

Water you thinking? Purcellville's budget debate hits a boil

BY VALERIE CURY

At two heated Purcellville Town Council meetings in May, sharply contrasting philosophies over the Town Manager's proposed \$35.9 million FY26 budget were on full display. Mayor Chris Bertaut, Vice Mayor Ben Nett, and Council Members Carol Luke and Susan Khalil advocated trimming approximately \$1.6 million from the draft budget—including significantly lowering the proposed utility rate change from a 0% increase to a further 9% decrease for water and an 11% decrease for sewer.

In contrast, Council Members Erin

Rayner, Kevin Wright, and Caleb Stought did not support the Town Manager's budget and also suggested adding double-digit utility rate hikes. They did offer one reduction—with Rayner suggesting to eliminate stipends for Council and Commission members which Rayner said amount to \$80,000.

All of Town Council's stipend is \$45,656, \$11,544 for the Planning Commission, and \$3,156 for the Board of Architectural Review. The total sums amount to \$60,320.

From the outset at the May 13 Town Council meeting, Council Member Erin

Rayner pressed Town Manager Kwasi Fraser on his proposed change to reduce the transfer of the Town's meals tax revenue from 100% to 83% from the General Fund to the Utility Fund.

"That was a policy decision made by Council—you don't have the authority to do that," Rayner said. "If that needed to be done, why didn't you reach out to Council and call for another vote to change it?"

Fraser responded that the change was only a suggestion, noting that transferring 100% of the meals tax would have put the General Fund into a "steep

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deficit." He added that he was willing to revert the proposal back to a full 100% transfer.

"But you don't have the authority to change Council-directed and approved

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Progress on Western Loudoun rural zoning amendments

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

Stakeholders reached a consensus about several aspects of Western Loudoun zoning ordinances at Loudoun County's Transportation and Land Use Committee's (TLUC) meeting on April 24.

Four Loudoun County Supervisors and three members of the Loudoun County Planning Commission met with nine representative stakeholders to discuss Western Loudoun zoning laws relevant to the farm industry.

Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin) said one of his constituents wished to be nominated as a representative stakeholder. However, a member of the Planning and Zoning staff told this person that he was ineligible. When Kershner asked the County Attorney about the situation, the County Attorney said that the person was eligible.

"I hope in the future that if there are those decisions

or determinations or suggestions being made by staff on whether a person should or should not participate in this process just because they have a zoning issue or whatever it may be, that is run by the County Attorney's office," Kershner said.

This meeting is the third in a series of stakeholder meetings that are part of a zoning revision process the Board of Supervisors conducted for the entire county. The Board chose to focus on Western Loudoun separately from the rest of the county because of the community's unique needs.

The stakeholders and government officials hoped that the zoning ordinance revisions should strike a balance between allowing property owners profit from their land and supporting residents who want to enjoy the quiet of the country.

The discussion featured seven topics: value-added agriculture, consistency between lodging uses, sawmills,

definitions, agricultural structure setbacks, and conservation easement density. Three of these topics are highlighted below.

Value Added Agriculture

The first issue up for discussion was value added agriculture. Discussion centered around definitions for "agritainment" and "agritourism".

"If I do think there's a difference—and I do think it's a pretty murky one—I would say that agritainment is what happens and agritourism is where it's happening," Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) said. "But having said that, I think the difference is murky enough that those two things could be collapsed.

With no objections, the group agreed to proceed with deleting "agritainment" and changing the definition of "agritourism" to conform to the state code.

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HCA teacher conducts student-designed experiments on Zero-G flight

BY GRACE BENNETT

As one of eight teachers selected for a flight on the Zero-G plane, Mrs. Megan Tucker—the Dean of Curriculum/STEAM Specialist at Hillsboro Charter Academy—was granted the opportunity to conduct microgravity experiments started by students at her school. Global connections to Nigeria and Spain contributed components for the experiments, and the Space for Teachers program made the microgravity flight possible in the first place.

Two major experiments were led during the flight: an examination of the behavior exhibited by Aqua Dragons in microgravity, and the effects of Newton's Laws on paper helicopters when immersed in that same Zero-G. Aqua Dragons are arthropods also known as "brine shrimp," or *Artemia Salina*, which feature 3 eyes, 8 legs, and no mouth.

Students from HCA raised and provided the Aqua dragons, and looking on with interest were those conducting similar experiments at Harmony Middle School and in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, and Spain. A collaboration with Nigerian students and scholars



added paper helicopters to the flight's study of physics. Specially designed tanks were engineered in Minnesota and mailed to HCA.

With materials ready to go and tanks

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McCormick wins top honors at the Student Environmental Showcase

Norah McCormick, a junior at Loudoun Valley High School and the Academy of Science took top honors on May 2 at the Loudoun Student Environmental Action Showcase. Her project, SOS: Save Our Scavengers received second place in the high school division, and she also received a special award for best communicator. McCormick's project surrounds advocacy, education, and fundraising for prevention of lead toxicity in scavenger animals, particularly birds such as vultures, eagles and other raptors.

In partnership with a mentor from Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, she has researched the prevalence and effects of lead toxicity in scavenger animals. She developed an educational program about the dangers of lead contamination for both humans and wildlife and alternative forms of ammunition.



McCormick has presented this program to local hunting clubs and environmental groups. Additionally, she has raised nearly \$1,100 thus far to provide care and rehabilitation for animals effected by lead poisoning at Blue Ridge Wildlife Center.

When asked why McCormick chose this topic, she traces it back to a pair of vultures that laid eggs in her family's barn during the pandemic: "It all started with the vultures, if I'm being honest. I feel that I owe

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A Stupid Project is Getting Pregnant

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

A handful of homes in Waterford have weak wells. A handful of houses in Paeonian Springs have problems with wastewater. These historic villages' needs were each addressed by the County in 2022 and 2019, respectively. In the years since, nothing happened. Then last year, County bureaucrats had a eureka moment and said, "Hey, why don't we solve both problems by creating piped water and sewer links that connect the two villages." Thus began the "Villages of Paeonian Springs and Waterford Interconnected Community Water and Wastewater Systems."

I sense a coordinated move by Staff and Loudoun Water to create a full-blown utility system to replace all existing wells and septic systems, where hook-up costs would be in the \$18,000 range for each lot.

OPINION

The \$60,000,000 cost didn't bother Staff. After all, the County has more than \$250,000,000 of surplus funds from data centers and it seems to be searching for ways to spend this largesse, rather than giving citizens some tax relief.

The Stage

Waterford and Paeonian Springs both have National Historic designations; they are connected by Clarkes Gap Road, a Virginia Scenic Byway. The villages are known for their charm and uniqueness. Both have a wide range of housing and family incomes. Neither one could be considered a "place just for the rich."

In addition to the villages and Clarkes Gap, the project's study area includes land along Hurley Lane, Highland View, Bridle Path and Hamilton Station. That implies that wells and pipes could end up in any of these areas.

The Issue

Working with Loudoun Water, County bureaucrats have proposed a massive water and sewer connection between Waterford and Paeonian Springs, along Clarke's Gap Road. It would be expensive, but that's not an

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An open letter to the School Board

BY DELEGATE GEARY HIGGINS
MEMBER, VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES DISTRICT 30,
WESTERN LOUDOUN & FAUQUIER COUNTIES

Dear Loudoun County School Board Members,

As a former LCPS School Board Member and parent, as well as a current LCPS grandparent and elected State Delegate, I have sat in your seats, and I know firsthand about the responsibilities of a school board member. I must say I am thoroughly disappointed and frustrated, but unfortunately no longer surprised, by the behavior of LCPS, specifically regarding the recent treatment of the three boys at Stonebridge High School, and the disregard LCPS has for their own policies, state and federal mandates, and the law.

I attended Tuesday's 4:30 pm school board meeting to speak to you about these issues and upon arriving I was informed that I would have one minute to speak. After waiting for four hours for the opportunity to speak, my

OPINION

one minute of speaking time was then interrupted and cut short by the Chair. Three and a half years ago, you told us that LCPS had to comply with the State Board of Education's 8040 model policy issued by the previous administration. Today, you actively disregard the current administration's policy.

I have spoken with the parents of all three male students involved in the incident. I contacted your government affairs staff for a meeting, but I was told that no one would discuss my questions. LCPS is failing these young men and has the potential to ruin their futures should this ridiculous LCPS Title IV investigation not stop. These young men were understandably uncomfortable with a girl in their locker room, who was filming them, and yet the boys are the ones in trouble. How long are we going to continue to punish students with this unscientific and radical agenda that boys can be girls and vice versa?

LCPS appears to be relying on the Fourth Circuit's Grimm vs. Gloucester decision as their guide, but Grimm specifically addressed only restrooms and did not address locker rooms, showers, or sports. As a 14- or 15-year-old young man, I cannot imagine a more inappropriate, awkward or embarrassing situation than having a girl in my locker

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Our Nation's Parks are at risk

BY JOHN P. FLANNERY

We are a local community in a State that cherishes its historic and environmental resources, and we have worked hard to preserve and protect entrusted treasures in land and gardens and streams.

We convey what we've learned to others, including our children, by our example and by the confidences we share with them; this handoff is critical, one generation to the next, for otherwise what we respect and honor may be fatally compromised if not lost forever.

There's an old joke, playing upon any Virginian's respect for history, when you ask how many Virginians it takes to change a light bulb, and the answer is three—one to change the bulb, and two to comment on the historic significance of the bulb replaced.

Among Thomas Jefferson's correspondence with James Madison, on September 6, 1789, he questioned how one generation may bind another, indeed, how "one generation of men has a right to bind another..."

The idea is a legal principle going back centuries to roman times: Jefferson stated it this way—"that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living."

"Usufruct" is a legal concept in two parts: first, of use (usus) and, next, of fruit (fructus); it is the right to use the land and streams, provided that at the end of such use one renders the fruit in the condition it was first received.

