

BUSINESS LEADERS ENDORSE RCC OUTREACH

By William Nicoson

Tomorrow an historic vote of enormous consequence will take place. No, I'm not talking about the vote in the U.S. House of Representatives to impeach President Clinton. I'm talking about the vote by the Board of Governors of Reston Community Center to approve outreach of its programs to space at Lake Anne.

Last Thursday the RCC Long Range Planning Committee, composed of all RCC governors, reviewed the business plan prepared by Executive Director Ed Grillo for the Lake Anne facility, and unanimously voted to consider it for final approval at the board meeting tomorrow evening. That approval now seems even more certain than impeachment of the President.

Let's take a tour of the new facility of 8,300 sq. ft. We enter through the front door of the previous tenant, Fresh Value, into a reception area leading to a central corridor. On the right, a wall of glass doors opens to the exhibition gallery, which also has direct access from outside. On the left, past the reception desk, we come to a music practice room which may double as a meeting room. Further along on the right, past a kitchen linked to the gallery, is a general meeting room and to the left an art classroom or resident artist studio. Adjacent on the left is another classroom for work with clay, including a kiln. Opposite on the right is a computer classroom. At the rear is a framing shop.

The business plan indicates that revenues from programs at Lake Anne will cover 80% of costs, contrasted with 52% for aquatics and 78% for general programs at RCC's existing facility.

Following approval by the RCC board tomorrow, the project will be presented for approval by Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors, probably at its meeting on January 25. David Ross, President of Atlantic Realty, the redeveloper of Hunters Woods and Tall Oaks village centers, has advised Supervisor Bob Dix that the rental rate for the Lake Anne facility will be \$7.92 per square foot, or about half the market "for equivalent space in other Reston village centers." His letter responded to grossly inflated estimates of market return in a Reston Times article.

An unusual letter has also been addressed to Supervisor Dix by all fourteen past presidents of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce supporting RCC's concept of expanding into Lake Anne and noting that "the support of this proposed center goes hand in hand with one of our most pressing goals, to enhance the quality of life for the citizens and members of the business community alike." These business leaders believe "that the proposed center would add yet another asset to our community that will be recognized and rewarded by the businesses that reside here or are making a decision to relocate here."

The demonstration of strong support by the business community for the concept of RCC's Lake Anne facility, to be funded by its small tax district, comes at a time when some opponents of the

concept have declared war on the tax district itself and sought to enlist the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce on their side. The letter to Supervisor Dix signed by its fourteen past presidents indicates no interest in scrapping the RCC district which has been effective in assuring the “vibrant, attractive and well educated community” celebrated by authors of the letter.

If the Board of Supervisors approves the Lake Anne facility, a grand opening could occur as early as June 1.

William Nicoson is a former publisher of Connection Newspapers.