

Open Board Meetings

Encourage State Associations to lobby every State
for open Board meetings.

By Jim Haynes, Falcons Landing, Potomac Falls, VA

For the last year residents at Falcons Landing have been dealing with the most unsettling and divisive issue in our 20-year history. Last year our Board applied to Loudoun County to rezone our 33-acre property to permit the construction of an 18-bed memory cottage and 9 four story apartment buildings. This would require the destruction of 38 cottages, our signature independent living units.

This application was a complete surprise to almost all of our residents. This spring the **County's Planning Commission and the County's Board of Supervisors approved this** rezoning. However, most of our residents living under the foot print of this planned new construction have contracts that permit us to live in our home until we are no longer able to do so. Our Board spent several hundred thousand dollars on consultants and lawyers to reach this standoff. This article appeared in one of our local papers in the middle of the zoning battle, [Falcons Landing Demolition Plan Splits Veterans Community](#).

Our Board operates in the "Dark" and not in the "Sunshine" as do most public commissions and boards in Virginia are required to do under Virginia open meeting laws. Our Board meetings are not open to residents, there are no residents on our Board. Only the president of our Resident Council may attend Board meeting. He or she has no vote. Dates and places of Board meeting are not announced in advance. Meetings take place 4 or 5 times a year. Only one Board member lives in Loudoun County where Falcons Landing is located. Three do not even live in Virginia. Minutes of Board meeting are available to residents only after they have been approved at a subsequent Board meeting, which means about 3-4 months after the fact.

I would like to see CCRC's subject to the same open meeting laws that Virginia County Boards of Supervisors are required to adhere to. I am convinced that if our Board had followed this practice we could have avoided the unpleasant year we have just experienced.

I note on the VaCCRA website on the History page the association has proposed legislation on this subject in the past, but apparently it did not go anywhere. Is this an issue that would be of interest to others nationally, and if so could VaCCRA help to **develop legislation like that previously proposed that could be added to NaCCRA's** Model Laws to help all states advocate legislation to correct this problem that I believe exists at many other CCRCs?