Jefferson concluded, "It is the right to make all the use and profit of a thing that can be made without injuring the

OPINION

The flawed Brady/Giglio List

BY LLOYD HARTING, A FORMER FEDERAL AND LOCAL
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO LIVES IN PURCELLVILLE

On April 4, 2025, a Purcellville Police Department police officer was terminated from employment by Purcellville Police Department Acting Chief of Police Sara Lombrana, citing alleged "unsuitability" for continued service. Simultaneously, Acting Chief Lombrana reported an unproven allegation—that the police officer had improperly used accrued sick leave—to Loudoun County Commonwealth Attorney Robert Anderson. What happened next was not only unprecedented, but deeply disturbing because without a criminal charge, without a hearing, and without clear explanation, Commonwealth Attorney Anderson then placed the former police officer on the Loudoun County Brady/Giglio List.

To date, the former police officer has received no explanation from Commonwealth Attorney Anderson's office for this adverse decision. No evidence of criminal wrongdoing has been presented. Yet his name is now among those deemed untrustworthy to testify in court—his reputation damaged and his law enforcement career possibly over.

Fundamentally, the Brady/Giglio List is intended to protect the rights of criminal defendants by ensuring that any material fact that could call into question the credibility of a law enforcement officer witness—such as past dishonesty or misconduct—is disclosed to defense attorneys. This mandate stems from the landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases Brady v. Maryland (1963) and Giglio v. United States (1972), which held that prosecutors must share exculpatory evidence,

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Affordable housing applications to be better expedited in the near future

BY GRACE BENNETT

On May 21, the Board of Supervisors was updated by staff during a Transportation and Land Use Committee meeting on the status of details related to the creation of an expedited process for legislative affordable housing applications. The objective of such a process would be to ensure an adequate supply of varied housing with optimal proximity to services and amenities for existing and future residents. Staff intends to return to another TLUC meeting with a drafted policy for action recommendation on July 15.

If the expedited process were to be implemented, a number of factors must be addressed by staff to ensure efficiency and sustainability, and certain restrictions will be adjusted or maintained—such as qualification criteria, proffer statements, and meetings.

The criteria to qualify for expedited housing will be relaxed so that more applicants may take advantage of the

offer. Restrictions on applications with third-party program deadlines will be removed to increase convenience, and the process will be extended to include purchase units rather than solely rental housing. In short, staff is working to avoid penalizing applicants who are seeking outside funding assistance.

Staff maintains that critical infrastructure—such as roads, bridges, and the like—must already be in place for an expedited housing process application to be considered. In the first year of incoming applications, staff will set a limit on the projects that are undertaken (roughly six, according to the May 21 meeting), but fine-tuning adjustments will be made after a review of the first year's successes. This pilot program is in place to avoid overpromising to industry representatives.

The expedited process is a joint effort, however; applicants will be expected to meet deadlines and uphold a certain quality of work. A failure to meet deadlines on the part of the applicant or

materials not meeting minimum standards may void an application's ability to be expedited.

Pre-meetings will remain required on both ends. Proffer statements, too, must still be included in applications. Those seeking participation in the expedited process are strongly recommended to factor in an eight-month minimum window between the application's

acceptance and the desired deadline, and as such, they should identify any special program deadline from which they are seeking funding.

When reviewing the adjustments to be made to the expedited process, industry representatives suggested implementing a new standing meeting with a joint review of applications between staff and the applicant teams.

To involve Board and Planning Commission members earlier and more directly, a few different options are under consideration: Supervisor(s) and Commissioner(s) could be invited to the

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“Evangelize it in Congress”: Suhas Subramanyam spearheads Agritourism Caucus

BY GRACE BENNETT

On May 29, Congressman Suhas Subramanyam (D-VA-10) visited Great Country Farms in Bluemont, VA to launch his Agritourism Caucus in Congress and to announce the publishing of a new USDA Agritourism Resource Manual.

Great Country Farms was the choice setting for this meeting—a multigenerational family farm heavily influenced by agritourism, it has made itself known as a place not only for produce but also dining, playgrounds, animal petting

zoos, events, and more. It is a testament to the power of agritourism to market directly to customers and act as a powerful bolster to revenue.

Subramanyam has taken up the torch passed down to him by his predecessor, Jennifer Wexton, in his enthusiasm for agritourism. He declared that he sees this caucus as a relaunch and a rebrand of what Wexton began.

Up until now, there have been no departments in Congress dedicated to agritourism. While Subramanyam's caucus does not seek to add bureaucracy, the

intention is to encourage related departments to start thinking about agritourism and better support the vital industry. “There's not one person who actually ... focuses on agritourism at all,” Subramanyam said. “I think it's growing, and I think it's the future.”

On top of establishing a group of legislators for the caucus, Subramanyam also launched a resource for small farmers—namely, the new USDA Agritourism Resource Manual. This handbook will prove itself pivotal to helping new farmers enter the industry and find the support networks they need to get started.

The USDA seeks to provide farmers with access to loans, the ability to begin funneling cars onto their property, and the general chance to share the open land that they own. Subramanyam is working to remove the roadblocks that farmers frequently encounter when dealing with governmental restrictions.

Subramanyam's hope is to have the proposed agritourism bill signed into law within the next year or two. “This exists for you and for people like you

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How to be a supportive and positive parent in competitive sports

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Male Emperor Penguins will stand guard to protect their baby eggs by covering them and balancing them on their feet in the freezing cold for a two-month incubation period. Emperor Penguin mothers will travel up to 50 miles to the ocean to retrieve fish for their offspring, which they keep warm in their pouches for long periods of time.

Ask Dr. Mike



DR. MIKE

Elephant mothers travel in herds and encircle their youngest member to protect them from predators, and orphan elephants are adopted by the herd. After octopus moms lay thousands of eggs, they stop eating and will not leave the area and will guard their offspring for as long as needed. It's documented that octopus moms have waited up to four and a half years before the eggs hatch. Cheetahs, orangutans, polar bears and kangaroos are also known to be fiercely protective of their offspring.

Then there's the sports team parent,

arguably the most protective parents of all in the animal kingdom. When these parents are encountered by a threat or challenge, like other mammals, they will inherently defend their children, and there is a myriad of threats to defend against—a bad referee call, struggles with a coach, players, or parents, not being on the best team, not being able to play a preferred position, etc.

Okay, so not all sports parents are overly protective, but to keep from being “That guy” when it comes to your child's competitive sports, I offer the following

“Dos” and “Don'ts:”

Do encourage and support your son or daughter's efforts: Research has shown that parents who praise effort bolster their children's perseverance and performance for challenging tasks. Research has also shown that children do better when their parents demonstrate their involvement and interest in activities in supportive and encouraging ways. Our children want us to be proud of them, so smiling widely, cheering positively, and helping your child develop a strong work ethic in their given sport is good medicine.

Don't pressure your son or daughter to play better: Don't over focus on output, as that can put a lot of pressure on your kid. Your child's success in their sport shouldn't be measured by the number

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SUBMITTED BY JOSHUA WOLINSKI,
DWARD JONES FINANCIAL ADVISOR

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JOSHUA WOLINSKI

with the financial strategies you've been following; but if you aren't, you may need to adjust them. The same is true if your goals have changed. You and your financial advisor will want to build a strategy to address any new or different goals such as emergency cash needs, having adequate insurance protection or estate planning.

- *Am I taking on too much—or too little—risk?* Put market declines in perspective. The financial markets always fluctuate, and these movements will affect the value of your investment portfolio. Suppose you watch the markets closely every day and track their impact on your investments. You may find yourself fretting over their value and wondering whether you're taking on too much investment risk for your comfort level. Conversely, if during an extended period of market gains your own portfolio appears to be lagging, you might feel that you should be investing more aggressively, which entails

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Edwards Landing Park

BY TIM JON

I don't remember making it down to the water that morning—or the way back, up onto solid ground, either; in looking at my camera shots from this adventure, I must have, somehow half-walked, half-slid from the bluffs above the River—descending all the



TIM JON

way into the muck and mire—and, at the time of this writing, I'm seated fairly comfortably at my home computer desk, so, I guess I made a safe and sound return to civilization. If that's how one can describe existence in 21st Century Loudoun County, Virginia.

Anyone taking a hike to the water's edge of the Potomac River in the general Leesburg area—after days of heavy rains—will recall the treacherously slippery effects produced upon our (very) finest quality Virginia clay—especially on a sharp, and oh, so long incline. Those were the conditions I found or, that found ME, at Edwards Landing Park in the Northeast section of Town.

On such a trip, I always half-expect to



find a human skeleton or two—somewhere down around water level—of those whose return skyward didn't go so well. I think I'm at least half-kidding. Or maybe, not quite.

But, as arduous as these trips are, and I've made several at most of the local riverside parks dotted along this well-known waterway, I always seem to forget the hair-raising and laborious nature of the experience and eventually find myself back on yet another lonely trail, on the forested high ground, wondering, “Now, just how in the heck am I going to get down there—and more importantly—how in blazes will I make a safe return to level surfaces without at least, getting embarrassingly covered in mud, or, at worst, sliding all the way out

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“If we make mistakes, let’s fix them” says Chair Randall regarding the Mountainside Overlay District

BY SOPHIA CLIFTON

The Mountainside Overlay District (MOD) was created to protect Loudoun County’s ridge lines, steep slopes and springs from development that could compromise their environmental, scenic and recreational value.

GOVERNMENT

According to a flyer from Loudoun.

gov, “The Mountainside Overlay District is an area of mountainous terrain that contributes to scenic beauty as well as provides many ecosystem services such as groundwater recharge, wildlife habitats and headwaters for local streams. Included in the MOD are Spring Features (natural groundwater emergence points) and Ridge Features (continuous crests formed where both sides of a

mountain meet).”

The flyer continues, “Additional development standards are required in MOD areas to avoid major erosion or soil slippage, and minimize impacts on wildlife habitat, natural beauty and water resources.”

Under these current regulations, any new disturbance of a designated ridge, steep slope or spring feature requires strict adherence to development standards—and there is no avenue for special exceptions or administrative relief.

Back in April of this year, Loudoun’s Board of Supervisors debated whether to begin loosening those protections—first by asking staff to explore amendment options, and then by suspending enforcement of any MOD violations until later this year.

