

## **Storm Clouds Gathering?**

To the Editor:

If you think that the Public Service Authority (PSA) is dead, then think again. Last week's announcement as reported in the Record by White Stone's Vice Mayor that the PSA phoenix is indeed rising from the ashes. He stated that the Lancaster County Industrial Development Authority's study being conducted by Rickmond-Burry is nearing completion and that their final report is forthcoming. You may remember, it was the IDA's interim study report by that same firm that recommended a PSA-like approach as one of two options, and that essentially spawned the PSA initiative and caused hundreds of County citizens to have to attend multiple Public Hearings on the issue. Now, you might say, "But, I thought that PSA thing was killed with a unanimous 5-0 vote by our Board of Supervisors at the October meeting; or didn't the Friends of Lancaster County deliver to the BOS a petition signed by 712 registered voters in the County asking for a public referendum on the PSA issue; and didn't the Town Councils of Irvington and White Stone either say "No", or table the PSA issue?"

The answer is yes to all the above. But, remember the old Yogi Berra saying, "It ain't over till its over". And, it has a corollary that is particularly relevant to the PSA phoenix, "Sometimes, it ain't over, even when its over". So it looks like that's what's about to re-happen here, and the IDA's Report from Rickmond-Burry will be just-in-time to get into the ongoing update of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Of course, the simultaneity of the report with the Comprehensive Plan update is likely just a coincidence, right? And, for those who may have forgotten, the New Tides, LLC and RW-C are active members of the IDA so we know its pending final report, much like the interim report, will be independent of any

organizational, or financial, conflict of interest, and will represent the long-term interests and wishes of citizens of Lancaster County.

Anyway, the PSA (or a PSA-like) initiative is easily seen in the storm clouds gathering overhead. The same chutzpah that led the IDA's proposed PSA Agreement to require that two members of the PSA Board be appointed from the lodging/tourism (New Tides, LLC/Sedona) and the retirement/housing (RW-C) industry will no doubt lead them to reintroduce the PSA initiative. Maybe it will even have a new name to make it sound different and fresh, but if it walks like a PSA and talks like a PSA, then it is a PSA.

All I can say is to repeat the shining words of the famous actor Jack Nicholson – “he’s back”. So let’s all get ready for still another call-to-arms and be prepared to have our summers interrupted with a flurry of public hearings.

Please, IDA not again, just let it end. We came here to enjoy the rural life style, quaint towns, and the natural beauty of the area. You’re trying to bring more and intensive development to the area under the guise of solving environmental/septic issues when you and we all know the real threat that the County faces is from the impacts of accelerated development which the PSA would greatly exacerbate. So far, the rural character of the County has been preserved largely due to the nature of the soils in the area, which prevent wide-spread increases in the use of septic systems for intense development in the County. We all know that our relatively inexpensive property values are a prime target for developers from Northern Virginia and Maryland, and adding the availability of county-wide sewer and water would result in an avalanche of development. Recently, one elected County official was quoted saying that development pressure is currently active like a “swarm of locusts flying around our heads” and rezoning request applications are depleting the time and resources of the county staff and the Planning commission. Indeed, if we want to maintain

the quality of life that we now enjoy and we want to continue to live in what is basically rural area, then the PSA by any name is swimming upstream to our desires.

I believe we can all acknowledge that there is a need for improved sewer and water services in some specific areas within the County, and particularly so within the White Stone area. However, these problems are highly localized and can be solved by localized engineered solutions, vice albatrossing the entire County with a PSA-style solution. That's like hitting a fly with a sledge hammer.

And, finally, we all know who the real winners will be if we allow a PSA to be established in the County. They're the developers, builders, New Tides, LLC, and RW-C, and surprise that's why they're all part of the IDA.

Sadly, here we go again.