

Virginia Peninsula Association of REALTORS®  
Monthly Public Policy Report  
*“THE MONITOR”*  
August 2016

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“Upon you, fellow citizens, as the representatives of the States and the people, is wisely devolved the legislative power.” -  
Millard Fillmore, 13<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America

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*No matter how high the temperatures, VPAR maintain it's cool for you in the legislative and political arenas throughout the Peninsula, and at all levels of government.*

## ELECTIONS

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District

VPAR President Andy Cohen and VPAR Public Policy Committee member Peggy Todd participated in candidate interviews for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Along with interview panel members from the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association, the Williamsburg Association of REALTORS® and the Eastern Shore Association of REALTORS® -- the Associations within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District - VPAR interviewed Del. Scott Taylor, the Republican candidate, and Shaun Brown, the Democratic candidate. An announcement regarding the endorsed candidate will be forthcoming, following action by the Trustees of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

### Voter Registration Information

The next election will be held on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. Please be advised that the deadline to register to vote or update an existing voter registration is MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2016. The deadline to request an ABSENTEE BALLOT be mailed to you is 5:00 PM on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 21016. (*Notice to voters using US mail service: The USPS delivery standards changed early last year so that First Class delivery went from 1-3 days to 2-5 days and Standard delivery is now 2-9 days. Please take this into consideration as you start thinking towards absentee voting for the Presidential election.*)

The deadline to request an absentee ballot by appearing in person is 5:00 PM on Saturday, November 5, 2016.

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## Local Issues

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### ***Hampton***

Congratulations to the newly sworn in members of Hampton City Council, including Mayor Donnie Tuck. Linda Curtis was elected from among her Council peers to serve again as Vice Mayor. See photos from the July 1<sup>st</sup> ceremony here! <http://hampton.gov/gallery.aspx?AID=68>

### ***Newport News***

We also extend congratulations to the newly sworn in members of Newport News City Council, with special accolades to Tina Vick, who was elected as Vice Mayor!

The City's planning team has been working diligently to compile an initial draft of the *One City, One Future Comprehensive Plan*, and the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CPCAC), of which VPAR's Legislative Consultant, Susan Gaston, is a member, soon will be reconvened. The CPCAC initially will focus on overall content, presentation, tone, and structure of the draft plan, including revised graphics and maps. Subsequent meetings will focus on key topic areas. Stay tuned for what will be a busy time for the Comp Plan in the coming months!

Mark your calendars! VPAR has reached out to Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) in efforts to "get to know" the division, its people and its facilities up close and in person! On Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, VPAR members are invited to participate in the tour of NNPS and to meet with its leaders and students. Much more to come, but keep that date open for what will be an informative and fun day!

### ***Regional***

We are repeating this bit of information from the earlier edition of the newsletter, in hopes that it reaches a broader audience: In various parts of the region, property owners are being held responsible for delinquent bills of their tenants. Virginia Code states that the owner is responsible ONLY if: 1.) the tenant puts up a security deposit; and 2.) the security deposit is not adequate to cover the delinquency, and in either case, only after the water authority or local government exercises due diligence to collect the delinquency from the tenant and is unable to collect. If you have received a letter indicating that a lien will be placed on your property or a property that you are managing, and the above-outlined conditions are not outlined in the letter, please advise VPAR so that we can begin to track the situation, and consider options to prevent the situation.

### **GET ON THE BUS! THE HRT BUS, THAT IS!**

Mark your calendars! The buses of Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) are rolling up to VPAR on August 24<sup>th</sup>! To demonstrate the importance of transit in our region, and to help you as REALTORS® better understand the HRT system, its routes and its service, VPAR has partnered with Hampton Roads Transit for a REALTOR® Bus Tour! More details with a precise agenda are forthcoming, but SAVE THE DATE for August 24<sup>th</sup> so that you can be part of this first-ever ride-along! It is sure to be fun and informative!

## ***State***

**How times flies! Remember the First-time Homebuyers Savings Account legislation that was initiated by the Virginia Association of REALTORS?** During the 2014 Session, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that allows individuals to designate a bank account as a tax exempt first-time home buyer savings account. That legislation, now law, has been widely hailed as model legislation throughout the nation, and now is the basis for similar legislation throughout the country.

If you know of a situation in your practice that would be remedied by a legislative fix, now is the time to contact VPAR's Legislative Consultant, Susan Gaston. A draft proposal will be prepared and considered by the Association's PPC and submitted to VAR for inclusion into the 2017 Legislative Package. While the first draft of the package will be reviewed on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at the VAR PPC meeting, there always is time to move forward on ideas and issues that YOU deem important!

## ***Federal***

**THE CALL-TO-ACTION WORKED! H.R. 3700 HEADS TO THE PRESIDENT**  
H.R. 3700, sponsored by Reps. Luetkemeyer (R-MO) and Cleaver (R-MO) and through companion legislation, Senators Menendez (D-NJ) and Scott (R-SC), passed the Senate under unanimous consent is on the way to the President for his signature. This legislation previously passed the House by a vote of 427-0. This legislation:

- Solves a number of concerns regarding FHA's condo rules:
  - Reduces the FHA condo owner occupancy ratio to 35%, unless FHA takes alternative action within 90 days.
  - Directs FHA to streamline the condo re-certification process.
  - Provides more flexibility for mixed use buildings.
  - Mirrors the Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) rules regarding private transfer fees for FHA condo lending.
- Provides permanent authority for direct endorsement for approved lenders to approve Rural Housing Service (RHS) loans.
- Makes reforms to federally assisted housing programs to streamline the programs.

Nearly 140,000 REALTORS® participated in the Call-to-Action with a response rate over 15%. This clearly made a difference on Capitol Hill. We expect the President to sign the legislation shortly. Thank you to all VPAR members who responded to the Call-to-Action!

## **PROPOSED EPA BUDGET CUTS BENEFITS NAR**

The House approved a \$32.1 billion FY 2017 spending bill this week that would cut U.S. EPA's budget next year and restrict the Agency's ability to implement several regulations, including the Waters of the U.S. rule and the Clean Power Plan. The bill also funds the Department of Interior, fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provides additional resources to fight wildfires. The White House has issued a veto threat on the bill. The bill now moves to the Senate, which has yet to act on its version of the bill. Current political realities make it unlikely for many of the riders to remain in the legislation. Other riders in the bill prevent implementation of the administration's National Ocean Policy, delay implementation of the Lead Paint Renovation, Repair and Rule until an accurate lead paint test kit is developed, and stop the Fish and Wildlife

Service from treating the gray wolf as an endangered or threatened species in the continental United States after next June.

*Should you have questions on these or other issues, or for additional details, please contact Susan Gaston, VPAR's Legislative Consultant, at 757-871-1445 or at [susan@gastongroup.com](mailto:susan@gastongroup.com).*

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