service and school responsibilities. The City Manager initially claimed \$4.7 million for the City Center Project and now the claim is less than half of that. At this point, the City has only a Letter of Intent from Harris Tweeter and no commitment at all from a hotel. The City needs firm commitments, e.g., a signed contract from commercial entities

CHALLENGE: Traffic, parking, meeting school needs and moderating taxes for both residents and business. Lowering taxes, at this time, can only be accomplished by City Hall tightening its belt with fewer employees. Traffic is not going to abate whatever the price of gasoline and this contributes to the lack of parking. One

answer is to build a real municipal lot such as City of Alexandria has instead of the one now planned mainly for the hotel. The City has some good restaurants but the difficulty of finding a place to park keeps potential customers away.

CONTACT: mwho_22106@yahoo.com

Patrice A. Lepczyk Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: I have enjoyed living in the city of Falls Church for the past eight years. I am a military veteran and have performed freelance work for the Government and commercial venues. I hold a Master’s degree from the American University with an undergraduate degree from George Washington University.

REFERENDUM: I will be voting against the referendum in May, as it would be unlikely to have any positive effect for the City’s future. The underlying motivation for further restricting the number of residential units in mixed used projects may be to hold back increases in school enrollment that could affect the insular nature of our population.

PROJECT: A monolithic building complex possessing little aesthetic appeal would mostly be attractive to a developer with the primary focus on capital return. The City may not have received sufficient concessions in exchange for ceding rights and variances such as exceeding height limits, which also allowed additional residential units in this development adding to citizens’ concerns that an influx of families would adversely affect the City’s services and resources. Although this development will bring in very much needed resources for the city, the negotiating of the packaging may have been stronger.

CHALLENGE: All jurisdictions are facing universal fiscal challenges. Just as families must live on a budget so should the City manage its resources without simply resorting to raising citizens’ taxes. We have the added

requirement that must preserve our autonomy and independence that distinguishes the city of Falls Church from our neighbors, yet not lag behind any of the other local communities in our quality public services and the sophistication required for this special cosmopolitan vicinity. We already have these advantages along with the strong community capable to formulate innovative means for long term perspectives. The Art District Designation could be one such possible future boon, but income increasing and cost cutting ideas for the City will always face some opposition and it is important for such burdens to be distributed fairly and not purposely target the most vulnerable in our community.

CONTACT: pal4cc@gmail.com

Lawrence L. Webb Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: Assistant Dean of Admissions, University of Mary Washington; BA Mass Communications, Shenandoah University; Graduate Certificate Public Management, Shenandoah University; Member: Parks and Recreation Board, Village Preservation and Improvement Society, Falls Church City Democratic Committee, Citizens for a Better City, Falls Church Arts, Department of Correctional Education Board

REFERENDUM: The proposed Charter change is a bad idea. If voters and the General Assembly were to approve it — and I hope that won’t happen — it would handcuff the City’s ability to attract the type of quality businesses that we want and need on our commer-

cial corridors. Good businesses won’t want to come to a community where practically every new proposal would be subject to a vote of the entire population. I like the current process of letting citizens and elected officials carefully examine development proposals, and work to tailor them to Falls Church’s needs. That’s much better than a simplistic, take-it-or-leave-it referendum.

PROJECT: Change is always very hard for some to accept, even change that will have a strongly positive influence on the City. Creating a vibrant new downtown for Falls Church is an ambitious goal, one that naturally is going to generate a degree of controversy. When working with developers, it’s important for the City to drive a hard bargain and hold them to their promises. On Council, I promise to do that.

CHALLENGE: The biggest challenge we face is maintaining our City’s independence and protecting our superior school system in these tough economic times. If elected, I will work closely with the City Manager and my fellow Council members to look for savings in department budgets and hold the line on municipal spending. The Council must continue to work with the School Board to make sure our school system has the resources it needs to attract and keep good teachers and prepare our students to compete in the global economy.

CONTACT: www.votefallschurch.org

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD

THE OFFICES

TERM: The Falls Church City School Board is comprised of seven members who serve four-year terms.

SALARY: \$1200.00 per year

DUTIES: The School Board's primary responsibilities are to set policy for the

school division, approve the annual budget, develop a strategic plan and hire a superintendent to operate the school division in accordance with board policy.

BIOGRAPHY AND QUESTIONS

BIOGRAPHY: Background provided by each candidate.

THE QUESTIONS

What do you see as the single most important **CHALLENGE** facing our schools in the next two years?

How would you describe the **ROLE** of the School Board in relation to the City Council?

How would you work with the school-affiliated **ORGANIZATIONS** (PTAs, the Athletic and Band Boosters, and the Falls Church Education Foundation) to ensure communication and information sharing?

CANDIDATES FOR THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD – Vote for Not More than Three (3)

Charlotte V. Hyland

Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: BA, University of Colorado. Freelance editor. Ten-year Falls Church resident. Married with three children who attend GM, MEH, and TJ. Past and current newsletter editor, elementary PTA and GM PTSA; PTA vice president and recording secretary; chair, various committees. My children are involved in sports, student government, band, and theater.

CHALLENGE: All students of all abilities should receive a great education in Falls Church City schools, and if I am elected, a goal of mine is to ensure that that remains the case. One way to do that is to retain small class sizes, particularly in the elementary grades, so

our teachers are able to really know all students and attend to their needs appropriately. Having students of all abilities in our classrooms has always been a strong attribute of our schools, but it does require that teachers are able to differentiate among all the distinct types of students. With the proper training and support, our teachers have been able to maintain diverse classrooms. I want to make sure that continues.

ROLE: The School Board and the City Council should work together creatively to keep our schools top-notch. The Board should support the Council's ongoing efforts to promote economic redevelopment, which is generating the new tax revenue we need to keep our teacher's salaries competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.