During a quarterly briefing on the Department of Planning and Zoning’s work plan on April 15, 2025, Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin) asked that the zoning-rewrite project include a review of the mountainside feature protections. He argued that several pending applications had been tripped up by the rigidity of the rules—developers couldn’t even apply for a special exception, meaning there was zero flexibility for legitimate, minor adjustments.

“Right now, there is no ability to even consider any differences to what the standards are,” admitted Dan Galindo, the county’s Planning and Zoning director. He suggested staff could propose limited “modification options” for the Board or zoning administrator to review on a case-by-case basis.

But Supervisors Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) and Vice Chair Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) pushed back. TeKrony noted that the county is already conducting a comprehensive zoning-ordinance update for western Loudoun—the Rural ZOAM and Comprehensive Plan Amendment—which would revisit the MOD protections, along with requirements affecting the county’s agricultural and equine industries. She argued it made little sense to carve out a stand-alone amendment now when a broader rewrite is already underway.

Turner went further, questioning whether it was fair to grant special treatment to one industry or applicant while others waited on the comprehensive process. “I’m not comfortable privileging one group in the rural CPAM and ZOAM process,” he said.

Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) suggested referring the matter to the Transportation and Land Use

Committee (TLUC) “to see if issues even need to be worked out.” When Kershner’s motion to send the MOD changes to TLUC ended in a 4-4-1 deadlock (with one abstention), the Board moved on—but later returned with a second proposal.

Acting at the request of County Attorney Leo Rogers—who was reluctant to file suit against an applicant currently out of compliance—the Board then considered suspending enforcement of all MOD violations until the fall. Rogers explained that litigation could not realistically proceed for a year, by which time the zoning rewrite might have altered the rules.

Despite heated criticism from Supervisors Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian), Koran Saines (D-Sterling) and Turner—who warned that the move would set a dangerous precedent of seeking relief for “just one constituent”—Kershner’s second motion passed 6-3.

The dissenting supervisors had feared this would undermine confidence in Loudoun’s zoning process and encourage future lobbying for personal exemptions. Randall, however, had chided her colleagues for their tone and supported sending the broader issue to TLUC for deliberate review.

During the Board of Supervisors Business Meeting on May 6, 2025, supervisors revisited their previous 4-4-1 vote at April’s meeting to send the Mountainside Overlay District standards to TLUC for a more comprehensive review.

“This reconsideration is only to reconsider the vote to send it to TLUC. That’s all we’re doing right now, is reconsidering that vote,” Randall said when opening the agenda item up for discussion.

After reading the motion to reconsider, Turner explained that Randall had approached him after the April meeting and as a professional courtesy she had requested the motion be sent to TLUC for “fine tuning.”

Turner explained that he was “by no means convinced of the argument,” but said he’d like to hear it again anyway, noting that he did not see a reason for the sense of urgency at the time and was still not sure there even was a reason for that urgency.

Supervisor TeKrony agreed that there was no need for urgency, especially when staff already had a very full work-plan. However, she did concede that she also wanted to hear the argument.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 »

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Contract renewed for Inmate Medical and Psychiatry Services

BY GRACE BENNETT

After eight years of the running contract for Inmate Medical and Psychiatry Services awarded by a competitive process to Wellpath, LLC, the term is set to expire soon on June 30. The Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee recommended a two-year contract renewal plan to a Business Board Meeting on May 13.

In addition, the FGOEDC recommended that the Purchasing Agent begin the process of providing medical and psychiatric services for inmates to ensure that a new contract is in by 2017, with further research conducted on service models to maximize the wellness of inmates and efficiency of operations. The Board consented to the recommendations in question.

The recently approved two-year period contract will involve almost \$7.7 M worth in funding—roughly \$3.7 M of which will be available in the first twelve months, and the other roughly \$4 M of which will

be subject to Board appropriation in the second half of the term.

Features include 24/7 medical, dental, and psychiatry services, as well as pharmaceutical, radiology, laboratory, and medical supplies to inmates in the Adult Detention Center. The contract extends its budget to account for off-site medical necessities, such as bringing in outside specialists and funding hospital visits. All security personnel will be provided with First Aid and CPR training by certified staff.

The contract will involve a collaborative relationship with the Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Development Services.

The fiscal impact would result in fewer expenses than if the contract were not in place. Before the Board first approved the privatization of inmate healthcare services in March of 1997—and approved the expansion of medical services to be around the clock—costs for inmate healthcare could be astronomical. A single hospital visit required extensive safety protocols. The

presence of at least two deputies for each criminal, for example, was needed to ensure the security of both the inmate and the public. By nature of transportation, every off-site visit raised the chance of a breakout. The mandatory minimum staff of the Adult Detention Center further complicated transport accompaniment.

The current contract system, however, ensures that off-site visits will be much fewer and farther in between; transport expenses have decreased as a result. The FGOEDC's recommendation to research other medical models will also work for the betterment of the already improved current system.

Other inmate healthcare providers researched by Staff include Mediko Correctional Healthcare, NaphCare Inc., Centurion, Tehum Care Services, Wexford Health, and Armor Health Care. Different healthcare models include the fully contracted method—which Loudoun County currently uses—or a hybrid model of both county

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 »

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Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve to allow more equestrian use on trails

BY GRACE BENNETT

On Wednesday, May 21, representatives from Parks, Recreation, and Community Services met with the Board of Supervisors to present four alternative ideas to open equestrian trails within Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve.

The various ideas are still in their early stages despite being under consideration for over a year. Once a plan of action has more official momentum, thorough research on trail usage and environmental impact assessments will be conducted. Remediation work will be performed by an independent contractor, and consultations with engineers will be hosted in order to take the most cost-effective and sustainable path.

While four alternatives were presented to the Board, representatives recommended the fourth and final of the ideas—namely, a plan to include all trails that could support equestrian access within the expansion, which would keep horses towards the upland areas of the preserve but maximize on their usage. This idea would mostly utilize old road-width trails with significant prior hardening.

An implementation of the fourth alternative would create the need to update the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve Master Plan. There would be no fiscal impact associated with doing so; however, an estimated \$570 K to \$795K would be funneled into

contracting, assessments, and any related construction.

The Board of Supervisors expressed interest in hearing more about the first idea presented by the representatives. While that option did not include any more horse trails, it would prioritize the preservation of the area, and it would include an additional section to Evergreen Mills Trail to complete the loop and improve the existing equestrian experience.

The Board was particularly interested in the aforementioned additional section. As long as slope grades, redundant trails, and expanded parking are taken into consideration—among costs and environmental impacts—the Board is supportive of maximizing the equestrian experience for Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Consultation with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation would resolve the issue of redundant trails.

Supervisor Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) gained support with the approval of option four along with its requirements. She then moved that the Board direct staff to make further assessment of additional mileage inside Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve within a requested period of twelve months.

A unanimous vote from the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board foreshadows improvements to the local equestrian experience soon to come.

GOVERNMENT

CONTRACT RENEWED, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

employees and hired contractors. In the new contract, staff will need to ensure that the next Request for Proposal process is carefully drafted to align with “changes in the inmate population, correctional healthcare best practices, policies and guidelines as well as plan for expansion during the next contract term to include the next phase of the ADC,” according to the Board of Supervisors Business Meeting Action Item draft. Staff will need to add a new full-time psychiatrist and a medication assisted treatment coordinator.



Additional enhancements in the areas of mental health and substance abuse will be included.

In the interest of timing a contract renewal with the expiry of the first award, and in hopes of mitigating disruptions to inmate healthcare, it was recommended that the Board authorize the Purchasing Agent to exercise the full two-year renewal option with Wellpath. A meeting on May 20 revealed the Board’s consent—and Loudoun County can continue to take pride in their dedication to inmate health.

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WATER YOU THINKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

policy,” Rayner repeated, pressing the issue. “I want it to be zero,” she added, referencing her desire that no meals tax revenue be allocated to the Utility Fund.

Mayor Chris Bertaut reminded the council that the budget has not yet been finalized. “These are proposals,” he said.

Rayner interrupted, repeating her concern that Fraser did not have the authority to make such a change. However, under the Town’s budgeting process, the Town Manager is responsible for preparing and recommending the budget, and may suggest revisions until it is approved by the Council.

“To interject,” said Bertaut, “we have not voted on a complete budget yet. The Town Manager has given this Town Council one proposed budget, and now, in effect a second proposed budget.”

Fraser clarified that the decision wasn’t made in a vacuum. After reviewing the numbers with the finance team, he said, it became clear that allocating 100% of the meals tax to the Utility Fund would significantly impact the General Fund. “In my judgment, I put it to 83%,” Fraser explained. “My apologies for not having a meeting to tell you what myself and staff have done.”

Continuing the critique, Council Member Kevin Wright also insisted that Fraser had no authority to reduce the meals tax allocation.

Mayor Bertaut reiterated that the Council had not yet voted on the change. “We as a Council have not voted on a whole budget,” he said, adding that the earlier policy decision could still be revisited.

Vice Mayor Nett agreed: “It is at 100%, but he [Fraser] made a proposal, and it’s up to us to accept the proposal or not.”

Council Member Caleb Stought joined in, asking Fraser whether he had discussed the proposed change with any Council members.

“I did not. I discussed it with our staff,” Fraser replied.

Interrupting, Stought pressed, “Only with finance staff?”

“That is correct,” Fraser confirmed.

Bertaut concluded, “But let’s recognize that it was pursuant to bringing a second proposed budget for the Town Council for their consideration.”

Changing direction, Rayner said that eliminating the vehicle license fee would put the Town at a loss of \$183,000 in annual tax revenue.

Later in the meeting, addressing that point, Nett said, “I am proud to have voted for that. I’d do it again. I dispute it’s a \$183,000 loss—as you know, the County funding pays for that for one year.”

Rayner said that, due to the Town Council majority’s vote to lower the property tax rate, the Town is also losing \$279,000 in revenue.

Again, Nett said he was proud to have voted for the equalized rate. “If you want to characterize that as a loss, so be it.”

Rayner also noted that the Council majority voted to lower utility rates by 9% for water and 11% for sewer.

Nett reminded the Council that the Town had an election in November 2024 and he ran on lowering utility rates.

