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After the Town Council meeting Town Manager Rick Bremseth greets Planning Director and Zoning Administrator Summer Wilkes and developer Casey Chapman.

Purcellville's Zoning Overhaul: developers, dollars, and the battle for the town's future

BY VALERIE CURY

The Purcellville Planning Department has skirted years of citizen input, election results and the principals of transparency, as well as the Town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, in favor of advancing developers' interests. This is most clearly reflected in the significant proposed changes that Planning Staff made to the draft zoning ordinance before presenting it to the Town Council. The Planning Commission's draft zoning ordinance, which comports with

the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, passed unanimously.

At the Purcellville Town Council meeting on Nov. 12, Director of Planning and Community Development and Zoning Administrator Summer Wilkes presented her proposed changes to the Planning Commission's draft zoning ordinance, claiming that "the more you develop—the more charm you get." Her proposed revisions do not align with the Town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, there has been no Town Council vote directing Wilkes to make wholesale changes to the ordinance. The Planning Commission spent two years crafting the ordinance to ensure consistency with the Town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which is aimed at sustaining and protecting the town. All changes recommended by the Planning Commission were thoroughly vetted during extensive meetings, with the sole goal of assuring Purcellville's small town charm.

Wilkes' revisions cater to developers and landowners by relaxing zoning requirements, reducing setbacks, and increasing density in all areas residents wanted to sustain. Her revisions also add high density uses to the Agricultural Commercial Tourism District, remove the limit on the number of apartments per building in the Historic Downtown area, and eliminate most Special Use Permits—all provisions developers and landowners have long been requesting.

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

Western Loudoun rural uses and standards meetings begin

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

On Nov. 21, Loudoun County's Transportation and Land Use Committee hosted the first of a series of meetings to address Western Loudoun's Uses and Standards.

Brian Wilson, a staff member representing Planning and Zoning, said the committee evaluating Western Loudoun's zoning ordinances originated during the four-year process of revising Loudoun County's zoning ordinances. During the process, staff realized that Western Loudoun residents

had distinct concerns due to the rural conditions in which they lived. Instead of delaying the entire revision process, the Board of Supervisors approved a separate committee to address concerns of Western Loudoun residents living on rural land. This committee is to address outstanding issues, not to rewrite Western Loudoun zoning ordinances.

The *Blue Ridge Leader* covered the supervisors' debate on the timeline for the committee in this article.

Each meeting will address a unique concern. The Nov. 21 meeting addressed language surrounding equine care and activities. The group included four representatives from the Board of Supervisors [Michael Turner (D-Ashburn), Phyllis Randall (D-At Large), Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin), Laura TeKrony (D-Little River)], two representatives from the Planning Commission [Robin-Eve Jasper (Little River) and Mark Miller (Catoctin)], and nine representative stakeholders.

The meeting opened with comments from each of the supervisors. The supervisors emphasized how important the equine industry is to Loudoun County. Kershner said that Loudoun County's equine industry is number one in the state.

"Being number one in the state is quite frankly a really big deal," he said. "So, anything we can do to kind of take the shackles off and create successful equine business opportunities, I think is really important."

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- Jose G.



Exhibit puts Century Farms into focus

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum in Sterling will be exhibiting 11 photographic prints capturing those Loudoun farms that are part of the State of Virginia's Century Farm initiative. Professional photographer Philip Ulanowsky visited 11 out of the currently registered 22 farms that meet the Century Farm criteria.

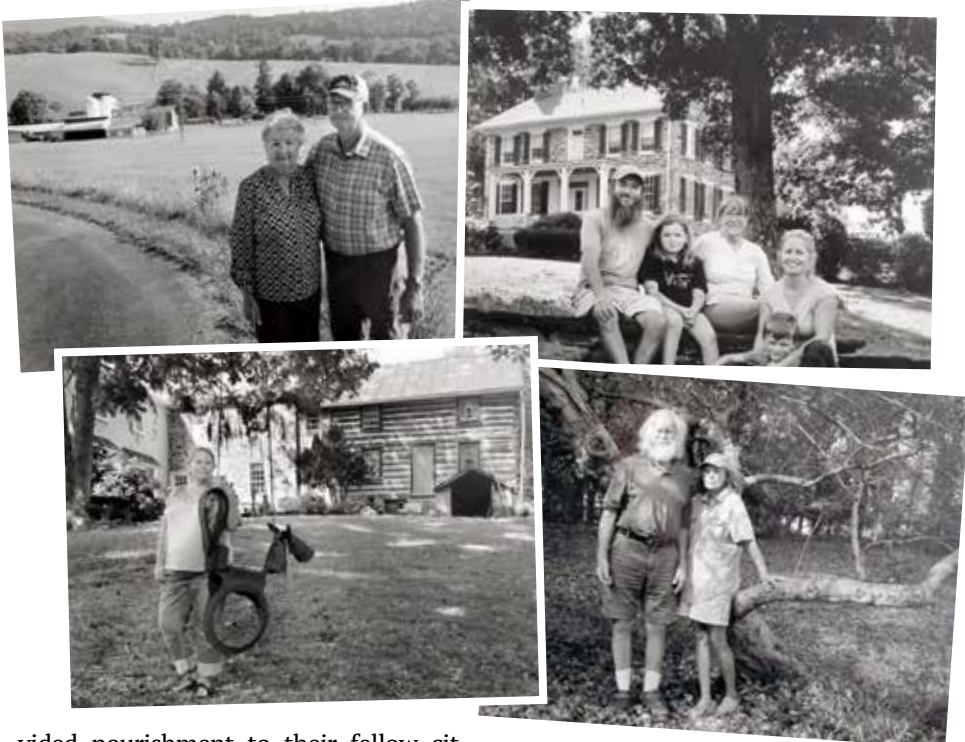
According to the Code of Virginia: Virginia Century Farm Program recognizes and honors those farms that have been in operation for at least 100 consecutive years and the generations of Virginia farm families whose diligent and dedicated efforts have maintained these farms, pro-

vided nourishment to their fellow citizens and contributed so greatly to the economy of the Commonwealth.

Photographer Philip Ulanowsky visited 11 of these farms, meeting with the owners, touring the properties and scouting out the best location for a portrait of the families with their property. The result is a series of images that evoke the powerful connection between landowner and land.

Purcellville resident Philip Ulanowsky is a photojournalist and professional photographer. From an early age, Ulanowsky was fascinated by the photographic image and the development of that image on paper.

Having studied at the Philadelphia College of Art, Ulanowsky is largely self-taught and favors the non-digital, tradi-



ditional methods of photography on film and the process of developing said film in a darkroom.

In addition to working in photojournalism and in the commercial sector, he was the Loudoun Ballet Company's photographer for 14 years. His black and white photographs utilizing the silver gelatin method create deep darks and have a lushness that is not found in the digital or AI manipulations of current photography.

Ulanowsky speaks of how the renewed interest in the non-digital process of photography has sparked the return of long-lost community darkrooms, cameras that use actual film and modified photography equipment that stays true to the original but with modern upgrades.

Similarly, where the American farmer is now well recognized as a dying breed, there is hope in another kind of renewal. Many of the next generation of Americans want to know where their food comes from and prefer to purchase it locally.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought to light the possibilities of supply chain

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They've Lost Their Way

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

The Board recently approved a \$1.7 million “wayfinding” program but directed Staff to rethink a proposed 40.5-mile western Loudoun route. I applaud the Board of Supervisors for hitting “Pause” on that ill-considered portion of Staff’s “Wayfinding” proposal. I also thank Supervisor Briskman for pointing out that a 40.5-mile route is simply too long for most recreational cyclists.

The proposed wayfinding program would be a system of signage that designates a planned bicycle loop on western Loudoun roads, as well as several other loops elsewhere.

Kudos to the Board for directing Staff to work with the group Bike Loudoun as the principal stakeholder. The Heritage Commission should also be involved.

However, there’s scant succor since the Board just approved this luxury project which we don’t need. (A luxury project is something that might be nice to have, but which is not truly a necessity. The wayfinding is a perfect example of a luxury project.)

This wayfinding scheme was first considered in 2017 and resurfaced in late

2023. The proposed routes and signage were set out in a 233-page report by consultants VHB.

I question their local knowledge, highlighted by its inclusion of high-traffic segments in the western loop, and its general lack of seriousness—such as its outreach to “stakeholders” like the Gallaudet University Alumni Association and the Chinese American Parent Association.

Wayfinding

“Wayfinding” is a system of carefully located signs that provide directional information. For example, a suburban office park may have signs that say, “2275” with a right arrow (thus, turn right to find building 2275) or “2150” with a north-pointing arrow (thus, continue straight ahead) to that building. The system can be as simple as a street sign, and in commercial projects, as deluxe as the budget allows.

Fancy Signs for Cyclists

Staff’s proposal, via the consultant, calls for fancy wayfinding signs called “kiosks” that would be suitable for a high-end commercial development. These

kiosks are pricey at about \$5,000 each, and the County has no problem spending \$1.7 million of taxpayer money to implement the overall program.

Loops

A proposed loop in eastern Loudoun seems to have no issues. The main western loop, on the other hand, has sparked intense concern.

