

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
March 18, 2017

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting on Saturday, March 18, 2017, at 8:30 a.m., in the Board Room, Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

**Members of the Board Present:**

Patricia S. O'Bannon, Chairman, Tuckahoe District  
Frank J. Thornton, Vice Chairman, Fairfield District  
Thomas M. Branin, Three Chopt District  
Harvey L. Hinson, Brookland District  
Tyrone E. Nelson, Varina District

**Other Officials Present:**

John A. Vithoukas, County Manager  
Joseph P. Rapisarda, Jr., County Attorney  
Barry R. Lawrence, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board  
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Community Services  
Douglas A. Middleton, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
Anthony J. Romanello, Deputy County Manager for Public Administration  
Randall R. Silber, Deputy County Manager for Community Development  
Humberto I. Cardounel, Chief of Police  
Patrick C. Kinlaw, Superintendent of Schools, Ed.D.  
The Honorable Shannon L. Taylor, Commonwealth's Attorney  
The Honorable Michael L. Wade, Sheriff  
Travis J. Pearson, Three Chopt District Representative, Economic Development Authority Board of Directors

Mrs. O'Bannon called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m..

Mr. Vithoukas welcomed the audience to what he characterized as a unique gathering to which healthy communities aspire. He recognized the members of the Board and other County officials who were present.

Mr. Vithoukas reviewed the agenda and logistical details of the meeting. He thanked the citizens in the room for their attendance. Mr. Vithoukas noted County officials had received many calls regarding documentation procedures and services relating to the immigrant community. He assured the audience that the County does very well in responding to the concerns, questions, and needs of all its citizens.

Mr. Vithoukas narrated a slide presentation highlighting major hate crimes that have been committed in communities throughout the nation during the past couple of years. Targeted groups have included the Jewish, Islamic, African-American, and gay communities. He assured the audience that the County is here to support them and remarked that great

organizations address cowardice head on. He then showed a slide depicting a local example of a hate crime that was committed in December 2016 where a suspect was arrested by Henrico Police for vandalizing Tuckahoe Park with racist messages. The suspect confessed to the crime.

Following his presentation, Mr. Vithoulkas laid out the ground rules for citizens who wished to speak during the community conversation portion of the meeting, which included a three-minute time limit per speaker. He advised the public that the community conversation was not intended to be a political discussion but an opportunity for the elected officials to listen to citizens.

Each of the members of the Board offered brief remarks. Mrs. O'Bannon began by commenting that this meeting resulted from a conversation she had with Mr. Vithoulkas after she received several phone calls from members of the Jewish and Muslim communities expressing concerns about the hate crime at Tuckahoe Park. She encouraged citizens to email or call County officials after this meeting if they have additional concerns they wish to share. Mrs. O'Bannon pointed out the Board was holding the meeting to listen and not to judge.

Mr. Thornton thanked Mrs. O'Bannon and Mr. Vithoulkas for convening this meeting. He spoke about the beloved community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King and reiterated the Board was interested in engaging the audience and hearing their concerns.

Mr. Branin thanked Goutam Gandhi, the Three Chopt District representative on the Library Advisory Board, for calling him with concerns and for being present at this meeting.

Mr. Hinson pointed out that the English settlers were welcomed to Henrico by Chief Powhatan in 1607 and greeted with open hands, food, and entertainment. He cited this as the beginning of the Henrico Way. Mr. Hinson thanked the Board, Mr. Vithoulkas, and County staff for facilitating this meeting and reiterated the Board was interested in hearing citizen comments.

Mr. Nelson greeted and thanked everyone for being present.

Mr. Vithoulkas recognized Mr. Hinton, who narrated a slide presentation on Henrico's changing demographics and growing diversity, which have impacted County services. He provided charts and statistical comparisons comparing the year 2000 with year 2015 for racial composition, language spoken at home, school population, and Health Department refugee patients and screenings. Mr. Hinton concluded that the minority populations in Henrico are varied and traverse the entire county. He commented the county is blessed to have such diversity.