“I heard from the overwhelming majority of the residents [going] door to door that the water rates are a real concern for them, and I believe there are alternatives to that. We can find it through trimming the budget,” he said. Nett added he was not interested in “revisiting our vote to reduce our water rates by 9% for water and 11% for sewer.”

Rayner said the Town staff is not bloated and that “we run a lean and mean organization.” Rayner also said the Utility Fund is undercharging its users. “If people can’t afford their utility fees, then they could use a fund,” she added.

“When we say
‘don’t drink it,’ we
are talking about
wastewater”

—Town Manager
Kwasi Fraser

The Town of Purcellville has a population of approximately 8,900 residents and employs about 90 staff members, nearly 39% of whom earn six-figure salaries.

The Utility Fund operates at a deficit in part because employees who are paid through the General Fund charge back costs to the Utility Fund—for example, \$311,843 in FY25 was charged for financial work. Additionally, the Public Works Department, also funded through the General Fund, charged back \$458,775 in FY25 for services including executive management, meter reading, and utility line management work.

Rayner said that the Stantec, the Utility Rate Consultant for the Town, showed double digit increases for FY26-27 “but then it normalizes.” She said with the Council Majority’s model “you get the double digits in 28-30—”so you are pushing the can down the road.”

Stought said he wanted a long-term plan, not just a plan for one year, and this was echoed by Wright.

Council member Khalil said the Town can reach “good structure by taking a different approach—cuts have to be made when times are tough.”

Bertaut noted that Rayner only presented two of Stantec’s eight proposals. He said the two models she highlighted were “pretty much of a throw away because that’s last year’s scenario. The

Capital Improvement Program forecast has changed for this year and out years and therefore we would not have a sustainable Enterprise Utility Fund either on the water or on the sewer side using last year’s rates.”

He said that 2,700 households and businesses carry the burden of supporting Town operations, as 52% of the in-town land is occupied by municipal buildings, community centers and churches—“none of which generate revenue for the General Fund.”

As of the start of FY26, the Town is carrying \$46.3 million in inherited debt which extends to 2040, noted Bertaut. The water and wastewater debt is \$38.1 million and that equals \$14,137 in debt per household.

That debt originated from then former Mayor Bob Lazaro and Council Members Joan Lehr and Tom Priscilla to name a few, who supported a major upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant. At the time, the facility was operating at approximately 40% capacity. The choice was made to expand the plant to accommodate future growth, during a period when the Town had a \$6 million mandated upgrade, which was paid for through grants.

Bertaut said that if the Town draws \$1.6 million from the General Fund reserves this year—that leaves us at \$4.2 million above the 30% reserve policy limit.

Rayner said she opposed freezing two and a half positions in the Planning Department and reiterated that she is against any reduction in Town staff.

Fraser said, “We did not take this decision lightly, myself, our director of Human Resources and Assistant Town Manager.” They chose not to fill the positions, so the question is whether the Town Council trusts staff to make those decisions internally, given their understanding of the organization’s structure, he said.

Nett asked Stought whether he “supported lowering utility rates for our residents.” In a raised voice, Stought responded, “No, because it will necessitate dramatic rate increases five years from now.”

Bertaut made a motion to support Stantec’s recommendation of increasing the level of the Town’s reserves in water to 100% and wastewater to 75%.

Bertaut, Nett, Luke and Khalil voted to allocate 83.6% of the Town’s Meals Tax revenue to the Utility Enterprise Fund. Rayner, Wright and Stought voted against the motion.

At the May 27 Town Council meeting, during the citizen comment portion, business owner and Purcellville Business Association President Jason Sengpiehl spoke on behalf of the Association’s Board, on which Council Member Erin Rayner—former two-term president—serves as treasurer.

Sengpiehl said that the association is concerned over the Town Council’s “continued pattern of divisions that demonstrate a clear disregard for Purcellville businesses, property owners, and residents.” He said that council has passed on “opportunities to revitalize our business community through well planned annexation efforts, infill development and infrastructure improvements.”

Sengpiehl said that the council actions are “missed opportunities and reflect a troubling unwillingness to support growth, or invest in the long-term health in the town’s economy.”

Regarding the wastewater plant, Fraser said that the Town needs four screens. Three of them are together and one is separate. Fraser suggested waiting until FY27 to do the three fine screens—and that will push \$750,000 to the FY27 budget. The Town is waiting on DEQ to give their consent on this proposal.

Stought argued that if the Town waits a year the screens could increase from 10.83% to 14.2% due to inflation. However, the contract would be structured in a way that would not result in a cost increase.

Fraser said, “The Town is implementing project management so we have visibility on tasks and who is assigned to it.”

Fraser had to talk over Wright, as he continued to loudly interrupt him. Said Wright, “To say we are going to find efficiencies—it just doesn’t work,”—arguing that the Town would delegate responsibilities to a reduced workforce, only to later require a budget amendment. “And where is that money coming from?” he asked.

As Fraser explained the Town’s project management efforts, Rayner—seated beside him—began laughing, shaking her head and reacting animatedly. Her reaction, which came as Fraser was emphasizing the seriousness of internal operations, prompted him to respond directly: “That’s not a joke, because in every organization you have three elements: people, system, and process.”

As Fraser began to respond—“We will be monitoring”—Wright shouted over him, “No, no! Where is that money coming from?”

Mayor Bertaut gavelled Wright for interrupting. “Let him finish his response, sir.”

“I will do what I wish, thank you,” Wright shot back.

“Not if you wish to remain in this meeting, sir,” Bertaut responded.

Fraser, finally able to complete his thought, said, “That money comes from the 200% in over budget reserve money that we have. I’m saying that the reserve is overflowing.”

While discussing staffing at the wastewater treatment facility, Stought raised concerns about safety, noting that the department was short one lab technician

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MOUNTAINSIDE OVERLAY, CON'T. FROM PAGE 8

The motion to reconsider passed 7-1-1, with Briskman voting no and Umstattd absent from the dais.

With reconsideration on the agenda, Turner then made the motion to move discussion of the MOD feature standards to TLUC for further review, and Randall opened the floor by offering her thoughts on the urgency of the motion. She explained that at the previous meeting, some of what was discussed were "literally health and safety issues."

"When you start talking about sewage, sewer lines, when you start talking about people's wells that are not producing correctly, those are health and safety issues. If health and safety issues, and water, safe water issues are not an emergency, I'm not quite sure what is," Randall said. "I completely disagree that these things are not urgent. If my well is going bad, that is an urgent issue for me."

Randall continued her argument, saying that "TLUC is the exact right place to work out these issues. It's why we have committees. If this goes to TLUC, Ms. TeKrony, it is up to you as the TLUC chair whether people come speak on the item in

TLUC. ... So the idea that we can't have people comment in the committee meeting is incorrect; it's your committee. If you want commenters, people to comment, the public, let them comment."

"The way we got into this situation is the Board—a board that you were not a part of, and you weren't, it wasn't your fault—kind of did this Mountainside Overlay almost as a response to something that was going on at the time," Randall explained to the newer board members. "And so there's never a time that we can make a decision that we can't be wrong or have missed something."

"In this one, I think we made this so narrow that we've caused people to not be able to take care of their health and safety needs. Of course we look at that. And of course that's urgent. We're human beings up here just doing the best that we can, and sometimes we make mistakes. And if we make mistakes, let's fix them. As quickly as possible, let's fix them," Randall concluded.

After her argument supporting it, the motion to move the MOD standards to TLUC for review passed 7-1-1, with Briskman voting no and Umstattd absent.



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Hiddenwood proposal draws denial recommendation

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

At its May 8 work session, Loudoun County’s Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors deny an application to re-zone nearly 30 acres of land for light industrial and commercial use.

For over a year, planning and zoning staff has been working with Hiddenwood Assemblage developers to create a workable proposal. The proposal has received heavy pushback from the community with 48 of 77 public speakers on the issue opposing the proposal at the Board’s public hearing on July 10, 2024.

The opposition is a result of the land’s proximity to Briarfield Estates, a residential area. Residents are concerned about the impact of industrial and commercial buildings like data centers on their health and on the value of their land. However, Hiddenwood Lane residents are excited about an opportunity to sell their land to developers, since their land was

devalued after the approval of JK Technology Park #2 (JK2).

To ease concerns, the developers proffered out six industrial uses, including data centers. Additionally, they promised to fund landscaping that will block sightlines for residents near the northern property line and assured the Commission that the building would not be an eyesore as it would comply with architectural standards.

Developers clarified that the buildings’ setback from the northern property line will be 110 feet. Additional changes to the proposal make further efforts to screen the development from the sightlines of current residents, commit to building a trailhead, and commit to providing electric vehicle charging stations.

“I think it doesn’t go far enough to get my vote on where we are going,” Commissioner Madhava Madireddy (Dulles) said.

Commissioner Robin-Eve Jasper (Little River) agreed.

“Clearly a serious problem was created by the approval of JK2. This would export that problem to Briarfield Estates and then also export it again potentially to other properties adjacent,” Jasper said. “I just don’t think that exporting the problem to another community is the solution.”

Commissioner Dale Polen-Myers (At-Large) presented a counterargument. She said there will be no housing stock in Hiddenwood Lane. Re-zoning would allow the county to get some commercial use out of the road while protecting Briarfield Estates, which has a buffer between the neighborhood and the development.

“When we talk about the application that is in front of us and the suitability of it and how it conforms to the zoning ordinance and everything, I think there is an opportunity to right a wrong. It just takes some willpower to stand up and do the right thing. And unfortunately, I don’t think there will be five people here to do that tonight,” Myers said.

Commissioners Eric Combs (Ashburn) and James Banks, Jr. (Algonkian) agreed. Combs addressed the planning and zoning staff’s concerns about land use and mitigation of the impact on Briarfield residents.

“In terms of mitigating impacts on adjacent residential uses at Briarfield, I don’t know what more we can do,” Combs said. “What we have is really minimal impacts over at Briarfield such that I don’t think we’re exporting the problem that Hiddenwood has.”

Commissioner Michelle Frank (Broad Run) agreed with Madireddy and Jasper that the application did not go far enough to protect Briarfield residents. She suggested that the applicant remove one of the three buildings.