That proposed western loop is 40.5 miles long, and utilizes long portions of high-traffic, higher-speed routes such as Hamilton Station Road and Loyalty Road, which have no shoulders, blind curves and blind hills. Bicyclists would have to share lanes with motorists, an idea fraught with danger.

Ideas

As proposed, the western loop would be promoted to bicyclists and others as a way to get to breweries and wineries, which are the primary businesses already currently shown on the wayfinding map.

However, the beverage industry already pays to be noted on VDOT signage. These establishments also have custom signs at their entrances. This prompts an idea: Make any brewery or winery pay to be noted on the wayfinding map or any of the signs. The precedent has already been set with VDOT signage.

And a second idea: Any map should first emphasize historic sites and important natural features.

It’s Your Money

I’m dubious about the wayfinding concept in general and clear-headed about the taxpayer’s cost of this luxury. Fiscal prudence would reject the entire \$1.7 million project ... and any luxury project.

Is a Wayfinding System Needed?

Nope, and here’s an example: On a recent weekend, I saw eight cyclists strung out along one of our pretty unpaved roads. A minute or so behind them was a tight group of a dozen cyclists and following that group was a convoy of perhaps twenty antique military Jeeps, all painted Army green. A pair of pedestrians was next, and following all this was a large two-rider-wide cycling group. That was a collective total of at least sixty people, finding their way without a wayfinding map or wayfinding signs.

A New Topic: Taxpayers’ Money

The County has a “fund balance” of \$250 million. As I understand it, a “fund balance” is money on hand for which the County has not yet found a use. I, though, can suggest a use for this money:

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Please include your name, address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary. Deadline for print edition is the third week of each month, or, online any time.

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Affordable Housing: promises, problems, and the cost of the mirage

BY KWASI FRASER, FORMER TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE MAYOR

Here we go again. The politicians are at it once more, spinning dreams of housing affordability while conveniently ignoring the true costs of their promises. No mention of paying people more to keep pace with housing prices. No acknowledgment of the economic strain these plans will place on the very communities they’re meant to help. Instead, we’re treated to a tired narrative: pack people in tighter, subsidize the cost with taxpayers’ dollars, and voila! Affordable housing Nirvana.

Take the Town of Purcellville, for example. For years, affordable housing has been a hot topic, but the proponents of increased housing density and subsidization have yet to answer basic questions. And until they do, the people of this town should be wary of the promises being made. Let’s start with these five glaring holes in their narrative:

1. What is the current inventory of affordable housing in Purcellville, and how much more is truly needed? Given the Virginia estimate of 3.6 million housing

units with a demand for 4.1 million, assuming we can reasonably apply the proportional need in housing units across communities in Virginia that will result in a 13.88% increase in housing units. For Purcellville, with an estimated 3,000 homes, this translates to a need for 417 new homes. Assuming each new home brings three additional cars, this could add approximately 1,250 cars to our roads.

Before we start upending neighborhoods and accommodating a potential influx of 1,250 cars on our roads, we need an honest and data-driven assessment of the actual demand. Are we addressing a critical need for housing that aligns with the proportional estimate, or are we creating a solution in search of a problem?

2. What is the target cost of this proposed “affordable housing”? Lofty terms like “affordable” mean little without a number attached. Are we talking about homes priced at \$200,000? \$400,000? Words are cheap, but homes aren’t.

3. How many homes will be needed to meet this so-called affordable housing

demand? What does success look like, and how will we know when we’ve achieved it? Or is this just an endless cycle of densification until the town loses its character and charm?

4. What is the financial impact of this model on Purcellville’s budget? The numbers don’t lie: for every \$1 collected in residential property taxes, according to the FY25 Budget, Purcellville spends \$3.3 on services. How much deeper will the deficit grow, and who will foot the bill?

5. What about traffic and infrastructure? Every new home brings two or three more cars onto our roads. What’s the plan for the increased congestion, the wear and tear on roads, and the already strained transportation infrastructure? Or do we simply hope for the best?

6. How does this plan entice critical service workers to live here? Will police officers, teachers, and nurses living within 30 miles of their workplaces give up their tranquil homes to cram into higher-density housing simply to shave a few minutes off their commute?

7. What happens to property values? How will your affordability scheme impact the family that just bought their \$600,000 home, investing their savings in the dream of Purcellville?

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Editor’s Note: It was stated during the Town of Purcellville Nov. 5 campaign that the *Blue Ridge Leader* made an in-kind ad donation to one of the candidates running for town council. There was a brief reporting error, and the statement is not true.

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Here's how we can Make America Great Again

Dear Editor:

Here is my letter to the editor about the top priorities our President Elect and his Cabinet Officials should do right away to Make America Great Again:

LETTER

- Stop birthright citizenship and birth tourism. Stop creating "anchor babies."
- No public assistance for illegal immigrants.
- Stop "Catch and Release." Detain and deport all illegal immigrants
- Close the border and finish the wall.
- Pass legislation allowing all law enforcement (police, sheriffs, marshals) to ask about citizenship status. Provide a means for all law enforcement to detain those who are not citizens and are here illegally.
- Defund every sanctuary city.
- Cancel all Chinese student Visa's and send them home.
- Stop all land sales to foreign entities. Rescind the sale or nationalize foreign owned land.
- Take away China's "Most Favored Nation" trade status.
- Pass National legislation requiring proof of citizenship and proper ID to vote and force states to comply.
- Stop government subsidies to the NCAA until they stop allowing biological men to participate in women's sports.
- No biological men in women's sports.
- No male prisoners in female prisons.

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Let's work with organizations to reduce light pollution

Dear Editor:

The night sky over North America has been growing brighter by about 10% each year. The DMV, including Loudoun, is the most light-polluted region of the country, with more than 200,000 times the artificial light of America's naturally dark night skies. Scientists predict that in 20 years, no stars will be visible here at night.

LETTER

Light pollution results in the loss of contrast between light and dark, day and night, which confuses our circadian rhythm and jeopardizes our health. Humans have an internal master clock, the hypothalamus of the brain, which is

synced to this 24-hour light cycle.

Our eyes have photoreceptors that send light information to the brain. Every normal body function from hormone secretion to cell division depends on the control of the hypothalamus. Exposure to light at night disrupts this natural control of our physiology.

Research links light pollution to a range of health problems including: cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease. Specifically, researchers have used satellite data to measure light pollution at residential addresses of many thousands of people worldwide.

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Mercer Middle School's name should remain unchanged

Dear Editor:

I had the privilege of attending a Mercer Middle School (MMS) re-naming committee meeting last week at MMS.

LETTER

I was aware of MMS' rich 20-year history of academic accomplishment and service. Many people have told me of the dedicated teachers and staff who make this school a true beacon of love and learning for the surrounding community.

I arrived just as the committee of about 20 people, seated around the main table, began a bewildering debate about renaming a school that is not named in honor of any person or anything that can be construed with racism. In other words, they are looking for a solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

I quickly observed that the chairperson of the committee was showing bias against the name "Mercer." Her line of questioning, body language,

and interaction with the other members made it seem that she had already decided that "Mercer" equates racism.

One person on the committee made a contortionist argument that racist incidents in Birmingham, Alabama, during the 1960's were somehow proof that systemic racism was alive and well in LCPS.

One of the committee members was the chairperson of the local NAACP

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Save the bridge/public right of way on Beaverdam Bridge Road

Dear Editor,

I agree with Les Starck's position regarding the bridge on Beaverdam Bridge Road, and his concern that a proposal to abandon the right of way there would deny the public access to a road that people have used and enjoyed for years. (Letters, Oct. 30) The county's scenic gravel roads are a

LETTER

major resource for the county and are regularly enjoyed by bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. The proposal to abandon the right of way has drawn widespread opposition.

By way of background, several years ago the bridge over Beaverdam Creek deteriorated to the point it could no longer support cars and trucks. Pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians

continued to transit the bridge until more recently, when all access was denied. Meanwhile, the Virginia Department of Transportation says they have no intention of funding the construction of a new bridge and a landowner in the area has pushed for an abandonment of the right of way, which would allow the land to revert to private ownership.

Loudoun county staff is currently reviewing the issue at the request of

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Windmill Park

BY TIM JON

“Well,” I remember thinking, “I’d better make this quick.” You see, as I turned into the drive to seek a parking area for the main character in today’s drama, I noticed a sign indicating official displeasure at my presence therein; now, when I’d looked up the available information on these geographical coordinates, I’d found



TIM JON

no hint of such private status. But, sure enough, the placard stated emphatically that these grounds belonged to the folks living in the surrounding neighborhood, and that visitors—well, had best turn around.

So, like any properly-raised, wayward child, I discretely parked my vehicle, took a few steps toward the small body of water and encircling walking trail, enjoyed the choicest moments of a mild summer pre-dawn, surveyed my surroundings and captured some of the more interesting sights on camera.

I half expected—the entire few minutes I spent on the forbidden grass and blacktop—that a local official would pop out of the bushes and slap on a pair of handcuffs, confiscate my photography equipment, and most likely, impound my car. Probably seize my home as collateral for

the egregiousness I’d transgressed. Having been raised in humble, German-Lutheran culture in the modest Midwest, I’ll probably suffer eternal shame and penance for my one, and only visit to Windmill Park in Ashburn.