Mr. Hinton recognized Chief Cardounel, who provided brief autobiographical information. Chief Cardounel informed the public that he was the first generation of his family born in the United States. He spoke of the importance of tolerance and diversity and informed the audience that the Henrico Police Division is entrusted with the safety and well-being of all citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, resident status, religion, or sexual orientation. Chief Cardounel commented on the Tuckahoe Park hate crime and how his department worked with the Commonwealth's Attorney, Ms. Taylor, to ensure it was properly prosecuted. He assured the audience that the Police Division will do all it can to relieve anxiety and promote tolerance in the community while acting aggressively against hate crimes.

Mr. Vithoulkas echoed Chief Cardounel's comments and expressed appreciation to Zulfi Khan, a Henrico resident, community leader, and active member of the local Islamic community. Mr. Khan thanked the Board for calling this meeting and the County officials for their involvement. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Vithoulkas and Mr. Hinton for their hard work in organizing this meeting. Mr. Khan also thanked the public for their participation. He pointed out this was the first dialogue of this type in the region and he is hopeful other local jurisdictions will become a part of it. Mr. Khan shared his personal thoughts on social justice and religious freedom. He expressed pride in being a Henrico resident and optimism that the County can be the best in the nation by eliminating prejudice.

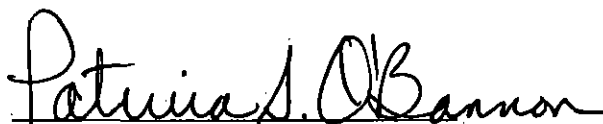
Mr. Gandhi thanked the Board, County staff, and the public for their participation. He stated it is a privilege to have lived in Henrico for the past 21 years. Mr. Gandhi stated that Henrico is prospering because of its diversity and global connections. He noted recent hate crimes have raised concerns in the community and suggested the County continue to address the question of how the community can be more united and peaceful.

Thirteen citizens offered comments, concerns, and suggestions during the open discussion portion of the meeting. They included representatives of the Native American community, Hindu Center of Virginia, Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce and Foundation, Islamic Society of Virginia, Islamic Center of Richmond, and Baptist General Convention of Virginia. In response to concerns that were expressed by some speakers, Chief Cardounel offered assurances that the Police Division does not routinely ask citizens for documentation or verification of immigrant status. Sheriff Wade pointed out federal law requires that the fingerprints of persons who are detained in jail facilities be automatically sent by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for the purpose of identifying in-custody aliens. Chief Cardounel elaborated on the Police Division's procedures for investigating hate crimes in cooperation with the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. Mr. Nelson noted Mr. Vithoulkas and Chief Cardounel are both from immigrant families and are empathetic to the concerns of the immigrant community. He remarked that the Board is working with County staff to heighten staff's sensitivity to minority concerns.

Tinh Phan, Chairman of the Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce and Virginia Asian Foundation Board of Directors, thanked the Board and County officials for their statements supporting inclusion and diversity. He cautioned, however, that all persons of color have a fear of being oppressed and continue to experience prejudice and discrimination outside the halls of government. Mr. Phan expressed the view that there is too much sugar coating of these concerns. He also stated that County departments should be given a directive not to harass the community and suggested that the County's procurement policies should be reviewed to ensure all businesses are being treated equally. Abulaziz Bulling, Vice President of the Islamic Center of Richmond, thanked Chief Cardounel and the Henrico Police Division for providing support and safety measures to the center during Ramadan and helping to ensure that the Muslim community was secure. He praised Mr. Vithoulkas on his accessibility. Paige Chargois, a member of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, elaborated on her editorial that appeared in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on March 1 that was a call to civility. She noted common themes among the world's major religions and encouraged Henrico's leadership to be more comprehensive in its plan to promote diversity and transform the community. Terrell Pollard recommended the County establish an office or position that focuses on diversity and inclusion.

Mr. Vithoulkas wrapped up the discussions by reminding the public that the County is their government and that they have the County's support. He noted the Board and County staff were heading into weeklong budget reviews beginning March 20. Mr. Vithoulkas concluded by suggesting the community will likely see more dialogues of this type in the future.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patricia S. O'Bannon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "O".

Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Henrico County, Virginia