

I want to congratulate Mrs. Hynes on the success of her chairmanship in 2012.

Eighty years ago a new president took office in the midst of a grievous national economic crisis, and took decisive actions to bring relief to the suffering, to stabilize the country *and* invest in its future, and to restore confidence in government. As a by-product, he also transformed the national capital region, most especially Arlington, which had just adopted its modern form of government.

The New Deal brought new development and new residents. Those new residents brought new talents – and new expectations – to what was still a largely rural, segregated county, with poor schools and few public services of any kind. In the decades that followed, Arlington’s new government and new citizens would change all that, building a reputation for good schools and libraries, for innovation in public policy, and for a municipal government that is professional and honest, a government that works.

The “can-do” spirit of those anxious times animated government action here in Arlington and in Congress. What a contrast to the dysfunctionality we see on Capitol Hill today in the current economic crisis, where ruthless adherence to anti-government dogma prevents the conclusion of even the most basic action of approving a budget, and threatens to push our economy over a cliff.

From an Arlington perspective, the paralysis of federal – and state – government in dealing with issues like economic recovery, transportation, immigration, is both frustrating and bewildering. We face challenges, and we don’t always get everything right; but we have been able to sustain a

practical, effective approach to governance, year in and year out. Others may swing one way and another, changing direction with the political winds of the moment, or periodic economic setbacks; Arlington has held steady on its progressive course – and has prospered for it. Through this terrible economic recession, Arlington has continued to out-perform virtually every other locality, as Chairman Tejada described in some detail. This is no accident. We've pressed forward, looking toward the future, and made our community a national model for economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social equity. From around the country, and around the globe, people look to Arlington to see how it's done.

Arlington's long-sustained, successful approach to governing rests on 3 commitments:

An unshakeable commitment to progressive moral values. We affirm the worth of every individual, celebrate diversity and promote inclusion. This commitment has required Arlington to be a leader – even when it is not popular – on such things as the fight against racial segregation in the 50s and 60s, opposing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the 90s, and standing up for the rights of immigrants today. It underlies our support of a local social safety net, and our efforts for affordable housing.

A commitment to long-term investment in our community. We recognize the vital role of the public sector in creating a just society and a great community – including the success of the private sector. Most particularly, we recognize the importance of long-term investments that improve the quality of life and grow the tax base, so that we can live up to

our moral commitments, fund the best schools in the region, and support all the services that Arlingtonians expect. Hence, our unstinting support for the Metro system beginning in the 60s, and to build streetcar today.

A commitment to the process of governing itself. What some call “The Arlington Way” is characterized by three qualities:

- a) It is open and inclusive, **promoting civic participation** and actively engaging the public from early on in decision-making;
- b) It values **civility in discourse**. In contrast to the noisy negativity that has become so prevalent across the country, Arlingtonians respect the merits of arguments, and reject personal attacks. Facts still matter here.
- c) And, lastly, **it is decisive**. Having had full and open discussion, we *do* come to conclusions. And then we implement them. And we move on to the next challenge.

Arlington’s exceptional success as a community demonstrates the power of these principles.

The coming year may not be an easy one, given both the economic and political climate, it may test our commitment to our principles as never before. Along with the current conflict between the President and congressional opposition, 2013 brings a statewide election that will put in sharp relief the two approaches to governance, and may put Arlington in the spotlight.

In the face of an aggressive ideological movement that disparages any positive role for government in improving our lives, our approach makes

Arlington increasingly a political target. No doubt this is partly because we have been so spectacularly successful. How irritating it must be that a county with an unashamedly vigorous public sector sustains the most vibrant private sector economy that can be found in the Old Dominion. That a government that tackles climate change continues to attract new businesses. That a community characterized by great diversity demonstrates such unity. (It is worth noting that, as of today, our local government and our school system are each headed by elected leaders who came to this country as immigrants.)

I think most Arlingtonians, perhaps now more than ever, are keenly aware that we have achieved something special here, something worth fighting for. The path laid out for us by our new Chair and Vice-chair makes clear that they think so, too.

From his focus on the problems of affordable housing and homelessness, to his plan for Neighborhood Town Halls, Chairman Tejada's call for us to "move forward together" is a forceful reaffirmation of the governing philosophy that has made this community one of which we are all justifiably proud. His remarks are a clear statement of the determination of this year's Chairman – and the Board he leads – to follow through on our commitments, sustain our community's values, and continue Arlington's progress. I look forward to working on it with him, and with all of you.

Happy New Year.