The visit, in fact, was fairly benign. The one other early-morning visitor (obviously a resident who enjoyed a welcome user status at the facility) was taking some exercise on the tennis courts, and offered no interference to my unwarranted intrusion.

I was able to enjoy the day’s beginning to my heart’s content; I even wistfully thought about taking a stroll around the little body of water within the Park, but thought better of it, and slowly made my way back to the parking area, climbed into my source of transportation, and bid an everlasting (at least in the physical sense) ‘goodbye’ to what I found as an otherwise very inviting place.

I say this because I found the atmosphere of the place absolutely enchanting, what with the gradual lightening of the sky, the spray and mist from the pond fountain, the early-morning silhouette of



the gazebo (deserted, of course, at that untimely hour), and a bit further off in the distance, the shape of an historic windmill [hence the name of the facility] cutting into the eastern sky. I will enjoy all those things as long as the memories of any other local visits I’ve recorded in this series.

And the pre-dawn walk that I never actually got to complete? I guess I leave that to my imagination.

And yours as well, since you’ve accompanied me on today’s sojourn. You’ve even served as a sort of accomplice in the act of trespass, so beware. If a Park Official stops by your home while you’re happily engaged in this little tale of exploration, don’t point the finger at me; you came

along of your own free will.

Now, if anyone wants to know the exact whereabouts of Windmill Park, it wouldn’t be hard to find: you already know it lies within Ashburn, Virginia—that homogenous blur of humanity to the south and east of Leesburg.

You can look it up on virtually any electronic device, and it’ll tell you—with explicit directions—how to arrive at the spot in your automobile. You may even see some enchanting pictures, with the pond, the fountain, the gazebo, the quaint little walkway, the tennis courts, and the Park’s namesake—that old windmill, still slicing the air near the entrance to the facility.

You can read a review or two, describing the wonderful experiences to enjoy there (walks, cook-outs, tennis, exercise for the kids and other activities).

But—one bit of information you will definitely not find is an official welcome for local storytellers from the County Seat. No. They need to head somewhere else. In fact, hindsight now tells me that we need to keep this particular tale in confidence.

We can’t have the wrong people find out about this; so, as you’re taking that imaginary stroll around the forbidden pond with me, don’t be surprised if an imaginary official pops out of the bushes and slaps on the cuffs, etcetera, etcetera.

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Purcellville Police Officer of the Year given ultimatum following town council win

BY VALERIE CURY

On Nov. 19 after congratulating Purcellville Police Officer of the Year, Ben Nett, on his successful election to Town Council, senior management of the Town of Purcellville notified him that he has two choices—either resign his position as a town police officer or resign from Town Council.

Based on the revised Town of Purcellville Employee Handbook, Section 10.3.B.1, “No employee shall continue in their position with the Town after election

to any public office in the Town.”

This newly created policy was inserted into the July 2024 revision of the Town of Purcellville Employee Handbook, which had not been updated since 2005. Prior to this revision, no reference to the new policy existed in the handbook. By this time Nett had met all criteria to run for election.

The updated handbook was distributed in July 2024 without prior notice to employees and was made available on the employee section of the town’s website for their access. However, despite its availability, no effort was made to

specifically inform Nett about the policy, which directly pertains to his election to Town Council.

It wasn’t until the end of November that Nett was notified that it was his responsibility to read the updated handbook. This raises concerns about why such an important update was communicated so poorly—and why it was introduced at this time.

Also, during his campaign and while on duty, and at the same time this new policy targeting Nett was implemented, he was taken into the police suspect interview room at police headquarters, disarmed,

and questioned at length regarding an alleged complaint from another candidate running for Town Council.

Nett was also asked about his employment plans after the election, and who else he has spoken with on Town Council. That complaint was found to be unsustainable, and to date the alleged complaint has been withheld from him.

According to a source familiar with the Purcellville Police Department, speaking on condition of anonymity, an officer under formal Internal Affairs investigation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »



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PURCELLVILLE'S ZONING OVERHAUL, CON'T. FROM P. 1
Wilkes' changes

Wilkes said she proposes Mixed Use Neighborhood Scale for the Historic Downtown area, even though this does not align with the Town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan or the current town zoning ordinance, which limits apartments to two per building in that area.

She said the Comprehensive Plan envisioned a village scale "and I think we need to honor that." Instead of the longstanding two apartment per building on 21st Street, Wilkes is recommending no limits to how many apartments can go in this area.

"The form of buildings and where they are, it's naturally limiting," said Wilkes. "It will limit naturally due to the form and lot size. The market will naturally dictate the number." The Planning Commission, however, recommends leaving the current zoning at two apartments per building.

Developer Casey Chapman and his investors have been asking for multiple apartment complexes in this area. They own the

Vineyard Square block on 21st Street, along with the Valley Business Park. They have said along with the allowed commercial uses, they want multi-family apartments and a hotel use added to this area.

Conflicts of Interest?

From 2020 to 2023, Vice Mayor Erin Rayner has received a total of \$72,476 in donations. Approximately \$27,000 of that came from developer Casey Chapman, his affiliates, his uncle and two of his uncle's employees. From 2022 to 2024, Rayner has contributed \$10,300 of her donations to Council Member Caleb Stought, who has also received approximately \$1,500 from one of the investors of Vineyard Square and the Valley Business Park.

This past election, Mayor Stan Milan received \$10,000 from an employee of an uncle of Chapman who has a land development company in Purcellville. He also received \$11,849 from Citizens for Virginia PAC which is based in Wisconsin. Milan received \$2,000 from a landowner

who will also be annexed along with the Valley Commerce Center if it is annexed into town.

The Agriculture Commercial Tourism District is comprised of three parcels, one of which is located on Colonial Hwy immediately after the traffic circle at Main Street and Rt. 287. Staff has proposed adding a school, senior center, and country inn (up to 50 rooms) as permitted uses. Under the zoning passed by the Planning Commission, country inns are limited to nine rooms, with any facility exceeding that number requiring a Special Use Permit.

This gateway district was originally envisioned for low-density development, given its close proximity to the traffic circle and the 90-acre Crooked Run Orchard which is in conservation easement. One of the property owners has requested the inclusion of these new uses, as they might have a potential contract for a school with 100 students.

The owner of this parcel donated \$2,000 to the Milan for Mayor Campaign and has

donated \$2,100 to Vice Mayor Erin Rayner's campaign from 2020-2022.

More changes

Wilkes said that the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove the provision for duplexes in the R-3 (residential) area, reduces a "development right from two units per parcel to one." She recommends leaving duplexes in that area as a by-right (allowed) use.

Wilkes said that the suburban and urban areas in town are "two different animals—and I will say that as a general statement, suburban development doesn't pay for itself."

"We talk in the Comprehensive Plan about areas to sustain. Generally speaking, over time, over the long run, suburban development costs the town more per house, per mile, per block and essentially, they are areas to subsidize,"—meaning these areas have too much front and back yard.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 »

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- ★ *Victorian Carolers*
Saturday, November 30 ~ 2:00pm-5:00pm
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- ★ *Leesburg First Friday*
Friday, December 6 ~ 6:00pm-9:00pm
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- ★ *Holiday Market at the Courthouse*
Saturday, December 7 ~ 12:00pm-4:00pm
Pop-up holiday market on the courthouse grounds with many gifts under \$25.
- ★ *Holiday Tree Lighting*
Saturday, December 7 ~ 6:00pm
Join friends and neighbors to celebrate the start of the holiday season. Held on Town Green.

- ★ *Holidays in Leesburg Fine Arts & Crafts Show*
Saturday, December 7 ~ 9:00am-4:00pm & Sunday, December 8 ~ 10:00am-4:00pm
Over 95 local and regional artisans will be selling original handcrafted items at Ida Lee Park Recreation Center. Free parking and admission to the show.
- ★ *A Downtown Hometown Holiday*
Saturday, December 14 ~ 1:00pm-3:00pm
Enjoy strolling carolers & holiday characters, photos with Santa, holiday open houses, and free holiday wrapping.
- ★ *Annual Christmas & Holiday Parade*
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Density and noise concerns slow Stone Hill development

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors again tackled the issue of residential development as it discussed the rezoning of a Stone Hill property during its Public Hearing on Oct. 9.

The property is currently zoned for Commercial Center development, meaning that the developers expected retailers to build in this area. The applicant, Angela Rassas, who represents Toll Brothers, Inc., asked for the property to be rezoned to Multifamily Residential development. This request came after the applicant held four community meetings with the Loudoun Valley Estates II (LVE II) Homeowners Association.

“When we took [the original plan] to the community, they said, ‘No, thank you.’” said Curata Partners Planning and Development Specialist Molly Novotny, speaking for the applicant.

Novotny attributed the community’s reluctance to embrace more retailers to the “prolific amount of retail around the property.” When the developers came back with a new plan, the community again rejected

the plan.

“So, we came back and said, ‘Okay, what else can we do here?’” Novotny said.

The applicant continued to communicate with LVE II residents and discovered that what the community wanted was more parking and pickleball courts. Taking inspiration from Buckingham and other properties across the street from Stone Hill, the applicant constructed the current proposal. The proposal included two pickleball courts and 355 parking spaces.

