

FRIENDS OF LANCASTER COUNTY
Meeting – February 14, 2007

President Charlie Costello began the meeting by reemphasizing the purposes for which FOLC was established. Those purposes include the promotion of responsible planning for the county, the preservation of the county's rural character, and the encouragement of public involvement in those efforts. He then briefly reviewed the current status of the ongoing comprehensive plan review, noting that on February 15, the Planning Commission Meeting will address issues raised in the draft, "Land Use Tools for Lancaster County," prepared by Land Design. Topics for that meeting will include affordable housing, timbering, preserving the rural character of the county (density proposals), and potential extensions of sewers beyond Kilmarnock

Because of the importance of these issues, Costello urged members to attend. Bill Warren reported that it is extremely unlikely that the county will enact a timbering ordinance, although the county might look favorably on requiring notice to adjacent landowners prior to any clear cutting. Land use discussions will likely include density allowed under current zoning; cluster development proposals; use of conservation easements; definition of primary and secondary growth areas; traffic; roads and other infrastructure issues; Bay Act compliance. Sewage line extension questions involve potential requests of RWC and the Tides Lodge for tie-ups to the Kilmarnock sewage treatment plant.

Costello then introduced the evening's speaker, Delegate Rob Wittman, who reported on what is happening in the general assembly. Items reported on included:

- Transportation: because needs differ greatly in Virginia, depending on the area, this remains a difficult issue. Wittman is hoping for a compromise bill that will address some of the problems.
- Payday loans: since the legislature authorized these loans, they have widely used. The legislature is considering whether limits need to be placed on lenders. The House bill would cap the percentage that lenders could earn. The Senate is still out.
- Environmental decision-making: currently fragmented among several different boards. The legislature is considering whether they should be combined.
- Biosolids: Wittman has submitted a bill that would revamp oversight of the use of biosolids. Another bill has been introduced that would require study of the health aspects of and alternative to treatment and use of biosolids.
- Water quality monitoring: Wittman has introduced a bill encouraging the use of citizen volunteers. The Code of Virginia allows it, but DEQ has not been using citizen volunteers effectively.

Questions raised by the audience included:

- How do VIMS and DEQ water monitoring overlap? Wittman reported that a central database is being set up.

- What is going on statewide with purchased development rights (PDRs)? Wittman noted that 15 localities have programs, but not many have funding. The subject is under study, but there is no money in the current budget for PDRs.
- What should the Northern Neck be doing about water supplies? Wittman stated that all counties should consider where and how much water is available now and in the future when looking at build out projections. We need to consider recharge areas, ground water questions, and sustainability of the water supply. He believes that localities should be able to tell builders they cannot build unless they can demonstrate that water supply is sufficient to sustain the buildings.

The meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.

Jackie Ferriter, Secretary