

MINUTES OF FRIENDS OF LANCASTER COUNTY
MEETING FEBRUARY 8, 2006

President Charles Costello called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He introduced Carl Schlaudt, Planning Administrator, Chesterfield County, VA. Charlie also introduced Jack Larson, Planning and Land Use Director, who provided a firm schedule for input sessions for the revision of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and Lee Hood Capps, Kilmarnock Town Manager.

Mr. Schlaudt described his experience as a planner. He said that he had 15 years of local government planning in three communities in California and Virginia. One, Visalia, CA, was a medium-sized city of 90,000. Another was the small town of Lindsay, CA, with a population of 10,000. His current position is working for Chesterfield County, a large suburban county of 300,000.

Mr. Schlaudt described what happened when the town of Lindsay had a series of problems that threatened to undermine the town's infrastructure and its viability as a community. He said that the town needed to provide leadership, establish a community vision, bury the past, change the rules, leverage resources, settle litigation, repair and upgrade major infrastructure, develop partnerships, engage the housing issue, and increase investment in the town. He noted that highway relocations and retailer decisions were beyond the control of the town's managers.

He asked why a community government should plan. The answer, according to Mr. Schlaudt was that the community should prepare to manage future change, to plan before the community needs a plan. A key point is that there should be a balance between personal property rights and the needs of the community.

Mr. Schlaudt then went on to describe current development plans for growth in Chesterfield County. He said that preserved open space should be on the table for Lancaster County. He recommended that the Friends of Lancaster County should look at the ordinances in Suffolk, Goochland, and Hanover Counties that address open space.

Mr. Schlaudt also recommended that consultants should be hired to help Jack Larson review applications for development. A fee would be charged for their services, and this fee would apply to small businesses as well as to large developers or to big box stores.

Mr. Schlaudt said that planning should be a process, that it should have a product (e.g., studies, policies), and that the plan should be implemented with ordinances that are enforced. He gave several qualities of good plans, including credibility, relevance, flexibility, and achievability. He described planning as a general guide to establish a community vision for future growth and development and zoning as a tool that achieves the vision of the plan by controlling land use and development. He gave several examples of how zoning has affected growth in Chesterfield County.

Mr. Schlaudt, in summary, challenged FOLC to have the conviction to say no, even if this requires politically difficult choices. He said the organization should commit to working for 5, 10, or 20 years, to develop civic leadership. He asked whether we would manage future change or be managed by it.

Following a question and answer period, Charlie noted that the FOLC's Vision Statement and the survey had been presented to the Board of Supervisors and others. He mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan contract was shown on the FOLC website. The contract is divided into three phases: 1) development of recommendations to revise Chapters 8 and 9 of the current Comprehensive Plan; 2) a public hearing on the proposed recommendations; and 3) a public hearing on proposed ordinances of the recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.