Stephen Hoffman represented the LVE II Homeowners Association in a public comment. He said that the Homeowners Association supported the applicant’s plan. He explained that though the number of parking spaces currently on the property complies with zoning ordinances, there are not enough parking spaces for residents since some residents own two or three cars. As a result, some residents park on Hopewell Manor Terrace.

“The additional parking spaces will substantially improve parking ability and safety,” Hoffman said.

At a Planning Commission meeting on July 30, two Loudoun County residents spoke during public comment to express their concerns about the plan for development such as compatibility with the surrounding homes, building height, and communication with surrounding Homeowners Associations.

One commenter, Tia Earman from the Piedmont Environmental Council, wanted to draw attention to the amount of outdoor recreational space available to residents. The applicant is seeking an exception on the yard standards to reduce the internal front yard setbacks from 25 feet to 15 feet. According to Earman, these outdoor spaces are correlated with the happiness of the community and reducing them would be detrimental to residents.

“This is an all-too-common theme in Loudoun development applications when it comes quality of life feature minimums developed from public input. And modern planning practices are not the starting point they should be,” Earman said.

Members of the Board of Supervisors

had concerns of their own. Because the property was originally zoned for retailers, there are some issues that may affect the livability of residential developments on the property.

One of the board members’ biggest concerns was the amount of noise coming from Dulles Airport. The development is 400 feet outside of an area that is rated at or above a 65 day/night average sound level (Ldn). Since 65 Ldn is the highest sound level rated for all normal land uses, the property is just barely within an area considered suitable for residential development.

Supervisor Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) suggested that the applicant use windows and insulation that will help mitigate the noise. Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) agreed. He would not even consider voting for the plan unless Ldn 67 noise mitigation, the highest quality technology available, is used in the dwelling units.

TeKrony compared the level of airport noise to that of the Birchwood neighborhood. The Board has received many

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 »

Family gatherings during the holidays: The pros, the cons, some practical tips and some things to avoid

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.



DR. MIKE

The holiday season is often seen as a time to reconnect with family and to celebrate traditions. However, family gatherings can also bring challenges. For some, these moments are opportunities to create joyful memories; for others, they may feel like navigating a social minefield.

Understanding the pros and cons of holiday get-togethers, along with actionable strategies for managing potential pitfalls, can help you make the most of your family time.

The Pros

Strengthening Bonds: The holidays provide a natural opportunity to deepen relationships with relatives. Shared time around the dinner table or during family traditions can reinforce connections that may have weakened over time. These moments of reconnection can become the foundation for stronger, more enduring bonds.

Creating Memories: Holiday traditions, whether they involve decorating a tree, playing board games, or watching favorite movies, create lasting memories. These shared experiences can become cherished stories passed down through generations.

Fostering Your Support System:

Family gatherings often offer more than just a meal—they can provide emotional support and a sense of belonging. For individuals going through difficult times, engaging meaningfully with important others can be especially grounding and comforting.

Honoring Cultural Traditions: Celebrating the holidays together often involves honoring cultural or religious customs. These rituals foster shared identity and continuity, particularly for younger family members who benefit from seeing (and being part of) traditions upheld.

Sharing Resources: Holiday preparations can feel overwhelming and isolating when done alone. Coming together as a family allows for collaboration, whether that’s sharing the cooking responsibilities or dividing the costs of gifts and decorations, making the season more manageable for everyone.

The Cons

Political Tensions: President Elect Donald Trump won the election, and the Republicans also won the House and Senate. This outcome certainly has been a joyous one for conservatives, but it has been very upsetting for liberals. Differing opinions among relatives may lead to uncomfortable or heated exchanges,

dampening the festive spirit.

Financial Strain: The holidays can be an expensive time of year, and hosting or traveling for family gatherings adds to the burden. For some, these financial pressures may outweigh the joy of spending time together.

Emotional Strain: Unresolved family conflicts or strained relationships can come to the surface during close interactions. Long-standing tensions can turn what should be a joyful occasion into a stressful one.

Logistical Challenges: Coordinating a family gathering often involves juggling schedules, arranging meals, and finding suitable accommodations. These logistical demands can be exhausting, especially when trying to cater to everyone’s preferences.

Health Concerns. Large gatherings can pose health risks, especially for vulnerable family members. This concern has become even more prominent in recent years, with the ongoing potential for illness transmission.

Some Practical Tips

Set Ground Rules: Before the gathering, agree on certain boundaries to keep the environment peaceful. For instance, deciding to avoid topics like politics or sensitive family matters can reduce tension.

Plan Activities: Organized games, movie nights, or outdoor activities can keep everyone engaged and provide opportunities for bonding without conflict. Structured activities also help avoid idle moments where tensions might arise.

Express Gratitude: Focusing on gratitude can shift the tone of family interactions. Letting relatives know what you appreciate about them and the holiday season can create a more positive atmosphere.

Create a Neutral Space: Choose a setting that feels neutral and welcoming to all attendees. Whether it’s a relative’s home, a rented space, a restaurant or even a virtual gathering, ensure that everyone feels comfortable.

Be Inclusive: Make an effort to include everyone in conversations, activities, and planning. Showing appreciation for diverse opinions and experiences helps create a harmonious environment.

Some Things To Avoid

Bringing Up Politics: Divisive topics like politics can quickly derail the festivities. Unless everyone is open to a respectful discussion, it’s best to steer clear of these subjects.

Overindulging: While enjoying the holiday treats is part of the fun, excessive eating or drinking can lower inhibitions and lead to unfiltered comments or arguments.

Criticizing Others: Judgments about someone’s life choices, parenting style, or career can cause unnecessary friction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

Submitted by Joshua Wolinski, Edward Jones Financial Advisor

FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Consider these year-end financial moves

As we enter the holiday season, your life may well become busier. Still, you might want to take the time to consider some financial moves before we turn the calendar to 2025.

Here are a few suggestions:

• **Review your investment portfolio.** As



JOSHUA WOLINSKI

you look at your portfolio, ask these questions: *Has its performance met my expectations this year? Does it still reflect my goals, risk tolerance and time horizon? Do I need to rebalance?* You

might find that working with a financial professional can help you answer these and other questions you may have about your investments.

• **Add to your 401(k) and HSA.** If you can afford it, and your employer allows it, consider putting more money into your 401(k) before the year ends—including “catch-up” contributions if you’re 50 or

older. You might also want to add to your health savings account (HSA) by the tax-filing deadline in April.

• **Use your FSA dollars.** Unlike an HSA, a flexible spending account (FSA) works on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis, meaning you lose any unspent funds at the end of the year. So, if you still have funds left in your account, try to use them up in 2024. (Employers may grant a 2½ month extension, so check with your human resources area to see if this is the case where you work.)

• **Contribute to a 529 plan.** If you haven’t opened a 529 education savings plan for your children, think about doing so this year. With a 529 plan, your earnings can grow tax deferred, and your withdrawals are federally tax free when used for qualified education expenses—tuition, fees, books and so on. And if you invest in your own state’s 529 plan, you might be able to deduct your

contributions from your state income tax or receive a state tax credit.

• **Build your emergency fund.** It’s generally a good idea to keep up to six months’ worth of living expenses in an emergency fund, with the money held in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund in place, you might be forced to dip into your retirement funds to pay for short-term needs, such as a major car or home repair.

• **Review your estate plans.** If you’ve experienced any changes in your family situation this year, such as marriage, remarriage or the birth of a child, you may want to update your estate-planning documents to reflect your new situation. It’s also important to look at the beneficiary designations on your investment accounts, retirement plans, IRAs and insurance policies, as these designations can sometimes even supersede the instructions you’ve left in your will. And

if you haven’t started estate planning, there’s no time like the present.

• **Take your RMDs.** If you’re 73 or older, you will likely need to take withdrawals—called required minimum distributions, or RMDs—from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA. If you don’t take these withdrawals each year, you could be subject to penalties.

These aren’t the only moves you can make, but they may prove helpful not only for 2024 but in the years to come. Remember, your individual financial goals and questions deserve individual attention. If you think you might need specific financial advice, please reach out to a local financial advisor.

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

Joshua Wolinski | (540) 338-2291
| joshua.wolinski@edwardjones.com.

“Aligning your financial future with your personal goals, wants, and wishes.”

Netflix Brings the Holiday Cheer with *Hot Frosty*

BY NAOMI FRASER



NAOMI FRASER

The holidays are officially here, and what better way to celebrate than with a heartwarming Christmas rom-com? So, grab your favorite blanket and a steaming mug of cocoa, and join me for a review of Netflix’s latest holiday hit, *Hot Frosty*—a film sure to bring plenty of seasonal cheer.

Rating: 5/5

Hot Frosty is a Christmas rom-com centered on Kathy (Lacey Chabert), a recently widowed café owner, struggling to move

forward with her life. While she spends most of her time caring for her community, she can’t seem to find the motivation to care for herself. Therefore, when a friend gives her a scarf that will supposedly lead her toward love, Kathy nonchalantly places it around a snow sculpture of a man. Much to her surprise, the snowman, Jack (Dustin Milligan), comes to life. As Jack and Kathy navigate this bizarre circumstance, Jack adds a little magic to Kathy’s life and helps her re-open her heart to the possibility of love.

