

Fairfax County Outdoor Lighting Ordinance progress

by Bob Parks, Virginia Lighting Taskforce

After more than three years of pushing and prodding, Fairfax County has finished the final draft of the proposed Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. It has been sent to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and public hearings have been scheduled.

The first hearing will be the May 1st Planning Commission meeting at 8:15 pm. Meetings are held in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA. Anybody interested in speaking in support of the ordinance should plan to attend. It is suggested that you register in advance to assure that you will be heard. Please call the Planning Commission Office at 703-324-2865 to register or visit their website: www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/planning/speaker.htm

The second public hearing will be at the June 16th Board of Supervisors meeting at 3:30 PM. Board meetings are also held in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA. To speak at a public hearing before the Board, you are encouraged to register in advance with the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151 or visit their website at: www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/bos/speaker_bos.htm.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to vote on the ordinance at this meeting, so your help is needed immediately. Everyone who lives in Fairfax County should visit the VOLT website (www.volt.org) to get details on how to send an email to their Supervisor expressing their support. I know that we're all busy people, but this will only take a couple minutes. We have provided a sample letter and links to your Supervisor. Please take the time to ensure that Fairfax County will have better outdoor lighting in the future. Do it for your children and grandchildren.

If you are a member of a homeowners group or civic association please talk to the leaders of the group and ask that they come to speak for the ordinance or send a letter to the Board of Supervisors. If they can't attend, ask if you can speak as the representative for the group.

Time is of the essence; the majority of the Board of Supervisors must be convinced that

the ordinance is important to the citizens of Fairfax County for this to pass. It is too easy for Supervisors to take no action, if they feel there is no public support. You can be sure the service station and fast food operators will take the time to let them know that they like being able to install bright, unshielded

lights that produce glare, light trespass and sky glow. It's cheap advertising for them.

Make sure that your voice is also heard.

Please help. Now.

Drop me a note at bparks@volt.org to let me know that you have sent an email and a copy of the response that you get to it. ★

Events in May and June

May		1	9	15	22	31	June		7	14	21	29
		NEW	FIRST	FULL	LAST	NEW			FIRST	FULL	LAST	NEW
2-4 23-25 30-31	Prime observing weekends						6-8 20-22 27-29	Prime observing weekends				
10	Monthly observing & Astronomy Day Star Party (Crockett)						8	General meeting				
18	General meeting (special date)						21	Monthly observing & NOVAC Picnic (Crockett)				
1-11 23-31	Crockett open						1-8 20-30	Crockett open				

NASM/Einstein Planetarium Public Observing

Join Sean O'Brien, staff astronomer of the Albert Einstein Planetarium, and other local amateur astronomers, for public telescopic observing under dark, star-filled skies, away from city lights. The evening begins with a short night sky orientation at dusk, followed by telescopic observing of various astronomical objects, ending at 11 pm.

Sky Meadows State Park is west of Washington, D.C. on US Route 17 North, 1 mile south of US Route 50, or 7 miles north of Interstate 66, Exit 23. The park contact phone number is 540-592-3556. There is a \$4 parking fee per car. Dress warmly. In case of clouds or rain, an amateur astronomer will lead a short alternate program.

2003 Schedule—Sky Meadows State Park, Paris, VA

May 3	2 days after New Moon. Astronomy Day; NOVAC MOS is May 10
June 21	Last Quarter Moon. Summer Solstice. Same day as NOVAC picnic
July 19	2 days before Last Quarter Moon
August 10	4 days after Last Quarter Moon. Same night as NOVAC MOS
September 13	3 days after Full Moon. NOVAC Stargaze September 20
October 18	Last Quarter Moon. Same night as NOVAC MOS
November 8	Full Moon—Total Lunar Eclipse!

Editor's note: This is a fun program for NOVAC members to help out with. Sky Meadows park has great skies, and the public is always very receptive. Plus, NOVAC members who bring their telescopes to share may stay until 1 am.