Madireddy made the motion to recommend that the Board deny the application. The Commission passed the motion to recommend denial with a vote of 5-4. Commissioners Clifford Keirce (Sterling), Banks, Combs, and Myers opposed.

ZONING AMENDMENTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Consistency Between Lodging Uses with Noise Regulations and Setbacks

Discussion turned to the inconsistency between the standards for bed and breakfast homestays, bed and breakfast inns, country inns, and rural resorts.

Currently, outdoor music is permitted later for country inns and rural resorts than for bed and breakfasts. Manisha Shah, who spoke on behalf of the Bed and Breakfast Guild, asked that the standards be consistent for each use. Shah said the guild would like 11 p.m. to be the cut off for outdoor music on weekends and 10 p.m. on weekdays.

Randall suggested the committee consider setbacks before considering noise. However, Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) disagreed.

“If we start moving setbacks, we’re going to start having a lot of non-conforming locations in Loudoun County, and I think it’s going to drive you back to something you can regulate, which is the amount of noise,” Turner said.

Kershner agreed with Turner. Commissioner Robin Eve Jasper objected, saying that country inns may start opening too close to the property line and having daily outdoor parties.

“As rural uses become harder and harder to maintain and the quality of our rural communities deteriorate through more development, I think it will incentivize more people to move in that direction,” Jasper said.

Randall suggested a grandfathering clause and reminded the committee that the goal is to find a balance between allowing residents to both profit off their land and enjoy the quiet atmosphere of a rural community. TeKrony said the committee should also consider the impact on the network of gravel roads in Loudoun County’s rural areas.

Kershner concluded the discussion by encouraging the bed and breakfast, country inn, and rural resort owners to self-regulate.

“If you don’t self-regulate, you will be regulated,” he said.

He reminded the committee that there is a demand for more of these types of businesses. He warned that if the demand was not met in Loudoun County, businesses would move elsewhere.

Ultimately, the committee did not reach a consensus on this issue and will continue discussion at the seventh meeting about the rural zoning ordinances.

Definition of “Farm”

The committee discussed adding a definition of “farm” the zoning ordinance. Previously, zoning relied on definitions of broader categories like “agriculture,” “agricultural operations,” and “agricultural products”. The idea of defining the term “farm” received pushback from some stakeholders and from planning and zoning staff.

“I do not support a definition of a

farm. This is defined in the state code as well as at a federal level by the IRS,” said Justin Wisch, owner of Longstone Farms, “A county-specific definition will create further confusion and misunderstanding throughout the zoning ordinance for staff and county officials for an industry that is facing daily pressures from existing regulations and land development opportunists.”

The committee agreed that it was best to continue without defining “farm.”

“As one of the groups that got this discussion started about the definition of ‘farm,’ I have talked to Jason and the staff, and I think their strategy on defining ‘agricultural operation’ and ‘agriculture’ and ‘agricultural products’ is a good path forward,” conservationist Chris Van Vlack said, “because we weren’t really concerned about ‘you’re a farm, you’re not a farmer, are those crops you’re growing really a farm?’ It was more about folks who were already in violation of zoning.”

Summary

At the end of the meeting, the committee reached a consensus on several issues. Planning and zoning staff would

make a definition of agritourism that complied with state code, create its own use, make it accessory, and add agricultural operations as its primary use. They would delete agritainment from the zoning ordinance. Staff would review the impacts of cultural tourism and keep it in the ordinance.

Sawmills will now require a minor special exception.

Staff will not pursue a definition for farm but will look at agricultural operations and agricultural products definitions.

Agricultural structures will receive an exemption that allows for the replacement of those structures due to natural disasters.

Conservation easements will not count toward additional density.

None of these changes to the zoning ordinances are final but are recommendations of the committee.

Planning and Zoning staff aims to complete the zoning ordinance revision project by 2027. Four stakeholder meetings are upcoming, and three have already been scheduled. The dates are listed in the box.

Topic	Regular TLUC Meeting Date	Regular TLUC Meeting Time	Special TLUC Meeting Date	Special TLUC Meeting Time
Wineries/Limited Breweries and Distilleries	June 18, 2025	3:30pm	June 18, 2025	5:00pm
Mountainside Overlay District/Signage	September 17, 2025	5:00pm	September 30, 2025	5:00pm
Food Service	November 19, 2025	5:00pm	November 5, 2025	5:00pm

“We’re trying to be awfully proactive if the worst happens,” says Town Manager Davis

BY SOPHIA CLIFTON

On May 20, the Town of Middleburg held an hour-long public meeting to walk residents through the town’s water system, explain why conservation has become critical, and solicit feedback on proposed conservation measures. Town Manager Danny Davis and Town Mayor Trowbridge “Bridge” Littleton led the presentation, with residents later sharing questions and concerns.



Davis opened by emphasizing that “no decisions have been made” and that this meeting was intended to allow a more detailed, interactive conversation than a regular council meeting’s public comment period.

He noted that Middleburg serves about 700 residents with five groundwater wells, and that the town has not previously faced such a significant conservation challenge: “This is really, really important stuff. This is a challenge the town hasn’t really had to address before, given capacity, given drought ... so we’re trying to be awfully proactive if the worst happens.”

Middleburg’s water supply relies exclusively on groundwater drawn from five wells permitted by the Virginia Department of Health. Of these wells, three are equipped with filtration systems to ensure water quality, while the remaining two rely solely on chlorination. Once treated, water is stored in four reservoirs with a combined capacity exceeding 600,000 gallons—enough to buffer short-term operational hiccups and maintenance shutdowns.

Despite these resources, the system faces challenges. Some water mains and pumping equipment date back several decades, increasing the risk of breaks and service disruptions. Each well’s pumping capacity is capped by regulatory permits and the actual yield of the local aquifer. As Littleton emphasized, “Every new

development and private well drilled in our region draws from this same aquifer.”

The town is actively evaluating whether to rehabilitate existing wells, drill additional sources, or invest in alternative water supplies. Davis noted that capital improvement projects—particularly those addressing mains and storage—are being prioritized to maintain system reliability.

With groundwater recharge lagging behind withdrawals, even a single dry season could force Middleburg to impose mandatory restrictions. Littleton warned, “If current drought trends continue, we may confront supply shortages despite our wells’ permitted capacities.”

As Davis noted, “We don’t just sit back and say, ‘Oh, we have five wells; we’re done.’ We have to always be looking at the capacity side—rehabilitate a well, examine new sources, or tweak treatment processes. Even if we had 12 wells, we’re still subject to drought and groundwater dropping. We want the right tools in place for restrictions or dire situations, but also we keep planning for future capacity offline.”

Littleton then took over to present data showing Loudoun County’s worsening drought and development pressures. The Lower Goose Creek Watershed—where Middleburg sits—has suffered below-average rainfall for years.

“Of the 131 years of rain data that’s been collected, this April was the 32nd driest that we’ve seen. But this is the one that’s even more alarming: From January to the end of April, it is the driest first quarter period we’ve had in recorded history in Loudoun County,” Littleton noted.

A 12-month running average is approximately 30 inches—25% below the historic 40-inch mean needed to keep the aquifer stable. “For the last five years running, that aquifer has not been able to maintain steady state,” he explained.

Private well installations in western Loudoun jumped 50% from 2010 to 2020 (from 11,500 to over 17,000 wells). “Think of Loudoun County as a glass of water. The glass never gets any bigger. But every new development we put in in Western Loudoun, there’s a new straw

that goes into the cup trying to drink the water.” Littleton said.

Littleton illustrated how well levels dropped dramatically during the 2024 heat and dry spells: “Well L and Well 4 both dropped to around 10 feet from the pump—just 10 feet from being bone dry.” He continued, “We literally lost 150 feet. And that’s the thing, it’s about the ground, as Danny said, we survive on groundwater. So when there’s no rain, there’s no groundwater going into the aquifer to recharge and fill that water column back up.”

“If you think about it, we want to make sure everybody can shower, you can drink, you can cook. Those are the necessities of life. And so those are the things that we’ve got to make sure we protect first and foremost,” he said.

After Littleton’s presentation, Davis outlined a three-tiered approach to conservation: voluntary measures, mandatory restrictions, and emergency water rationing.

Voluntary measures include reducing outdoor water use by limiting lawn watering and delaying power washing, and also include household recycling, like using rain barrels and greywater for irrigation. “We’re exploring ways for residents to buy rain barrels at a discounted rate,” Davis noted. Indoor practices such as fixing leaks and installing low-flow fixtures are the final stage. “This stage is strictly voluntary; it’s to show conservation is important,” he said.

The next tier, mandatory restrictions, prohibits sprinkler systems, allows timed hand-watering only, and bans pool top-offs or other non-essential outdoor use like filling ponds and fountains. “Automatic irrigation uses 1,000–2,000 gallons a day per household. We cannot allow that in a serious shortage,” Davis warned. He explained that instead, residents can use a handheld hose or watering can between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m. to minimize evaporation. He also emphasized that, in past conservation efforts, “limiting irrigation alone stabilized our demand—wells could recharge, and capacity improved.”

The final, and most severe conservation tier, was emergency water rationing. These rations would institute a residential cap at 150 gallons per person per day (equivalent to 9,000 gallons over a 60-day billing cycle). “Currently, 83–84% of customers average below 150 gallons/day,” Davis noted. Additionally, all non-essential commercial users must cut consumption by at least 10%. “Heavy users can save significant amounts by reducing

slightly,” Davis explained.

Any usage above the cap would incur a surcharge—“not to penalize, but to disincentivize overuse during an emergency,” he said. In such a rationing scenario, Davis said, the town would read meters three times weekly to provide near-real-time usage data. “We don’t want customers finding out two months later that they blew past their cap.”

During last year’s drought (July 2024), before restrictions, only 75% of customers used under 150 gallons/day. After restrictions in September 2024, that number rose to 84%. “Water conservation measures resulted in a 25% decrease in consumption,” Davis said.

Currently, meters are read every two months. Under rationing, staff aim to read weekly. When residents notice unusual spikes or suspect leaks, Davis encouraged them to call the utility office immediately: “The meters store 30–40 days of hourly data. If you call us right away, we can download that and identify if a toilet flapper or water softener ran nonstop.”