While I was hesitant going in, I really enjoyed *Hot Frosty*. Like any good Christmas rom-com, it balances humor and warmth and leaves audiences grinning from ear to ear. The film especially excels at creating characters who feel relatable and easy to root for, with Kathy being the standout example. From the beginning, her struggles resonate deeply—How do

you carry on after a devastating loss?

Yet, despite her emotional turmoil, Kathy continues to show up for her community, going out of her way to care for neighbors, friends, and even strangers. The grief and generosity within Kathy evoke empathy from viewers and establish her as someone to root for. We invest in her personal growth and cheer as we watch her move from a place of grief and isolation to one where she can experience the same love and joy she so freely gives others.

Jack is another character who is easy to love. The snowman-turned-man embodies warmth, joy, and fun. New to life, he approaches the world with child-like wonder, finding excitement in the things we often take for granted. His presence lights up the town and begins to chip away at the walls around Kathy’s heart. The relationship between him and Kathy feels heartfelt and authentic,

filled with warmth and tenderness that kept me smiling throughout the film.

As every good rom-com needs protagonists who make us smile, they also need antagonists who make us groan. Sheriff Hunter (Craig Robinson) fits the latter role perfectly. During Jack’s first few minutes of being human, he inadvertently commits two petty crimes that draw the ire of the self-important Sheriff Hunter. Though he lacks evidence, Hunter assumes Jack is the culprit and fixates on arresting the man. While Robinson’s performance occasionally feels over-the-top in its pursuit of laughs, he excels at portraying the sheriff’s obnoxious, overzealous personality. His relentless obsession with Jack is equally maddening for the audience and the characters, but that’s part of the fun. Rooting against a villain who adds a playful layer of conflict is just as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »



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Orme Farm rezoning approved

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

The Orme Farm rezoning application appeared on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors' consent agenda at its Oct. 16 business meeting after receiving push-back during the board's public hearing on May 15.

Orme farm, previously known as Greenfield Farm, has received attention from The Washington Post for being one of the last two big turkey farms in Loudoun County. It was home to 20,000 turkeys in the 1940s and 1950s before becoming a hog farm in 1959 after turkey meat lost its popularity. Now, Loudoun County residents are worried that it will become home to yet another data center.

The Blue Ridge Leader reported on citizens' public comments on re-zoning the Orme Farm property at the Loudoun Board of Supervisors public hearing on May 15.

During the comments, Tia Earman from the Piedmont Environmental Council said, "When we say, 'Stop digging the hole deeper,' this application is exactly what we are talking about."

At the May 15 meeting, Vice Chair Juli Briskman (?-Algonkian) asked if the applicant would proffer out data centers and substations from the application.

Representing the owners of Orme Farm, Roy Barnett of Van Metre Companies, LLC responded.

"I cannot sit here tonight and answer that question," Barnett said, "because we are representatives here, and I am not the property owner. That would be a property owner decision."

Barnett said that he would go back and ask the property owner for permission to proffer out data centers and substations.

"It's pretty clear that this is going to be a data center unless you proffer out data center use," Ashburn resident Chris Tandy said during public comment.

At the May 15 meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted to forward the application to its July 2 business meeting. The vote was 5-2-2 [Briskman and Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) opposed; Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) and Supervisor Sylvia Glass (D-Broad Run) absent]. The applicant later requested to defer the application to the board's Oct. 16 business meeting where the application appeared on the consent agenda to be passed in a block vote with several other motions.

At the Oct. 16 meeting, Randall asked about the Orme Farm application before passing the consent agenda. She said she

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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Holiday light show returns to Downtown Leesburg

The Town of Leesburg's annual holiday light show will take place in the Rose Garden, located behind the Donaldson Log Cabin, 14 Loudoun Street, SW, beginning Saturday, Dec. 7 through Jan. 1, 2025.

The display includes approximately 2,500 lights that are synchronized to three festive holiday themed songs. They include Deck the Halls, Christmas Sarajevo (Trans-Siberian Orchestra), and The Most Wonderful Time of the Year.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to celebrate the sights and sounds while visiting the historic downtown. The display will run every evening from 4:30 to 9:45 p.m.

For a full list of holiday events in Leesburg, go to www.leesburgva.gov/holidaysinleesburg.

COMMUNITY

County opens survey of youth & parents to Help Young People Thrive

The Loudoun County Advisory Commission on Youth is conducting a survey to gather information that will help inform county leaders when making decisions about services and programs designed to meet the needs of young people in the community.

The survey is intended for middle and high-school-aged students and

their parents/guardians. The survey is expected to take about ten minutes to complete. The survey covers four topic areas:

- Activities and interests.
- Drug and alcohol use.
- Mental health and stress management.
- Online access and activity.

Responses are anonymous. Participants are not required to provide any identifying information such as their name, home address, birth date, IP address, etc. The survey is available in English and Spanish. It is open through Tuesday, Dec. 31. Information gathered from the survey will be used to inform ACOY's "State of Loudoun Youth" annual report to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors.

This survey was first conducted in 2019 as part of the Board of Supervisors' initiatives involving youth, which, in part, aim to ensure there are effective programs and services available to help Loudoun's youth thrive. The survey is intended to be an annual feedback mechanism to help county leaders stay current on trends in youth behaviors, interests and needs.

More information about the current youth survey is online at loudoun.gov/YouthSurvey. More information about ACOY, including a link to the commission's "State of Loudoun Youth - 2024" report (PDF), is online at loudoun.gov/acoy. More information about existing youth services offered by Loudoun County is online at loudoun.gov/youth.

PURCELLVILLE'S ZONING OVERHAUL, CON'T. FROM P. 10

Wilkes said, "Properly passed infill development will increase the character and charm. When you grow according to a charming DNA, you are going to get more charm. The more you develop—the more charm you get."

Council Member Carol Luke asked, "Purcellville is built out, is it not?" Wilkes responded, "I don't believe it's built out.

"What are you proposing? We have streets that exist, houses that exist," said Luke.

Wilkes said, "It would be each street has its own character. So, we would try and capture the character in the regulations."

Town Planner Jordan Andrews answered, "It's the redevelopment of these small lots [which if redeveloped, would make the area more dense thus less suburban]."

Said Luke, "So what you are saying is that it's going to become like Falls Church." There was no response.

Wilkes said that she is generally recommending eliminating Special Use Permits. "They are not necessary and overly complicated."

The purpose of Special Use Permits is to ensure that the community has an opportunity to provide input on proposed developments. Developers have been advocating for eliminating this requirement, but without the Special Use Permit process, the public would lose the ability to voice concerns about what is being built in their neighborhoods or elsewhere in the town.

Wilkes is also recommending no

minimum lot size in the commercial areas. The Planning Commission recommended 20,000 square feet minimum lot size.

Staff recommends eliminating lot sizes and lot size minimums in the Medium Scale Commercial parts of town. They are also recommending no Floor Area Ratio for structures, which means a building could overwhelm a lot.

Wilkes also recommended having no parameters to by right conditions in the commercial districts. "The general approach of the Planning Commission was if you fell within certain parameters, it would be a by-right condition. If you fell outside it, each of these parameters—you would need some kind of Special Use Permit.

"In other words, go to the Planning Commission and the Town Council for review," she explained. "It's the Planning Staff's opinion that these things are not necessary—that they are overly complicated," she said.

Wilkes said Purcellville's Main Street should have the "same standard as the downtown area—in other words there is no minimum lot size in downtown." She does not agree with any lot size standards as they are too "suburban."

Wilkes said Main Street is a "suburban area right now, but if you have the goal of making it more like a traditional Main Street, then you should allow it to grow that way." She is recommending no minimum lot size "because based on the way the market will essentially develop

this out, there's really no need to have a maximum lot size. It will self-regulate [to its highest density]."

Wilkes is recommending a minimum street frontage of 30 ft. as opposed to the current 100 ft. recommended by the Planning Commission for street frontage on Main Street—"It's in keeping with the traditional Main Street approach."

Regarding lot depth, staff is recommending none, versus the 150 ft. recommended by the Planning Commission. Wilkes is also recommending no limits to by-right development on East Main Street.

In the Industrial Districts the Planning Commission approved combining the CM1 and M1 districts into a single district with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. Wilkes recommends maintaining the two separate districts.

Currently, Hirst Road is zoned CM1, while the Mayfair Industrial Park is zoned M1. One of the key reasons for the Planning Commission's decision to merge the districts was to address safety concerns related to fuel storage from a permitted by-right use to a Special Use Permit in the CM1 District, as both areas are in close proximity to residential and commercial businesses, with the M1 district being even closer to residential than the CM1 district.

Wilkes noted that a flood plain buffer exists along Hirst Road, and as a result, she recommends that fuel storage remain a permitted use in this corridor. The change recommended by Planning Staff would allow more fuel storage in a flood plain.

Wilkes said staff wants to add Planned Unit Development into the ordinance as "a tool in the tool box."

This addition would allow for creativity and density with lax standards in height and uses. It is usually applied to areas of approximately one acre or more. For example, the Vineyard Square property on 21st Street spans two and a half acres.

