

SPECIAL MEETING – FEBRUARY 6, 2007
FRIENDS OF LANCASTER COUNTY

President Charlie Costello called the special meeting to discuss issues raised in the draft, “Land Use Tools for Lancaster County,” prepared by Land Design. The draft is on the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting on February 15. Issues for the meeting included the following:

- Affordable housing
- Timbering
- Preserving the rural character of the county – density proposals
- Potential extensions of sewers beyond Kilmarnock

Affordable Housing: Although everyone agrees that affordable housing is desirable, there is no agreement on how much is needed or how or where it should be provided. So far as we know, there is no county survey that identifies how much housing in the county could currently be defined as affordable, nor is there good information on the extent of the need. There was general agreement that the provision of affordable housing does not need to be tied to higher density as a requirement.

Timbering: 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.

Preserving the rural character of the county – density issues: Current density discussions involve the following, among others: 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. Density under the current requirements is already high. That is, if the county were fully “built out” using current zoning, the whole county would be highly dense. There was general agreement that before any zoning ordinances are changed, there should be a firm understanding of where we are now and where we might be with changes. Any zoning ordinance change will create a new “by right” provision. Thus, if current zoning is modified to allow for higher density, any proposal that meets the requirement can go forward with no public hearing.

There was general agreement that development should center around the towns rather than be spread out indiscriminately around the county. There was also general agreement that designating both primary and secondary growth areas should be done carefully, should be coordinated with the affected towns, which apparently has not been done, and that the area currently proposed as the PGA was too large.

After discussion, it was also agreed that zoning issues needed to be decided before any extensions of sewer and water by the town of Kilmarnock. The Planning Commission will meet to discuss these issues on Thursday, February 15.

The meeting concluded at 9:10 p.m. The next regular meeting will be February 14, 2007. Rob Whitman will speak.

Jackie Ferriter, Secretary