Upon hearing about a resident’s example of a faulty data entry that showed 36,000 gallons used in January–February—when actual use was closer to 1,600 gallons—Davis acknowledged “that was a multiplier error. We’ve since verified all new meter installations to prevent recurrence.”

Multiple mains dating to the 1950s have broken repeatedly. A resident recalled a break on Chestnut Street that “leaked for days because of a holiday and nobody noticed,” leading to thousands of gallons lost.

Davis confirmed that the Capital Improvement Program allocates funds to replace high-break segments (e.g., Chestnut and Stonewall). He explained, “Replacing a couple of miles of old mains could cost \$500,000 to \$1 million—water lines are pressurized, so repairs are more complex than sewer relining.”

Several residents raised specific concerns. One homeowner asked whether well levels in Middleburg affect private wells on adjacent properties. Littleton clarified that while Middleburg’s five wells tap the same regional aquifer, “your well might not directly interact with all five town wells—but you do share the general groundwater under Western Loudoun.”

A resident with a large household asked, “How do you account for variable household sizes? A family of seven uses

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

OUR NATION'S PARKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

substance of the thing itself.”

It goes hand in hand with Blackstone's notion that we may not permit waste, prompt spoliation or destruction “in houses, gardens, trees or other corporeal hereditaments ...”

In Loudoun County, we have regional and district parks and persons and commissions that preserve and protect the legacy of gardens, trees and open spaces.

While we may be doing well close to home, there are ominous threats impinging on our national parks at federal levels; and these forces are coming on fast and strong and are a clear and present danger to our national parks.

We owe an historic debt of gratitude to President Theodore Roosevelt.

In and around 1900, President Roosevelt thought to redress the abuse of our public lands, starting with the bad lands, and those spaces he found and relished when retreating from the losses and burdens of his life in the East; President Roosevelt found himself confronting an identity crisis, after his own hunting trips; he became concerned that, if things were not taken in hand, if the hunting continued so aggressively, the nation would suffer a loss of species and habitat.

Thus, he decided to act.

He had no illusions about the truth that our nation “became great because of the lavish use of our resources.”

But, he said, “the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil and the gas are exhausted, when the soils have still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the rivers.”

President Roosevelt may have never used the term “usufruct” but he proved he understood the principle

and embraced it vigorously; he said: “We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of good fortune.”

Roosevelt did his part; he created the United States Forest Service, national forests, bird reserves, game preserves, national parks and national monuments.

Our Commonwealth of Virginia is home to its share of parks; there's Shenandoah National Park, Great Falls National Park, it's reported there are 20 national parks in Virginia, we also have the Appalachian national scenic trail, and battlefield parks, monuments and memorials.

But the rub is our values to embrace and manage these remarkable places are at risk; and that is a shame and a disgrace.

A newly created agency, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), did blithely disregard Roosevelt's directive; instead, DOGE ordered mass layoffs in the various agencies crippling their ability to function to the benefit of our natural inventory.

It remains to be seen if court efforts to save the lands will succeed; DOGE has been charged with having no authority unto itself to usurp the various agencies necessary to our national lands and parks including OPM, DOE, the Forest Service, BLM, NOAA, EPA, DAG, DHHS, NIH, and others.

Worse, the threat is more than staffing, as important as that is; it's about drilling and mining the lands and closing visitor centers.

President Roosevelt told us that each one of us must do his or her part to preserve and protect this great natural fortune entrusted to our generation.

Accordingly, we must put an end to this shady attack on our nation's natural legacy, and embrace the reasoning starting with Thomas Jefferson, concluding with dramatic initiatives of Theodore Roosevelt.

55th Annual Bluemont Fair announces Moore for poster winner



Organizers of the 55th Annual Bluemont Fair, to be held Sept. 20 & 21, have announced Addie Moore, of the Spring House Studio, as the winner of this year's poster design contest. A resident of Hillsboro, in Western Loudoun County, Moore is the artist who created the Purcellville mural on the side of the Purcellville Restaurant, which was sponsored by Discover Purcellville—a community nonprofit headed by Michael Oaks and Kim Patterson. When not creating art, Moore can be found with her nose in a book or playing with her dogs. She can be reached through Instagram @the.springhousestudio.

Moore's design reflects the 2025 Fair theme 200th anniversary of the Snickersville Academy. Moore said, “Our community is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

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World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Wednesday, June 11
9:00am-2:30pm**

The Lodge at Hanson Park | 23394 Endeavor Dr. | Aldie, VA
Lunch will be provided | Pre-registration is required

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

initial pre-meeting; direct notice of an application's acceptance and a link to all of the application's materials could be provided to those same staff members; and a special meeting could be called soon after the application's acceptance.

If an application has no issues, then double advertising is supported. "The Commission is not bound by double advertising and maintains the right to forward the application to one or more Work Session(s), just as the Board maintains the right to forward the application to a future Business Meeting for final action," as stated in the Board of Supervisors TLUC Information Item.

If the expedited review eligibility were to be expanded in the near future, then extra staffing would be taken into consideration, and a cross-departmental team for conducting expedited reviews may be wise. The Department of Planning and Zoning is working with the Department of Housing and Community

Development to educate developers on the process. Similarly, the DPZ is working with the Office of Public Affairs and Communications to ensure the community's awareness.

Industry has suggested that an ombudsman be added in order to answer questions and keep the relationship between the community and staff positive. According to Daniel Galindo from Planning and Zoning, the ombudsman will be "a position that can work with project managers, referral agents, and others to try and clarify any comments ... just another set of eyes to make sure these are moving through quicker."

The May 21 meeting was hosted as an informational session for the expedited process; a return to the Board with a plan of action, however, can be expected shortly down the road. Affordable housing applicants can look forward to improvements in the speed and efficiency of cost-effective and diverse homes.

AGRITOURISM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

all over the country," he declared to the gathering of farmers and representatives attending the launch.

After his announcements, Subramanyam opened the floor to attending farmers to gather their feedback and answer as many questions as possible.

When asked about the agenda for the caucus—its timeline, federal role, and involvement in the local government—Subramanyam explained that the agenda has not yet been established since the newly launched caucus has not had the chance to meet. He assured the audience, though, that he will still be working with the local government as a chief resource.

One attendee, Alexa Janoschka from Double8 Alpaca, pointed out the difficulties that farms have in reaching the younger adult/teen generation. There is a desperate need for more advocates, more involvement, more engagement, and stronger social media connections that will eventually bring the crowds in

person. "There is something special here, and you don't know it 'til you go to it," she said.

"Farming is a tough business," added Mike Huber, another attendee from Stone Tower Winery. "It's hard, and you're doing it for the love." He pointed out the importance of profit viability for business ventures—many avenues do not earn much money for farmers. Obstacles like an uncertain economic future and ever-changing county zoning make property lines unclear and further discourage businesses.

Loudoun County's zoning is beyond Subramanyam's control, but he will be working with Congress, the local government, the USDA, individual farmers, and more to ensure that as many obstacles as possible will be removed from the agritourism's pathway.

"Consider us your champions in Congress," said Subramanyam. "Let's work together for hopefully many years to come."

WATER YOU THINKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

and the position should not be frozen. He argued that having only one person in the lab made the work less safe and said a second technician was needed to provide oversight. Stought implied that the Town's treated wastewater might not be safe to drink without a second lab technician.

That prompted Council Member Carol Luke to respond, "Then don't drink it."

"Don't drink it?" Stought repeated. "Council Member Luke, was that your recommendation? Don't drink it?" he shouted. "I know that it's good—cuz our Public Works staff ensures that it is good. Don't drink it?" he shouted again.

"Excuse me," Town Manager Fraser

interjected.

"What a horrible thing to say," Stought said, cutting him off. "You are horrible," shouted his wife who was sitting in the audience.

Fraser continued, "Excuse me, folks. When we say 'don't drink it,' we are talking about *wastewater*. So please get that clear, folks—we are talking about the *wastewater*, not drinking water."

As with previous meetings, the atmosphere in the room was tense and toxic. Members of the 15-person audience repeatedly shouted, spoke out of order, and openly mocked both the Town Manager and the Council majority—behavior that included active participation by Council Member Caleb Stought's wife.

JUST LIKE NOTHING (ELSE), CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

into the current, or even getting permanently stuck in the 'material' just under the water's surface—or maybe worse, losing my precious camera—my companion on every successful trip in this lengthy series?"

However, priding myself on a classic sense of native stupidity, I—at this critical moment in our trip—generally forgo all reasonable thought, and forge, if not blindly, at least ignorantly forward, and eventually downward.

I guess my hope is: that if enough adventurous souls read and remember these stories, I can just maybe rely on a fairly timely 'rescue' should I ever find myself in true peril. I also hope that this last thought was just a humorous little juncture in today's story. If not, my pen name appears on my vehicle license plate, and I never stay out 'on safari' past around mid-afternoon. Another pause for laughs.

But you see, to me, it's quite important to maintain a healthy, or is it unhealthy, sense of adventure. I believe it keeps one young, even if only in spirit and, critically, it allows me, at least, to subject my body and what little mind I still possess, to the true ardors of my workaday world—namely that of a rural mail carrier in present-day Northern Virginia—where it's seemingly everyone's civic duty to order all possessions from a

computer.

I've survived on many days where a quick, slick slip into the Potomac would seem like child's play in comparison. I feel as if my bread-winning ability depends on my willingness to keep my feet to the fire—or, perhaps more fittingly—my boots to the mud.

Not that these adventures are pure torture. I've had enjoyment in the extreme in visiting every one of the sites over these past ... what ... almost 15 years of little monthly 'vacations' in my own 'backyard.'

With very few exceptions, every one of these, now approaching the two hundred story mark, has taken us to a selected pair of coordinates right here, in Loudoun County. I've found it to be a place of fascination, variety, surprise, congestion, solitude, comfort, hardship, and just about any other description you'd care to name, except boredom. I've never run out of potential sites for examination, and I've never left one of these places with a lack of words to share with you. We've made a good team.

My hope is only that I can find another almost-two-hundred sites for adventure, with the time, energy and desire to get my feet on the ground, camera clicking, heart pumping, those two or three brain cells pin-balling around in my noggin, and someone to appreciate the effort. Got anyone in mind?