Wilkes proposes to cut out all the Planning Commission Overlay Districts the commission worked on with then Interim Zoning Administrator Martha Semmes as it is "too suburban."

The Planning Staff recommends one foot of rise in the flood plain, per project, as opposed to the Planning Commission's zero rise recommendation which mirrors Loudoun County and protects citizens who live along the major flood plain of the South Fork of the Catocin Creek. Wilkes is recommending a 100 ft. buffer from the creek instead of the 200 ft. buffer recommended by the Planning Commission. Wilkes said 200 ft. "is too large."

When a property in the flood plain area on Hirst Road put fill for over a decade in that area, it led to the expansion of the flood plain in the Old Dominion Valley Neighborhood requiring some home owners to buy flood insurance. Moreover, as recent as 2020, 25 properties in both Catocin Meadows and west of Hatcher Avenue, were found to be threatened by the 100-year flooding.

Town Council will review the director's changes at the Dec. 10 Town Council Meeting.

DENSITY AND NOISE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

complaints from Birchwood residents. Hearing these complaints, Turner would like to address the airport noise problem on a wider scale.

"I don't care if it takes every second of the remaining time I'm in this office, however long that is. I'm going to get MWAA and Dulles Airport to change the flight path

of Runway 30," Turner said. He believes a change in flight path would help reduce airport noise for many Loudoun County residents, including residents of Stone Hill.

A few members of the Board suggested that disclosure about the airport noise to residents before they buy the home would cut down on complaints.

"New developers do a good job with this.

It's the re-sale where this falls apart, and often it's the re-sale where we hear the complaints," Supervisor Matthew Letourneau said.

In May, a bill passed in the Virginia General Assembly prohibiting localities from requiring disclosures in real estate listings. The bill was intended to make disclosure requirements consistent across the state to avoid confusing residents trying to sell their

homes. The Loudoun Board of Supervisors opposed this bill because it prevented the Board from requiring homeowners to disclose the proximity of their homes to Dulles Airport. The bill does not affect the county's ability to enforce disclosure requirements on developments, but affects subsequent sales.

"We were protecting our residents,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

USES AND STANDARDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Next, the commissioners and representative stakeholders spoke for three minutes each, addressing their unique concerns. These concerns centered around over-regulation of the equine industry.

“There are an infinite number of uses that you could define,” representative stakeholder John Ellis said. “It leads to problems to regulate every one of them. On the other hand, there are a fairly small number of negative impacts on neighboring properties. And if those are consistently regulated, we may be getting closer to what we want.”

After a dinner break, the committee addressed five categories of concerns laid out by Wilson: Consistency/Uniform Standards, Contextual Appropriateness, Defined Equestrian Standards, Equine Uses as Principal Uses, and Outdoor or Major Recreation Parking Issues.

Issue 1: Consistency/Uniform Standards

The first issue addressed uniformity in the application of standards to equine- and recreation-based uses. The committee mainly discussed hours of operation for equine businesses under this issue.

Below is a chart showing how the hours of operation are currently regulated:

Use	Hours of Operation
Agricultural Support Uses (Direct Association with On-Site Activity)	6 a.m. to 9 p.m. except for Stable, Livery facilities which are limited to 4 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Ag. Support Uses (Standalone)	6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Banquet/Event Facility	7 a.m. to 12 a.m. midnight
Bed and Breakfast Homestay, Bed and Breakfast Inn, Country Inn, and Rural Resorts	7 a.m. to 12 a.m. midnight

The committee members reached a consensus that it would be best to simplify the regulations to restrict public-facing equine businesses to hours of operation from 4 a.m. to 12 a.m. Businesses that are not public-facing

will not face any restrictions of their hours of operation.

Issue 2: Contextual Appropriateness

Under this issue, the committee considered that certain standards may need to vary based on the location of the facility being regulated.

The committee suggested that the maximums on building size be removed, that facilities be setback at least 60 feet from the property line, that buffering requirements be eliminated, that lighting requirements be reviewed, that options for field parking be examined, and that distinctions be made for event facilities that may need additional parking.

Issue 3: Expand Equestrian Uses

Under this issue, the committee examined whether certain equestrian events required specific standards. The committee mainly discussed polo and fox chasing.

The committee suggested that the standards require a minimum acreage of 25 acres for polo and recognize fox chasing and kennels.

Issue 4: Equine Uses as Principal Uses

Under this issue, the committee discussed whether equine activities should be categorized as a primary part of agriculture instead of an accessory to other forms of agriculture. The committee agreed that equine activities were a core part of agriculture and should be removed from agricultural support uses. As a result, staff will need to create a new list of agricultural uses.

Additionally, the committee agreed that those leasing property should be allowed to operate an equine facility. Previously, only individuals who owned a property could operate a facility.

Issue 5: Outdoor or Major Recreation Parking Issues

Under this issue, the committee considered whether certain standards like parking ratios should be revised based on the intensities of different recreation uses. The

committee agreed that athletic fields deserved a unique category since they often require more parking spaces, especially for big events.

Additionally, Western Loudoun should encourage pavers to use impervious material, preferably gravel, when paving parking lots. Gravel is safer for horses than asphalt.

The Planning and Zoning staff will discuss the input they received at this meeting and revise Western Loudoun’s standards using their own discretion.

Below is the tentative schedule for further meetings. Only the first three meetings have been scheduled for an exact date:

TLUC Meeting 1 – Liveries/Stables/Outdoor Recreation	November 21, 2024
TLUC Meeting 2 – Agricultural Processing/Other Farm Related Issues	January 23, 2025
TLUC Meeting 3 – Value Added Farming/Other Farm Issues/Cons. Easement	April 24, 2025
TLUC Meeting 4 – Mountainside Overlay District/Signage	June 2025
TLUC Meeting 5 – Wineries/Breweries/Distilleries/Events	August 2025
TLUC Meeting 6 – Food Trucks/Food Service and Rural Restaurants	October 2025
TLUC Meeting 7 – Outstanding Issues	December 2025
Staff Develops Draft Ordinance Language	January-December 2025
Zoning Ordinance Committee (ZOC) Review and Comment on ZOAM Language – Four Meetings	January-April 2026
Agency Comments	April-May 2026
Board Information Item & Resolution of Intent to Amend Ordinance	June 2026
Planning Commission Public Hearing	July 2026
Planning Commission Work Session(s) for Recommendation	July-October 2026
Board of Supervisors Public Hearing	December 2026
BOS Business Meeting for Action	April 2027

CENTURY FARMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

issues, labor problems, food safety and lengthy shortages. The large farming conglomerates that have decimated the small farms, the family farms, to the tune of thousands lost, have created a terrible crisis. Ulanowsky believes that family farms are the backbone of America, not the large cartels. “I thought I might be able to show these Loudoun farms and in a small way contribute to the recognition of their value,” he says.

The mission statement of the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum says that it is “dedicated to preserving, promoting, and bringing to life the rich agricultural heritage of Loudoun County.” Echoing the museum’s purpose, Ulanowsky believes that education of the public is key to understanding not only agricultural production, but it is a factor in the renewal of a once productive society.

The Century Farms exhibit opened

Nov. 26, and runs for three weeks. Each of Ulanowsky’s photographs will have an information card displayed next to it. The farm owners depicted are names will be familiar to many visitors as these are families dating back generations in Loudoun County.

Sara Brown, 9th generation farmer at Oakland Green Farm near Lincoln is one of Ulanowsky’s featured subjects. Brown says, “I enjoyed meeting Philip and understanding his enthusiasm for these unique spaces. I don’t get much of an opportunity to step back and appreciate the enormity of the effort that goes into preserving a family farm because I’m in the midst of it. But these spaces we’ve been given to care for are important. From a practical perspective they are productive and useful but they are also a living history with much yet to reveal.”

For museum hours and information: heritagefarmmuseum.org.

NETFLIX’S HOT FROSTY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

enjoyable as rooting for the protagonists we love.

The themes woven throughout *Hot Frosty* also contribute to the film’s charm. One message I gathered while watching is the importance of making the most of the time we have left. Jack, who retains his snowman-like qualities despite appearing human, constantly faces the threat of melting. Unsure of how much longer he’ll be around, he dedicates his time to helping Kathy and the townspeople in meaningful ways.

The film also explores the journey of healing from loss and reopening oneself to love. One thing that stands out is the nuanced way *Hot Frosty* prioritizes self-love over romance. The story emphasizes that Kathy must first learn to love and value herself

before she can embark on a romantic relationship with Jack. This thoughtful approach sidesteps the cliché of portraying romance as a magical solution to personal struggles. Instead, the writers offer a more authentic and heartfelt depiction of Kathy’s growth, making her journey deeply relatable and satisfying.

Funny, sweet, and uplifting, *Hot Frosty* is a great rom-com to ring in the holiday season. While a few logistical plot holes (such as the inconsistencies surrounding what Jack does and does not understand about the human world) may elicit an eyebrow raise here and there, the film’s overall charm still comes out on top. So, if you’re looking for a heartwarming story with plenty of laughs and a touch of holiday magic, I recommend adding *Hot Frosty* to your list.

