

Husch, Mayor Try to Silence Public Commen

Critics Speak Out Against Political Protests

BY LEAH M. KOSIN
FOR THE OBSERVER

Councilman Dennis Husch repeatedly interrupted several speakers Tuesday night during the public comment portion of the Herndon Town Council's public hearing, and Mayor Steve DeBenedittis tried to stop residents from speaking when they criticized the behavior of some Council members.

Citizens normally have three minutes to discuss anything that's not on the agenda. Ruth Tatlock attempted to use her time to express disappointment and concern that some members of the Town Council were either present or actively participating in a protest last Wednesday outside a campaign event for Democrat Stevens Miller, the candidate challenging Thomas D. Rust in the 86th state house district. Gov. Tim Kaine attended the event.

Tatlock referred to the protest as a "tea party" and asked the Council what kind of judgment it showed to openly demonstrate against people of whom the town is asking favors. "I know it's a free country and everybody is allowed to protest. However, when to do it is important," Tatlock said.

Interrupting, Husch elevated his voice to DeBenedittis saying, "Mr. Mayor, this is out of order. This is out of order," while Tatlock continued to read. After continuous attempts to have Tatlock sit down, the mayor asked for her microphone to be shut off so she

See Council, Page 10



Observer Photo by Leslie Perales

Reston Interfaith announced it has received more than \$400K in stimulus grants on Sept. 18 to help put those who are homeless in stable housing. The same day, Virginia Spine Institute made a \$25K donation to the organization. Above, Drs. Thomas Schuler and Brian Subach and employees of VSI present a check to Reston Interfaith CEO Kerrie Wilson at the Laurel Learning Center.

Reston Interfaith Awarded \$400K

BY LESLIE PERALES
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Reston Interfaith received notice Sept. 11 that it has received \$424,236 in grants through the Homelessness and Rapid Re-Housing Program authorized through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"In this economy there are already people who need help," said Reston Interfaith CEO Kerrie Wilson. "Now we have people who are out of work." She said the money will provide the county and area nonprofits with long-term funds to help stabilize those in need.

Wilson said there are currently about 100 families who are homeless or nearly homeless on a Fairfax County waiting list. She said with the funds that have been provided to Reston Interfaith, along with other agencies throughout the county and the county itself, those on the list may be able to see some relief.

See Interfaith, Page 9

Multicultural Fest Comes to Reston

BY LESLIE PERALES
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The ninth annual Multicultural Festival will take over Lake Anne Village Center this weekend from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. The celebration embraces diversity and brings the community's cultures together.

The festival offers music, entertainment, food and cultural treasures from around the world. Those who attend are invited to come dressed in their own native attire and share their culture with their neighbors.

"I find that the best part of the festival, to see people in beautiful saris or these gorgeous clothes from around the world that you don't see all the time," said Kevin Danaher, Reston Community Center's director of community events. "Just to see it right here in Reston in such large numbers is a great thing."

This year the festival's three stages will include performances by more than 25 cultural organizations and groups. The World Stage, Gallery Stage and Global stage will all have local and national groups performing throughout the event.

"The idea behind the entertainment is to get a nice broad group of multicultural entertainers for the entire festival," Danaher said. Some of the most popular groups that are returning are The Rhythm and Cues Tribal

See Festival, Page 7

Interfaith, From Page 1

housing program and emergency sufficiency services program.

"As a grantee of HPRP, we are excited to extend these funds to the broader community and continue our work in direct synergy with the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness—meaning that we are bringing hundreds of thousands of new dollars to implement the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership on Ending Homelessness," Wilson said in a press release.

Dean Klein, Director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness said, "As we move forward with the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, these federal stimulus funds not only help high-performing organizations in the

community partnership to implement new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness, but also keep essential programs for those who are homeless running during these difficult economic times."

The same day of the announcement, Virginia Spine Institute presented a donation of \$25,000 to Reston Interfaith. The presentation was held at Reston Interfaith's Laurel Learning Center.

"I can't tell you all how much it means," Wilson said at the presentation. "This check is wonderful. This is rent for a family for two years." She said VSI's donation will help give a family the stability it needs to get back to their normal lives and be productive members of society again. Wilson said VSI has not only worked to raise money for Reston Interfaith but its employees have collected and

donated backpacks, school supplies and volunteered at its shelter and in other ways.

Dr. Thomas Schuler, CEO of VSI, said the spinal health center has two main goals in the community. The first is to take care of those in the local community who have needs. He said often people are passionate about helping the victims of devastating events that happen in other countries, but there are people locally who also need help.