The Board must be very careful with every tax dollar spent. Budget discipline gives the Council and the community confidence that the Board is spending wisely to hire and retain excellent teachers and staff, to develop a learning program that challenges students of all abilities.

ORGANIZATIONS: I am currently a member of all the organizations mentioned, and as a School Board member I would regularly attend their meetings and the events they sponsor to keep informed of their various activities. I would encourage members of these organizations to attend School Board meetings to share information.

CONTACT: www.votefallschurch.org

Kimberley J. Maller

Challenger



BIOGRAPHY: Kim has lived in Falls Church City for twelve years. Kim has three young children. Her two oldest attend our City Schools, her youngest is in preschool. Kim is an active member of both School and Community organizations. Kim graduated from UCSB and managed College Bookstores for several years.

CHALLENGE: Our biggest challenge is how can a small, independent city offer a world-class education to all of its public school students? We must be innovative: The new IB Program for the Primary years and for the Middle Years will help us to continue our tradition of curriculum excellence. Most of our school budget goes

to personnel costs, but high-quality teachers are essential to our students' success. The School Board must continue to look at each tax dollar spent and make sure that each student receives a first-class education. These steps are essential for our students and in doing so, our real estate values will remain as strong as possible during these years of economic uncertainty.

ROLE: The School Board is the steward of the schools. The Board is responsible for the care and management of the schools and for asking City Council for funds needed to keep our schools excellent. The Board is also responsible for making sure all of our students get a top-notch education and that tax dollars spent on educating our students are wisely spent.

The Board must have good communication with

the City Council on any school issues that may have a broader community concern. These issues may include future capital expenses and community service needs.

ORGANIZATIONS: I would make sure all of these school-affiliated organizations have a web site linked to the FCCPS web site. Interested parents and members of the community would be able to easily find out about these organizations and how they can get involved. We already have a School Board liaison to each of these school-affiliated organizations who reports information back at School Board meetings. I would continue to work closely with these organizations and continue to attend every meeting I can.

CONTACT: www.votefallschurch.org

Kieran Sharpe

Incumbent



BIOGRAPHY: Attorney, litigation and financial services regulation, Howrey LLP. JD American University, BA Political Science, Albright College. School Board Member 1998-2008. City Council Member 1994 -98. Boards of Fairfax Partnership for Youth, Homestretch, Inc. and Falls Church Education Foundation. Coach for youth basketball, baseball and soccer. Married, two children: GMHS grads.

CHALLENGE: We must teach all our students the skills and knowledge helpful for success in a global economy as well the values for exercising responsible citizenship. The full range of students, from the most gifted to the least, will face stiff competition for places in higher educa-

tion and the job market. Teachers are the most important component in equipping students for economic success and good citizenship, so providing the pay and benefits to attract and retain the best among them is a top priority. Sufficient time to learn is an equally key factor. Our calendar is the shortest of any district in our area and much shorter than in many other countries. So that our students have the best opportunity for success in the global arena, we should find ways for students to have more time with teachers and use time more effectively.

ROLE: The School Board provides policy and strategic direction for K-12 education, such school-related or community services as day care and rental of school buildings for community activities. In its relations with Council, it should strongly advocacy for world-class education and present convincing assurance of efficient and effective

management. Also, it should dialogue with the Council and community to clearly understand what resources are available and act in a fiscally responsible way. Further, to assure equitable access for low-income and other vulnerable residents, the board should work with parent advisory groups and others to understand what subsidy or other accommodation these residents may need and then incorporate that in its advocacy with Council.

ORGANIZATIONS: To ensure good communications with PTAs and other school-affiliated organizations, I would work with fellow Board members to implement a systematic communications policy, frequently interact with these organizations' leaders and members, listen, and be responsive to their ideas and concerns.

CONTACT: kjsharpe@starpower.net

Joan E. Wodiska

Incumbent



BIOGRAPHY: Elected in 2004, Joan Wodiska is a mother and valued member of the School Board. Joan is the Board Liaison on Special Education, ESOL, and Family Life. She also leads education for the National Governors Association, and is the Chair of the Northeastern Region of the Virginia School Boards Association.

CHALLENGE: Despite budget pressures, the School Board must figure out a way to accelerate innovation and continually improve our schools. Our schools must equip every student with the critical thinking and traditional hard skills to be successful in the global economy.

ROLE: Teamwork, transparency, and a shared vision are the key components of a successful partnership between the School Board and City Council. While each body plays a unique, autonomous, and defined role to strengthen our City and schools, we must and do work together. I've worked hard to help ensure a collegial and productive relationship between the School Board

and Council. This year's smooth budget process is a testament to the Board's commitment to work cooperatively and collaboratively with Council.

ORGANIZATIONS: Community engagement is essential to our schools' success. Yet, the School Board can't rely on a single method, strategy, or language to engage the community. The Board must use the web, email, newspaper, personal visits, phone calls, newsletters, BoardDocs, and other effective methods to communicate.

As a Board liaison to several school groups, I continually sought input and advice, shared information in a clear, transparent, and consistent manner, and ensured that community views were represented in the Board's deliberations. Additionally, I helped re-write the school district's mission statement to acknowledge the critical importance of community involvement. As part of that work, I also helped formulate specific goals to prioritize and enhance communication and information sharing. This work is ongoing. With your support, I hope to further improve this critical area.

CONTACT: www.votefallschurch.org

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT – VOTE YES OR NO

QUESTION: Should the City of Falls Church amend the City Charter as follows?

The City Council may approve a project, including a pending project, for construction on commercially-zoned property only if at least sixty (60) percent of the total project's square footage will be used for commercial or retail purposes. The City Council may not, by special exception or other approval, allow more than forty (40) percent of such a project's square footage to be used for residential purposes.