FINANCIAL FOCUS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

greater risk. In any case, it's important to consult with your financial advisor to determine your risk tolerance and use it as a guideline for making investment choices.

- *How will changes in my life affect my investment strategy?* Your life is not static. Over the years, you may experience any number of major events, such as marriage, remarriage, loss of a spouse, birth of children or grandchildren, changing jobs or illness leading to early retirement. When you meet with your financial advisor, you will want to discuss these types of changes, because they can affect your long-term goals and your investment decisions.
- *How are external forces affecting my investment portfolio?* Generally speaking, you will want to create an investment strategy based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. And, as mentioned, you may need to adjust your strategy based on changes in your life. But should you also make changes based on

outside forces, such as interest rate movements, political events, inflation, new tax legislation or news affecting industries in which you have invested substantially? Try not to make long-term investment decisions based on short-term news. Yet, talk with your financial advisor to make sure your investment portfolio and spending strategy are not out of alignment with relevant external factors.

By making these and other inquiries, you can help yourself stay informed about your overall investment picture and what moves, if any, you should make to keep advancing toward your goals. A financial advisor is there to provide you with valuable guidance — so take full advantage of it.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC

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THE FLAWED BRADY/GIGLIO LIST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

including credibility issues of law enforcement officer witnesses, with the defense attorneys.

In principle, this safeguard is a vital part of a fair justice system. In practice, however, when misused or applied without clear standards, it becomes a powerful weapon that can be abused to end careers and reputations without due process.

Virginia law provides no specific, objective criteria for placing a law enforcement officer on a Brady/Giglio List. While documented instances of dishonesty—such as a perjury conviction—would clearly justify inclusion, the legal standard for placement is ambiguous at best. Instead, prosecutors are given wide discretion to label a law enforcement officer as untrustworthy based on little more than internal administrative actions, unresolved allegations, or subjective judgments.

This unchecked authority allows a Commonwealth Attorney to place a law enforcement officer on the list based on nothing more than an accusation whether substantiated or not. Worse, there is no established appeal process, no impartial hearing, and no formal review. Officers are left to navigate a system where their futures are decided behind closed doors.

For the dismissed Purcellville police officer, the implications are devastating. Placement on the Brady/Giglio List essentially blacklists him from future law enforcement work—not just in Loudoun County, but across Virginia. No department will risk hiring a law enforcement officer whose credibility has been officially questioned by a prosecutor, regardless of the lack of evidence or due process.

This situation begs the obvious question: what precedent has been set when a law enforcement

officer can be labeled unfit to testify based on an unproven and unrelated administrative issue such as alleged sick leave abuse? If this so-called “standard” holds, then nearly any dispute between a police chief and a police officer, or between a sheriff and a deputy, could become the basis for permanent professional exile.

This is not accountability. This is vindictive persecution masquerading as justice.

There must be a clear distinction between legitimate grounds for Brady/Giglio List placement such as dishonesty, perjury, or evidence tampering versus administrative or disciplinary matters that are irrelevant to courtroom testimony. Without that distinction, the Brady/Giglio List loses its legitimacy, and with it, the trust of both the public and the law enforcement officers who serve them.

Behind every name placed on a Brady/Giglio List is a human being—someone who has honorably served their community, often with distinction, and who now finds themselves professionally adrift without recourse. In this case, the former police officer is not just fighting for his job—he’s fighting for his public reputation, his dignity, and his professional future.

Clearly there is an urgent need for reform: for transparency in the Brady/Giglio process, for clearly defined standards, and for a fair and impartial appeal mechanism. Justice demands no less for law enforcement officers and the communities that they serve.

Until then, the outcome of the legal actions taken by this former Purcellville police officer may provide the only hope for correction. It may answer the uncomfortable question facing all law enforcement officers across Virginia: ‘If it happened to him—could it happen to me?’

“WE’RE TRYING TO BE AWFULLY PROACTIVE...”, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

more water than a single person.” Davis agreed, “We need an objective standard that’s fair. If the county average is three people per home, 150 gallons may work for most—but families of five or more may need a slightly higher cap. We’re still finalizing that.”

One homeowner described a week-long leak that ran undetected in a basement. Davis apologized: “Reading meters weekly is our goal, but staffing limits prevent daily reads. If you receive an unexpectedly high bill, please call us immediately. We’ll download hourly data and help you get a leak adjustment if you repaired the problem promptly.”

When asked why Loudoun Water can expand capacity while Middleburg can’t, Davis explained that “drilling a new production well with treatment facilities can cost several million dollars. For now, we’re rehabilitating existing wells—Well 4 will be deepened by 150 feet, and Well 2 will be refurbished this year.”

A public hearing on the draft ordinance was scheduled for May 22, 2025, at 6 p.m.—two days after the community meeting. “Anything you say there is on the public record, and Town Council will consider it,” Davis said.

Following the hearing, staff will compile feedback with the utility committee and source water team, revise the draft, and present the final ordinance for potential adoption on June 12.

Davis stressed urgency before he concluded: “We’re approaching summer; if conservation measures are needed, we must have them in place sooner rather than later ... Our goal isn’t to ration water for its own sake, but to ensure we can supply every customer with safe, reliable water—today and long into the future.”

June Highlights

Franklin Park Arts Center



Play All Day VA

Friday, June 20 7:00am-8:00pm
Free (All Ages)

We are celebrating the longest day of the year across Loudoun County and Virginia, and we want YOU to join us for these FREE activities!

Letterbox Search: Hiking+mystery+art=Letterboxing! You have all day to search for letterboxes we have hidden on the trail at Franklin Park. Stop in the Arts Center or the Franklin Park Pool desk for a list of clues, or go to Atlasquest.com > People > Events > Play All Day VA 2025. At the end of the day (7:00-8:00pm) gather at the Hillsboro Pavilion for an ice cream party to meet other letterboxers, swap stamps and stories.

Paint a Patriotic Quilt Square: We will supply the 1' x 1' wooden square and paints, you supply the creativity! We will display them in Franklin Regional Park through July 4th.

Flower Headbands: Create a tissue paper flower headband and check out our “Inspired by Frida Kahlo” exhibit.

Loudoun County Parks, Recreation & Community Services

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Trip to Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Wednesday, June 11 7:00am-6:30pm \$105
(Ages 18+): At the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, VA, this artist and her

works are the focus of a new exhibit **Frida: Beyond the Myth**. A book about Kahlo is included in the price of the trip and will be discussed on the bus. Price of trip includes transportation, exhibit ticket and guided tour.

Flower Head Clay Planter Class

Tuesday, June 24 & Wednesday, June 25 4:00pm \$20 (Ages 13+)
Wednesday, June 25 3:00pm \$8 (Ages 6-12): Create a small planter using air dry clay or terra cotta pots, inspired by the flower headwear that Frida Kahlo was famous for wearing.

FILM: Exhibition On Screen: Frida Kahlo

Thursday, June 26 5:00pm \$8: This documentary style art film tells the story of Kahlo’s life and art. After the film enjoy refreshments and post-film discussion while you take in the exhibit in our gallery.

HCA TEACHER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

waiting on-site, Tucker headed through airport TSA with her many clear cosmetic bottles of Aqua Shrimp, taking care to allow them oxygen and pressure releases at every possible moment. Tucker worked closely with the CEO/Founder of Aqua Dragons, Amy Holden, to ensure the safety of the animals.

Once on the Zero-G plane, it was time to document predictions and results. The typical behavior of an Aqua Dragon in earth's 9.8 m/s² gravity is to swim upside-down and horizontally through the water. A simulated lack of gravity, however, would change the shape of water in the tanks, necessitating that the Aqua Dragons adapt. HCA students listed their expectations for the shrimps' behavior based on their observations in the classroom.

And the plane took off. Tucker described the initial feeling of weightlessness to say, "It was like gravity was released. You didn't get any funny feelings in your stomach; it was like a switch was turned off, and there was nothing (no gravity) to hold you down ... It was like everyone else was upside-down, but you were still right-side-up or the world was spinning around you while you were being still."

The reaction of water in microgravity, too, was fascinating to observe. "The water adhered to the walls of the container," Tucker shared, "leaving a big air bubble in the middle. The Dragons followed the water flow and swam up and down the walls. It was crazy to see them swimming vertically instead of horizontally!"

Even after the experiment had concluded and the water returned to normal, the Aqua Dragons continued to cluster around the tank's edges. "I am wondering

if it had to do with the giant air bubble that would've formed in the middle in micro-gravity as well as capillary action that was happening with the liquid in the tank," Tucker muses.

But the Aqua Dragons were not the only experiment on the docket for that Zero-G flight. Tucker also brought the paper helicopters designed by four schools in Nigeria onto the plane in order to "fly" the prototypes.

In late September, Tucker had traveled down to Lagos, Nigeria as a Limitless Space Institute Educator to get started on the paper helicopter engineering process. Tucker commented that "the collaborative effort allowed for a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives, further enhancing our scholars' understanding of engineering principles and global collaboration."

Jumping ahead to the recent micro-gravity flight, Tucker reported interesting behavior from the paper helicopters in simulated Zero-G. "All of the helicopters except one just floated and stayed pretty still in microgravity. A few with parachutes appeared to move upwards. One helicopter, designed by a Nigerian student to convert potential energy to kinetic energy upon release, spun and traveled away from me."

The STEAM experimentation between biology and physics in microgravity, made possible by a global collaboration and close partnership with the Space for Teachers Program, opened up fascinating learning opportunities for dozens of classrooms. Findings will be shared with the scientific community, and the cultural sharing from such a cross-connected endeavor enriches the lives of students and teachers alike.

MCCORMICK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

it all to them—they were a source of joy and comfort back in 2020, and now it's time to pay back the favor," said McCormick.

The vulture couple became affectionally known as Marge and Marvin and provided her family with entertainment and quirky conversation during the lonely days of quarantine. McCormick, a lifelong bird enthusiast, became fascinated with the role of the Turkey Vulture in the ecosystem and grew interested in raising awareness about scavenger animals that play a crucial

role by efficiently cleaning up waste and preventing the spread of zoonotic diseases.

