

Spotsylvania supervisors take issue with FAMPO voting rule

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Spotsylvania County's "strong dissatisfaction" with a recent decision by the region's transportation board is now in writing.

The Board of Supervisors this week unanimously approved a resolution asking the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to reconsider a new restriction in the group's bylaws.

The rule, approved in February, says FAMPO cannot vote on an issue unless a motion has been put forward and seconded by members from different localities. The federally mandated organization's membership includes elected officials from the city of Fredericksburg, and Spotsylvania and Stafford counties.

Spotsylvania's resolution says the new rule "undermines the stated FAMPO objective of valuing and inviting input."

The tension between Spotsylvania and other FAMPO members is nothing new.

Since 2012, Spotsylvania supervisors have clashed with the majority of FAMPO members over the proposed \$284 million Rappahannock Parkway project. The four-lane parkway would leave Interstate 95 at the Virginia Welcome Center, pass through Celebrate Virginia South in Fredericksburg and connect with State Route 3 near Gordon Road in Spotsylvania.

Spotsylvania Supervisor and FAMPO member David Ross has proposed at least two failed votes against the project—one in October 2012, the other in April 2013—and both motions were seconded by another FAMPO member from Spotsylvania. Those votes, which received no support outside of Spotsylvania, wouldn't have been allowed under the new voting rule.

Projects must have FAMPO's support to receive federal dollars.

Fredericksburg City Councilman and FAMPO Chairman Matt Kelly said the voting issue will probably be discussed at the organization's next meeting on March 17. He has said the rule was simply an effort to "foster regional cooperation and consensus."

"The Spotsy BOS would better serve their residents spending more time dealing with the transportation issues we face and less on procedural issues," Kelly said in an email. "To be successful requires working with their regional partners, which will sometimes mean they will not get their way."

Ross said in an email this week that he doesn't think Spotsylvania will stop attending FAMPO meetings if the bylaw change is not overturned.

“However, I believe that the first time a motion from Spotsylvania County’s representation is not seconded... that our Spotsy members will walk out the door, which will take the FAMPO quorum away and end the meeting,” Ross said.

Kelly noted Friday that each locality has to be represented for there to be a quorum.

Ross did say he’s “fairly certain” a FAMPO representative from the Virginia Department of Transportation or the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission would second a Spotsylvania motion if nobody else did.

FAMPO members from both of those agencies joined Spotsylvania in opposing the bylaw change, which passed by a vote of 6–5.

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