

Friends of Lancaster Meeting, May 6, 2008

7:05 FOLC President Charlie Costello opened the meeting with a statement to visitors that the origin of Friends of Lancaster 3-4 years ago was crisis driven but that it remains an active organization.

He introduced tonight's speaker, Dr. Lynton Land, scientist, professor emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin, and Northumberland County resident. Dr. Land's web site is www.VaBayBlues.org

In introducing tonight's feature topic, the DVD *Weary Shorelines: Death by a Thousand Cuts*, Dr. Land made the following points:

He recommends Tom Horton's book Turning the Tide.

The state of the Chesapeake is not improving and will not improve until the major problems are addressed.

The largest problem is nitrification caused primarily by agricultural application of fertilizer.

Waste water treatment is the second largest contributor.

Sixty percent of the problem is agricultural and waste water treatment

He blames agronomists, not farmers.

The problem is fertilization inefficiency.

The reason the problem isn't being addressed is the public doesn't want to pay.

Progress will not be made until the major problem is addressed.

Purdue Farms Inc is the largest polluter of the Chesapeake.

As long as we continue to do everything on the cheap, we will make no progress.

Citizens need to stand up and demand solutions.

We have to solve the problem at its roots: too much nitrogen and phosphorus.

Next the DVD *Weary Shorelines: Death by a Thousand Cuts* was shown. Much of it involved Maryland's Critical Areas Law which was created to protect the quality of Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by implementing restrictions on development within one thousand feet and eliminating development within 100 feet of the water. It emphasizes the difficulty of protecting public interest versus private property rights. The effectiveness has been undermined by liberal granting of variances and the lack of enforcement resources.

After the DVD, Costello summarized Lancaster County's Waterfront Overlay and pointed out that as of this moment no variances have been granted for the required 100' buffer. Yesterday, the Board of zoning appeals turned down a request for a 1.59 acre lot. Others pointed out that there is no enforcement for cutting vegetation within the 100' buffer.

There followed an open forum discussion including the following ideas,

R-2 (multifamily) is being redone as per the Comprehensive Plan passed in October 2007. Work is starting on ordinances. November 25, 2007 Butch Jenkins recommended working on R-2 "inland first." Don Gill, Planning Director, is working on a straw man proposal on R-2 now. We need to stay aware.

Costello has a memo from the Tartan which will be put on our web site. It is still

simmering – trying to get into the Waterfront Overlay.

Bob Westbrook, Irvington Town Council, asked if FOLC would consider having a consistent article in the Rappahannock Record to disseminate information. He also stated that he believes the county should have a professional planner. The suggestion was made that articles be structured to be informational rather than letters to the editor and be written by a member of FOLC.

Kilmarnock Mayor Curtis Smith, whose family is from Smith Island, MD, stated that most vocal people [advocates of waterfront conservation] already have waterfront homes so are seen by some as hypocrites. He has waterfront he inherited and may want to build on.

Dr. Land stated the need for an overlapping canopy of trees which also means overlapping roots for de-nitrification and the importance of fertilization efficiency. Prune lower limbs instead of cutting down trees. He feels focusing on the zinc in crab pots and copper in boat bottom paint diverts attention from the real problem which is excess nitrogen and phosphorus. High grade phosphorus will run out before oil. Low grade phosphorus has lots of radioactive material. We should be extracting phosphorus from chicken litter instead of spreading it on fields.

On the subject of workforce housing (separate houses on small lots), Bill Warren reported that he had made a presentation to the School Board about a project in Hertford County, NC. They have formed a foundation and built housing which they rent only to school teachers. It has dramatically improved their ability to recruit and retain teachers. He will be part of an ad hoc committee being formed here. Warren also reported that the adjacent, planned, townhouse development on Black Stump Road, by Jones Felvey (40 homes on 29 acres in a Kilmarnock PUD at lower cost), would may include a provision for a five year right of refusal to help assure that the units stay affordable.

Rev. Gayl Fowler from SAIF Water reported that SAIF Water and NAPS (Northumberland Association of Progressive Stewardship) are working toward a ground water management area to include the Northern Neck. Funding has been pulled for monitoring wells to get information on our aquifers. Neither the counties or the state currently have any means to control water usage. Several presentations are planned to educate the public. Westbrook suggested going to schools and PTAs with the educational aspects of this.

There will be a Board of Supervisors work session on Friday May 9 to discuss the plans for the court house and the budget. We need someone to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted
Jo Chamberlain, secretary