FAMILY GATHERINGS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Focus on positive interactions rather than critiques.

Ignoring Boundaries: Respect personal boundaries, whether they involve space, time, or topics of conversation. Recognizing and honoring these limits shows

consideration for others’ comfort.

Family gatherings during the holidays are a mix of opportunity and challenge. By focusing on shared values, expressing gratitude, and avoiding conflict-prone topics and behaviors, you can create a more harmonious and enjoyable holiday

experience. Whether you’re celebrating traditions or building new memories, the key lies in balancing understanding, respect, and care for everyone involved.

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire:

it is the time for home.” ~ Edith Sitwell

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.

50th Anniversary of TWA Flight 514 Remembrance Ceremony



Pictured is Gregory Williams Jr. the grandson of James H. Larkins Sr. who lost his life in the crash.

The Bluemont Citizens Association hosted a private ceremony for families of the 92 lives lost on TWA Flight 514 on Dec. 1, 1974. This event occurred on Sunday, Dec. 1, at 1 p.m., on the 50th anniversary of the crash.



The ceremony took place at the Bluemont Community Center, which served as the emergency operations center and morgue during the recovery effort. TWA Flight 514 crashed into the Blue Ridge Mountains above the Village of Bluemont while on approach to Washington Dulles International Airport. There were no survivors.

Thirty-two of the 92 onboard were U.S. military veterans. Given that this

accident occurred on private property, no memorial service was ever held. The Bluemont Citizens Association unveil a bronze plaque and black granite memorial during the remembrance ceremony.

TWA Flight 514 is considered one of the most pivotal accidents in our nation's history regarding aviation safety improvements. NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy was the ceremony keynote speaker. Over 200 family members and nearly 100 airline personnel, first responders, government

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

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DENSITY AND NOISE, CON'T. FROM P. 17

and we were protecting their future constituents when we did that. And they took that away from us, not even knowing anything about what we did and how hard we worked on that. And they took their power and flipped it over on us,” Vice Chair Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian) said.

The proposal also raised concerns about density. The current plan includes 104 dwelling units, bringing the density to 6.25 dwelling units per acre. The county’s policy allows 6 dwelling units per acre. Supervisor Koran Saines (D-Sterling) asked the applicant to reduce the number of dwelling units to 100 though this would mean the development would lose an Attainable Dwelling Unit (ADU). However, Briskman disagreed, saying she preferred to keep the ADU instead of reducing the density.

Letourneau said that the density of the residential dwelling could be contributing to the parking issues.

“I will contend that every two-over-two

property in this county has a parking problem,” he said.

Staff recommended that the applicant reduce the density of the residential units and add more civic space. Currently, the plan designates five percent of the property as civic space, which is under the county requirement of 10 percent.

One single family unit encroaches on the cemetery preservation buffer zone around Mankin Cemetery. The applicant asked that the buffer zone be reduced from 25 feet to 20 feet. TeKrony refused.

“That was a big accomplishment, getting that buffer zone around cemeteries. So, I am concerned about reducing that at all,” TeKrony said.

Board members decided to forward the proposal to their Nov. 19 business meeting for action with a vote of 7-0-2. Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At-Large) and Supervisor Kristen Umstatt (D-Leesburg) were absent. At the November meeting, the board deferred the proposal to a future meeting.

TWA FLIGHT 514, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

personnel, military members, elected officials, and members of the community attended.

A big thank you to the ceremony sponsors: the Air Line Pilots Association, the Allied Pilots Association, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, Bluemont Citizens Association, Bluemont United Methodist Church,

Blue Ridge Mountain Civic Association, Epling Landscaping and Lawn Services, Grand Event Center, Mr. Print, Rinker & Frye Memorials, and Wegmans.

The Bluemont Citizens Association was created in 1955 as a neighborhood association dedicated to improving the Bluemont community and protecting, celebrating, and preserving its rural heritage and character.

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Arcola Town Center zoning modifications nearly triple residential development

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

At their Nov. 7 meeting, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved a revision to the Concept Development Plan and Proffer Statement for a plot of land in Arcola Town Center. The approval came contrary to staff recommendations.

The property discussed is north of Arcola Boulevard, south of Arcola Mills Drive (Route 321), and east of Stone Springs Boulevard (Route 659). Initially, the county planned 530,000 square feet of nonresidential development on this parcel of land. The applicant proposed to add 460,000 square feet of that land to land already allocated for residential development. The residential density increased from 299 dwelling units to 823 units.

At its Sept. 11 public hearing, the board forwarded the plan to its Oct. 16 business meeting. Before the meeting, the applicant requested to defer discussion of the application to the Nov. 7 business meeting so that the applicant

could ensure the county would have an opportunity to eventually use the historic barn for commercial purposes.

At the Sept. 11 public hearing, land use attorney Colleen Gillis presented the plan to convert Arcola Town Center to an 89% residential development (the guidelines for this place type allow 60%). She highlighted the application's offer to finish a walking trail and to convert a historic barn into a community "eat-ertainment" space. The applicant also planned to open a coffee shop with Land of a Thousand Hills Coffee, a coffee brand that seeks to provide jobs for Rwandan farmers.

"This is a mix of residential and non-residential uses, but with—I think—an innovative way of providing some non-residential use to this area," Supervisor Matthew Letourneau (R-Dulles) said.

Previously, Letourneau had been encouraging commercial development in Arcola Town Center since that had been the vision for the property since around 2007. He pointed to the Target

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

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Photo by Katey Jackson

Leesburg accepting applications for 35th Annual Flower & Garden Festival

Applications are now available for those who would like to participate as an exhibitor or vendor during the 35th Annual Flower & Garden Festival.

Scheduled for Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27, 2025, this award-winning event has become an annual rite of spring for the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. Transforming the streets of historic downtown Leesburg, the festival showcases beautiful flowers, plants, and landscaping along with the best

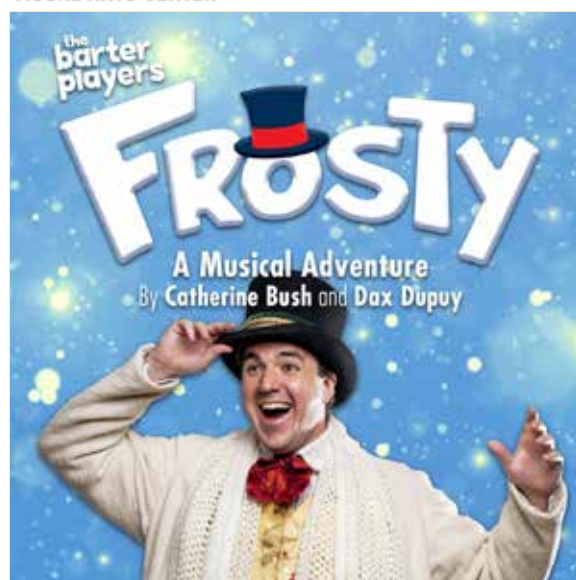
gardening and outdoor living products and services.

Applications for exhibitors and retail vendors are due Jan. 8, 2025. Food concession and nonprofit applications are due Jan. 31, 2025. Applicants are strongly encouraged to read all criteria, instructions, and terms before submitting. Not all those that apply will be selected. For more information, visit www.flowerandgarden.org or call Ida Lee Park Recreation Center at 703-777-1368.



Franklin Park Arts Center

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Frosty, A Musical Adventure

Sunday, December 22 3:00pm \$12 show only

(All Ages) The Barter Theatre professional touring theater company brings a magical musical adventure to our stage! Billy discovers a stolen hat, and when he places the hat on a snowman's head, that snowman magically comes to life! Join Billy and Frosty on a thrilling quest through New York City as they discover that the real magic of the season is love. The show is 55 minutes long.

Holiday Package: Tea & Frosty, The Musical

Sunday, December 22 \$20 Tea & Show

Holiday Tea has become a community favorite! Wear your festive holiday attire, enjoy warm tea, finger sandwiches and delicious sweets while creating a winter holiday craft. Tea seatings are before/after Frosty. Seating is limited!

First sitting: Tea & craft-2:00pm, Frosty at 3:00pm Second sitting: Frosty at 3:00pm, Tea & craft-4:00pm

Winter Lights Walk: "Sweet Adventures"

Monday- Sunday December 9-22

6pm-8pm FREE

(All Ages) The 5th Annual Winter Lights Walk has expanded with even more colorful lights, gingerbread people and penguins to entertain you on this walking loop. Begin inside the Arts Center to see the exhibit featuring artwork from Loudoun County artists - and VOTE for your favorite painted gingerbread house! Then take the magical walk outside through a candy cane tunnel and a gingerbread house, spy snowmen, a flying pig, sparkling candy canes, giant lollipops and more.

Family Nights at "Sweet Adventures"

Saturdays, December 14 & December 21

6:00pm-8:00pm \$5

Visit the art exhibit "Gingerbread Dreams" and vote on your favorite painted gingerbread house. Special activities include make your own hot chocolate bar, "sweet" themed crafts and marshmallows roasting over a campfire. End the evening watching "Frosty's Winter Wonderland" amidst the lights.

ARCOLA TOWN CENTER,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

that is currently under construction as the commercial center for the area. He said it's time to try something different for Arcola Town Center.