McCormick conducted this project as part of her work as an intern with the VA Soil and Water District's 2025 Youth Conservation Leadership Institute. She hopes to study biology and biochemistry in college and continue her work with avian species and conservation.

If you would like to contribute to the care and rehabilitation of scavengers through her fundraiser, the link can be found at <https://gofund.me/bdc10ff5>.

BLUEMONT FAIR POSTER WINNER, CON'T. FROM PAGE 19

filled with so many interesting historical structures, so I think it's great the Bluemont Fair Committee chose one as this year's theme. Log cabins have a special place in my heart. I live in one, so I'm very grateful to have been chosen for this year's design."

Built in 1825 this charming log structure, which sits on the banks Butchers Branch, served as the village's first one-room school and church. Restored in 2010 with a community maintained walking lane, bridge, and garden, the Snickersville

Academy serves as a focal point of Bluemont's early history.

Moore's rendering was selected from a crowded field of creative submissions by artists of all ages from throughout the region. Capturing much of what makes Bluemont such a special place in Northern Virginia, her design will grace the Bluemont Fair's distinctive poster, T-shirt, and other fair memorabilia.

For more information about the Bluemont Fair visit: www.bluemontfair.org, @bluemontfair on Instagram, Bluemont Fair on FB, or call: 540-554-2367.

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ASK DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of goals or points they scored in a game, but rather, their success should be based on their effort to play well and to learn and grow.

Do promote sportsmanship: In addition to supporting your child's sportsmanship with other players, speaking respectfully as a parent about other parents, officials, coaches, teams/organizations, and players is also recommended. Speaking positively is always a good thing. Focus on the good, and try to avoid negative statements.

Don't become overly competitive and reactive: As a psychologist that works a lot with child and teen athletes, I'm often asked, "Why do parents become so upset at sporting events?" The reason is that we want the best for our children, and we also want them to be happy and successful. Our children are an extension of ourselves, and thus we identify with them. When we perceive that something or someone is a threat to our child or that something is unfair, it's normal to feel badly with and for our kids and to want to jump in to protect them as much as we can. Problems occur when we over identify with our children as they struggle to manage unavoidable real-life challenges.

If you find yourself becoming angry or overreacting emotionally in relation to your child's sports experience, it's more likely the case that something triggered you and that you need to make sense of what that is; screaming, taunting, or cursing during a game, or reacting negatively to a coach, will likely only lead to more problems.

When faced with an upsetting or triggering moment, try to be aware of your tone and voice level, be careful what you say, turn to other parents for support and consider stepping away to regroup.

Do communicate: Regardless of the team your son or daughter is on, no team is going to get everything right for your child, and they will likely not manage your expectations at times. If your child is old enough to work through a problem on his or her own—it's best to encourage that.

If your child is younger, it's best to communicate calmly and respectfully and at the right time. I recommend parents wait 24 hours after an upsetting

event or problem before emailing or calling their child's coach. That extra time will give you the space to cool off.

Don't keep things inside: Often problems in sports, as is the case in other areas of life, go away on their own, but avoiding problems that don't go away could make things worse for your child over time. There's a very old idea in the field of psychology that strong, negative feelings turned inward can cause depression. Not addressing a problem that needs to be addressed can lead to a host of problems when parents don't communicate effectively.

Do volunteer. Parent involvement helps to make a team experience more enjoyable. When you volunteer or help your child's team, you're building connections and modeling the importance of cooperation and giving back in relation to others. These sorts of socialization moments are important for your child to observe and internalize, both on and off the field.

Don't be a stranger: When your child is on a team, you're on a team. While you may not agree with some of the things you hear other parents or players say—when we're on a team we're in it together. I've yet to meet a parent on my son's teams that I didn't like or didn't enjoy spending time with. We all want our children to get the most they can from the sport and the experience.

So, the next time you have a little free time, don't sit in your car and wait for practice to end. Connect with other parents and watch your child play and have fun if there's an opportunity.

In summary, even if your son or daughter—or you as parents—do everything right, upsetting and unfair moments will happen for them when playing and when advancing in competitive sports. Problems on the court or field, or off the court or field, can't always be avoided. It's how your son or daughter, and you as parents, manage your feelings and actions during those tough moments that matters most.

Michael Oberschneider Psy.D., "Dr. Mike," is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He can be reached at 703-723-2999, and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.

AN OPEN LETTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

room taking a video. Kids deserve to feel safe at school and safe in their locker rooms. Placing adolescent children of the opposite sexes together in a place of undress is unacceptable and just plain wrong. Where is your decency and common sense?

Further, as a taxpayer, I am amazed that this board will actively turn its nose up at as much as \$100 million federal dollars rather than comply with federal

policies. There are Virginia school divisions whose entire budget is less than \$100 million. Since I left the Board of Supervisors in 2020, your cost per pupil has risen by over 50% while your enrollment continues to decline. When I sat on the LCPS Board, every dollar mattered.

Your decision to insist on these radical policies at the direct expense of the taxpayer and the safety of our children, who you are supposed to be protecting, is unacceptable and irresponsible.

OPINION: A STUPID IDEA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

issue for this rich county. Loudoun Water would manage and own the project.

This scheme would condemn parts of the lots along the Byway for a major water plant, pumping stations, piping and up to five communal wells, all on what's now private property. Many trees along Clarkes Gap would be chopped down.

Malignant Mutation

This started as a way to help a few handfuls of houses with impaired water and/or sewer. Now it's morphed into a monstrosity: A full-blown utility system with lines running all over both villages so every lot would be served. (Oddly, except for properties along Clarkes Gap Road.) One imperative is that there must be sufficient revenues for it to be financially feasible for Loudoun Water. Connecting to the system will likely be mandatory... triggering meter hook-up fees in the \$18,000 range per house, even for houses with satisfactory water and sewer.

Numbers Tell a Tale

I believe that the villages' combined water usage is currently around 544,000 gallons per day. The proposed system would provide 600,000 gallons per day. Clearly this is a plan to take over private wells and wastewater systems.

Citizens Erupt

Many residents of both villages and also those on Clarkes Gap Road came together to fight the cumbersome-ly-titled project, forming the ad hoc

Waterford Preservation Group (WPG.) Check its website: Savethebyway.org and PLEASE sign the petition you'll see there.

Those along Clarkes Gap would suffer badly. The two-pipe system would run alongside that road, taking residents' land as needed and removing many of the trees that line the road. There would also be buildings behind chain link fences to be stations for pumping Paeonian Springs wastewater uphill to Waterford's sewage treatment plant.

First, We Vent

The first WPG meeting I attended was mostly emotional. People were really, really hot. That may have been necessary catharsis. I tend to be phlegmatic and pragmatic, so it was a day or two before I realized that problems with this project rightfully beget an emotional reaction. That's fine—people should get emotional over grandiose schemes like this.

Studying the Plan

I've poured over various engineers' work, Staff's 2019 108-page document to the Board seeking its approval and Staff's PowerPoint presentation to the Board last November 19. The engineering study seems credible; Staff's 2019 paper is full of errors and what I think are purposeful omissions; while the PowerPoint presentation had all of those problems, packaged as a slick sales pitch.

Houston's Unbiased and Totally Accurate Findings

There has been no community engagement by the County. Staff glosses over this, telling the Board that public engagement would be premature since the project is in its feasibility phase. Chair Randall made the great point that once a project like this gets started, it's hard to stop. This one is getting pregnant. But it can be stopped once you see some of its specific problems:

Elements of the plan include (1) up to five groundwater wells with new access roads, pumping out 600,000 gallons a day. No mention is made on potential reduction in our existing wells or the aquifer, which is currently 40 – 50 feet below normal. (2) A water treatment facility. (3) water storage, which could be a water tower. (3) One or more pumping stations—actual buildings inside chain link fencing enclosures with back-up generators. (4) Force main water piping. (5) Forced flow sewage piping. In several places Staff slipped up and called this what it is: A water plant, plopped along a scenic byway denuded of trees.

There are serious environmental risks. Catocin Creek south of Waterford would be subject to seasonally drying up. The creek north of the village may see daily wastewater discharges in excess of stream base flow into the Potomac.

Projects like this cannot be built on land that's in a conservation easement, and there are at least nine such parcels along the proposed project route.

Deleterious impacts to property values, which were not even mentioned.

There was no presentation of alternative solutions. Why? Probably because Staff wanted the Board to have a binary choice—this project or nothing. The Board was derelict in not demanding to see alternatives.

The project would allow several hundred new houses to be built in the villages, causing new headaches such as increased traffic and crowding.

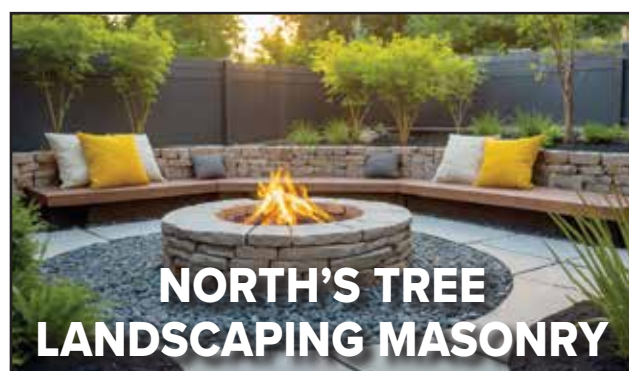
Staff's slipshod PowerPoint show is worth mentioning. I particularly note its claim that the project was "economically feasible," without saying for whom. Certainly not for homeowners who may be forced to tie into the system at costs up to \$18,000 each. Remember, if too few houses hook up on their own, the County can force others to tie in to ensure that Loudoun Water gets enough revenue.

Aesthetic issues are critical—this project would destroy the beautiful viewsheds that make Clarkes Gap a scenic byway and a pleasing entrance into Waterford.

What we Want

"Supervisors, please hit the Abort button."

Charlie Houston generally considers engineers to be credible and without biases to their work. On the other hand, he knows that project managers often contort engineers' work to push their development agenda. Houston did that himself a few times—a traffic engineer said a proposed road intersection would have a level of service of F so he pushed the engineer to call it "a high F."

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