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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 553

Offered March 3, 2008

*Commending the historic Town of Potomac on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.*

Patrons—Ebbin, Englin and Moran; Senator: Ticer

WHEREAS, the Town of Potomac, now known as Del Ray, and its proud citizens will celebrate the community's historic 100th anniversary in 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 1907 residents of the communities of Del Ray and St. Elmo petitioned the General Assembly to incorporate into the Town of Potomac; and

WHEREAS, a charter was granted on March 13, 1908, giving power to the new town to set up a local government with all normal governing authority, including the establishment of a six-member council and a mayor; and

WHEREAS, between 1910 and the mid-1920s, the Town of Potomac grew into a self-sufficient community, and by 1925 it had a combination town hall and firehouse, a public high school with a gymnasium, a fire department "with motorized apparatus," two volunteer companies of 50 members each, and a complete sewer system connected to every house in town; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Potomac was surrounded by railroads and was known as a railroad community because of the large number of railroad workers who resided there, and even though many railroaders lived in the area with their families, it was not thought of as a "company town"; and

WHEREAS, the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad ran through the heart of town from the Alexandria Junction to the Blue Ridge Mountains; and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad, know as the RF&P, developed a major plan for a new passenger station in Alexandria that opened in 1905 and a large freight classification facility called Potomac Yard that opened in 1906; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Potomac grew and prospered, in part because by 1915 the streetcar line linking the town to Washington and Alexandria provided job opportunities; houses were clustered near the entrance to Potomac Yard near the streetcar stops in the communities of Del Ray and Lloyd; residents had to overcome the many hardships associated with the growth of a new community, including navigating unnamed and unmarked dirt roads that took them to the streetcar line at the bottom of the hill at Mount Ida Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the first school was held in two rooms of a private dwelling, and in 1899 five Mount Vernon Avenue lots were purchased for a new school building; Mount Vernon School was built in 1900 and a rear addition was added in 1928, which was originally the George Mason High School; and

WHEREAS, the town's combination volunteer fire department and Town Hall was constructed on Windsor Avenue in 1926 and it is still used as a fire station for members of the Alexandria Fire Department and the Alexandria Volunteer Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, on September 23, 1927, the City Council of Alexandria by resolution started annexation proceedings that included the Town of Potomac, which were filed with the court in 1929; and

WHEREAS, annexation was a hotly contested matter and it is believed that the town was determined that no records were to be turned over to Alexandria, and one night, the documents were burned in protest; however, the annexation became effective on January 1, 1930, and the 2,355 residents of the Town of Potomac became citizens of the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Potomac has become the vibrant and active community now known as Del Ray, contributing significantly to the social and civic fabric of the City of Alexandria and the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Potomac was listed in 1991 by the Commonwealth and the National Register of Historic Places as a Recognized Historic District; and

WHEREAS, 2008 marks the 100th year of the original founding of the Town of Potomac and the citizens of Del Ray will celebrate its centennial birthday by honoring the community's glorious past, present, and future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the Town of Potomac, now known as Del Ray, and its proud citizens on the occasion of the community's historic 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Del Ray Citizens Association as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes for a joyful anniversary celebration.

INTRODUCED

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