"I've been trying to get commercial into Dulles South as long as I've been on the board," Letourneau said. "We do not lack for approved projects in this area. What we do lack are users."

Supervisor Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) argued the board should not give up on the original vision for the property.

"Buchanan Brothers described it as another Fairfax Corner and kind of a needed pedestrian main street in Dulles South," TeKrony said. "This didn't happen, as we all know, because in 2018, 2.3 million square feet of data center was approved right in the center of the community, so it really cannibalized that whole vision."

TeKrony said that the property would likely support retail and small businesses. She agreed with a public comment speaker who said approving the plan would be a "missed opportunity" to use recent road improvements as access ways to

commercial real estate.

In addition to concerns about the large increase in residential units, supervisors expressed concerns that a substation would be built next to the development. These fears resolved after the Loudoun County Planning Commission's Sept. 24 public hearing. The commission recommended denial the application to build a substation on the Arcola Grove property, which is adjacent to the Arcola Town Center property.

Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) supported the proposal.

"You have to put in the rooftops before you put in retail and restaurants," she said.

Supervisor Kristen Umstatt (D-Leesburg) spoke against the proposal.

"I really appreciate Supervisor Letourneau's hard work in trying to get something into this area, and I do agree with him that the barn is very attractive and hopefully will be a great asset," she said. "However, I am hung up on the annual operating costs for the school needs of this project, and that will be \$5.6 million every year."

The board approved the plan with a vote of 7-2 (TeKrony and Umstatt opposed).

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LETTER: MAKE AMERICA GREAT, CON'T. FROM PAGE 6

- No transition surgery or medication for prisoners who desire to transition.
- Defund and cancel all CRT and DEI programs nationwide.
- Defund those colleges and universities who do not comply. No CRT or DEI in the military—it's divisive.
- Personnel choices nationwide should be based on merit, not on race, gender or pronouns.
- No foreign aid to countries that do not like us.
- Stop funding the United Nations.

- Move them out of the U.S.
- Stop funding all the corrupt international organizations. Those funds and the UN funds and foreign aid funds should be rerouted towards the National Debt.
- Dismantle the Department Of Education. Turn it over to the individual states.
- Replace the oil that Joe Biden drew down from our strategic oil reserves and finish the Keystone XL Pipeline.

*Damon Cable
Purcellville*

LETTER: LET'S WORK TOGETHER, CON'T. FROM PAGE 6

These studies show that people living in places with the worst light pollution have a 31% higher risk of high blood pressure, 29% higher risk of death from coronary heart disease, 28% higher risk of diabetes, 17% higher risk of cerebrovascular disease [strokes and brain aneurysm], and 12% higher risk of breast cancer.

Multiple studies have also shown the association between disrupted circadian rhythm and increased risk of aggressive

prostate cancer. And this risk remains, even after studies control for the presence of air and noise pollution.

This is an avoidable problem. Locales across the globe have worked with the nonprofit DarkSky International and similar organizations to develop common sense legislation and voluntary programs to reduce light pollution – Loudoun should be one of them.

*SJ Anderson, MD, PhD
Leesburg*

LETTER: MERCER MIDDLE SCHOOL, CON'T. FROM PAGE 6

chapter. She asserted, using a non-credible, evidence-free, taxpayer-funded report from several years ago, that systemic racism exists in LCPS.

Pro-tip to the audience: if you're conducting a racism study and you can't find any proven incidents of racism, use the nebulous words "systemic racism," and then the profit-driven education-industrial complex will throw tons of money at a problem that doesn't exist.

Members of the Loudoun Love Warriors were here as well. They are the street muscle for the local NAACP. They intimidate school board members and encroach into their personal space, threaten violence, arson and lawfare and use cancellation against anyone who interferes with their narrative of

racism.

In attendance was the former Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney. Apparently she has a strong scent for rooting-out "racism" where it doesn't exist but was weak on prosecuting child rape in LCPS.

This months-long attack on MMS has left stunned parents and staff with the difficult task of explaining to bewildered children that their school is somehow, might be, associated with racism.

We must stop pretending that these race-bullies are credible. They distract us from what is good, and they foment hate and division in our community.

Mercer Middle School's name should remain unchanged.

*Ray Farrell
Round Hill*

LETTER: SAVE THE BRIDGE, CON'T. FROM PAGE 6

the Board of Supervisors. No final decision has been made.

Even if the state decides against rebuilding the bridge, I urge the county to maintain the right of way for public use. Perhaps the state or county could replace the current bridge with a

pedestrian overpass.

Nearby Philomont Road transits directly through a creek, without any type of bridge. Finding a solution may require imagination and vision, but I am confident it can be done.

*Jim Michaels
Philomont*

ORME FARM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

would move the application off the consent agenda if necessary. The applicant had proffered out a data center, but building a substation remained an option for the applicant.

"If a data center wanted to use the utility substation that sits on the Orme property—if that's what's actually built

there—that data center would have to come back to the planning commission and the board for approval before that happens, correct?" Randall asked.

The applicant agreed that Randall understood correctly. The board passed the consent agenda, which included the Orme Farm application, with a vote of 9-0.

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OPINION: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

These are not rhetorical questions. They are fundamental issues that deserve concrete answers before a single dollar of taxpayer money is spent or a single zoning ordinance is changed. Absent those answers, this isn't a plan—it's a pipedream. And here's the rub: we live in an era of powerful tools like artificial intelligence

and digital twin technology. These can model the financial, environmental, and social impacts of any proposal with remarkable precision. Yet, instead of bringing data and transparency into the conversation, we're handed vague promises and political platitudes.

Let's pause the rhetoric and demand the facts. Show us the models. Prove the need. Lay bare the costs—financial, logistical, and

social. Affordable housing shouldn't be a slogan; it should be a carefully considered, data-driven strategy that uplifts the community without undermining its future.

Until then, Purcellville risks becoming a cautionary tale: a small town sold on big promises, only to awaken to the nightmare of broken budgets, overwhelmed infrastructure, and diminished quality of life. Let's not let that happen here.

OPINION: THEY'VE LOST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Eliminate the personal property tax on automobiles. Voters would see the Supervisors as heroes.

The real fiscal villain is the school system. It is proposing \$1.5 billion, yes, billion, of new capital spending, even as enrollment has been flat. Among that proposal is \$221 million for construction of a new Park View High School. That seems insane.

Here's an idea called the 5% Plan. The County and every one of its departments must cut their next-year's budget by 5%. For the year after that, the budget gets another 5% cut, and so on. In five years, the County's spending would be cut by around \$2 billion, leaving government \$5 billion to spend. That should be sufficient if luxury projects like the wayfaring project and like some Board travel, are eliminated and if the Board has the nerve to reject the School Board's spending addiction.

This budget cutting would cause our government some pain, and assuredly prompt it to review its programs and staff, eliminating anything that's not critical.

In my former profession, we always said that the most expensive part of a building's budget was its architect's pen or keyboard. We'd go through the cost estimates line-by-line, cutting out fluff, until the budget was tight.

Charles Houston's career was developing around \$6 billion of major office buildings throughout the south. The tallest was 617 feet, the largest was 1.2 million square feet. Every single building came in on time and within budget. He consulted on real estate with several familiar corporations that rank high on the Fortune 500 list, served as an expert witness in litigation regarding real estate, and occasionally lectured on real estate at the university level.

OFFICER OF THE YEAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

is entitled to receive a copy of the complaint filed against them.

Regarding the issue of disarming a uniformed officer, such action would only occur if the officer were to be immediately terminated or relieved of duty.

The source also stated that Officer Nett has been the subject of targeted actions over the past several months, citing examples such as unofficial reprimands for publicly highlighting the department's lack of sustained 24/7 police coverage and for criticizing management over the practice of assigning officers to work 12-hour overnight shifts alone.

The source referenced an Oct. 31 email in which Nett was reprimanded for passing out Junior Purcellville Police Officer stickers to children at the October Tag Sale, claiming he was using the stickers to benefit his campaign—only to be countered by the fact that Nett had been

provided the stickers, for distribution at the Tag Sale, by a supervisor as part of a community outreach effort.

Also, on Nov. 4, election eve, Nett received notice from the Deputy Chief that he was "randomly" selected for drug screening.

Nett's candidacy for Town Council has been approved by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council, which cites VA Code 15.2-1512.2, outlining the rights of First Responders to engage in political activity.

This includes Nett's right to run for and hold public office while maintaining his employment with the Police Department. He would have to recuse himself from matters dealing exclusively with the Police Department.

As of press time LaDonna Snellbaker, Director of Human Resources, has given Nett until Dec. 3 to resign his position with the police department.

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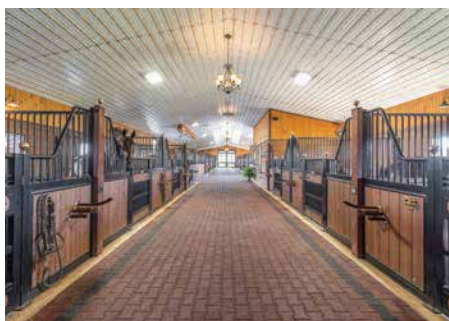
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