

Friends of Lancaster County  
Minutes  
January 11, 2007

The annual meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with President Costello's introduction of Sonny Thomas, the county's Commissioner of the Revenue. Mr. Thomas explained that the Commissioner's major function is the assessment of real property in the county. Mr. Thomas has held the position since 1996. In 1996 the assessed value of Lancaster County was 1 billion dollars. Today it is two billion. The Virginia Code states that assessments must be based on 100% of fair market value. Because of the way the state handles funding, if the assessments are not at 100%, the county is penalized. A reassessment is coming up, and Mr. Thomas pointed out that there are a number of ways to appeal your assessment should you think it is incorrect. He also suggested that it would be wise to stop by his office to check your "land card," which contains the description of your property and is used in conducting reassessments.

Amendments proposed. Following the speaker, Mr. Costello called the annual meeting to order, and established that a quorum was present. Items to be voted on included amendments to the governing articles and the election of officers for the next two years. Amendments were proposed for Article XI, concerning non-profit activities, and Article XII, concerning distribution of assets upon dissolution. The change to Article XI was to conform the Friends to the requirements for non-profit status under section 501(C)(4) of the tax code. Dues are not tax deductible under this provision, and the organization cannot itself endorse candidates. Following some discussion, both amendments passed.

Election of Officers. The proposed slate of officers was as follows: Charles Costello, President; Bill Warren, Vice President; Marilyn Hedges, Treasurer; Jackie Ferriter, Secretary; Jackie Brown, Tom Smith, and Barb Deitz, Managers. No nominations were made from the floor, and the officers proposed were elected. Mr. Costello noted that Joe Urban, retiring secretary, would continue to man the web page. He further noted that Joe had done a fantastic amount of work in the past two years, which resulted in a round of applause on Joe's behalf, Joe being in Florida.

Announcements:

- There will be a DEQ water management meeting at St. Mary's White Chapel at noon on January 17<sup>th</sup>.
- RWC is having two sessions to discuss their permit seeking changes to their water treatment/sewage disposal system. January 23 from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.
- DEQ will have briefings and hearings on the RWC request on February 7. One at 2:30 p.m., and one at 6:30 p.m. Library. RWC.
- White Stone, pop. 325, has hired a consultant on the question of boundary line adjustments. On January 3, the town officials held a "closed" meeting that should not have been closed. Stay tuned.
- Charlie attended the last School Board meeting and noted that the last appropriation was only through December.

- The Planning Commission will meet on January 18 at 7 p.m. Chapters 1 – 6 of the Comprehensive Plan revisions are up for review. Issues include the transfer of development rights, sewage “authorities” questions, and other development topics.
- Pete Geilich is the new chairman of the Board, and Jack Russell is the Vice Chairman.
- Representatives from Land Design, the contractors who are working on revisions to Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan, met last week with county representatives who are concerned about affordable housing, cluster development, the purchase of transfer rights, and easements.
- Dues. Dues were initially set at \$15 per person and have, to date, been collected only one time. We currently have approximately \$1400 in the bank, and approximately 215 members. A motion to set dues at \$10 per person, \$15 per family, and \$20 “sustaining,” passed.
- A Virginia Tech article has some statistics of note in the area of “what is rural?” The statistics show, for some counties considered rural, the number of people per square mile. The figures include: Lancaster – 86 per sq. mile; Northumberland – 61 per sq. mile; Richmond – 47 per sq. mile; Middlesex – 79 per sq. mile; Matthews – 143 per sq. mile; Westmoreland – 67 per sq. mile.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 14. Delegate Rob Whitman will speak.

Jackie Ferriter  
Secretary