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Today

Judge sets next date for Purcellville indictment case as attorneys await evidence

BY VALERIE CURY

The scheduling of the next court date for Purcellville Vice Mayor Carl “Ben” Nett and Town Manager Kwasi Fraser was once again postponed during a Sept. 25 hearing in Loudoun County Circuit Court. The new date has been set for Nov. 20 at 1 p.m.

Attorneys for both Nett and Fraser are expected to soon receive limited access to transcripts from the grand jury that returned indictments against their clients.

However, Special Prosecutor Eric Olsen stated that the transcripts are still being finalized—60 days after the indictments were issued—and are not yet available for full review.

GOVERNMENT

Olsen also indicated that he intends to file a motion to consolidate the two cases. Defense attorneys will be unable to formally respond until they have reviewed the grand jury materials in greater detail.

The Sept. 25 hearing had itself been rescheduled from an earlier court date on Sept. 4, after defense attorneys John Boneta, representing Fraser, and Ryan Campbell, representing Nett, requested a delay, citing lack of access to the grand jury transcripts and other discovery materials.

Sept. 4 hearing

At the Sept. 4 hearing Special prosecutor Eric Olsen, Stafford County’s Commonwealth’s Attorney, did not oppose

the hearing request to reschedule, noting that the transcripts at the time were still unavailable more than 40 days after the indictments. Olsen participated in the hearing by phone. Fraser appeared in person with his attorney, while Nett did not attend and was represented by his attorney, Ryan Campbell. Loudoun County Circuit Court Judge Jim Plowman granted the continuance.

Fraser and Nett each face two felony charges, including allegations of bid rigging and commercial fraud involving a government contract. Nett also faces four additional felony counts related to the unlawful acquisition of identifying information.

The charges stem from a grand jury



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indictment on July 23. According to prosecutors, while serving as a town police officer, Nett allegedly used a law enforcement database to obtain personal information through misrepresentation and trickery.

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Abernethy & Spencer celebrates grand opening after major renovation

After nearly a century serving Loudoun County, the historic Abernethy & Spencer Greenhouse & Garden Center marked its 100th anniversary with the official grand opening of its newly renovated and expanded grounds. The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on Friday, Sept. 26 at 3:30 p.m. at their location, 18035 Lincoln Road, Purcellville, VA, with a full weekend of events that followed.

The updates come an extensive, multi-year aimed at both restoring the center’s historic infrastructure—reimagining it for the next generation of gardeners and plant lovers. In addition to revitalizing the selection of native flowers, herbs, trees, and organically grown vegetables, Abernethy & Spencer is introducing



several new features designed to make the space welcoming and community-focused.

Among the most anticipated additions is The Conservatory, a restored historic greenhouse that now houses a gift and

garden lifestyle shop, cafe cart, library, and orchidarium. At its center is an intricately crafted bronze water garden fountain inspired by Alice in Wonderland, created by award-winning artists from the Chelsea Flower Show.

Another new space, The Glassroom, serves as a multimedia education and event venue built from a reclaimed local greenhouse. Additional upgrades include a new native perennial greenhouse, a restored houseplant and tropical greenhouse for year-round gardeners, and an expanded parrot aviary—home to several beloved resident birds.

The site also features Lola’s Coffee Cart,

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Morven Park to host US Equestrian Open of Eventing Final

The Morven Park International & Fall Horse Trials will host the US Equestrian Open of Eventing Final from Thursday, Oct. 9, through Sunday, Oct. 12, at the historic Morven Park grounds in Leesburg. The four-day

COMMUNITY

competition will feature top-level riders, including Olympians, competing in the three phases of eventing: dressage, show jumping, and cross-country.

The Open of Eventing Final marks the culmination of a new national series that includes 20 qualifying events held across the country. Riders accumulate points throughout the season, with top performers advancing to the final round at Morven Park. The event will crown the inaugural US Equestrian Open of Eventing champion.

More than \$200,000 in prize money will be awarded at the final. An additional \$50,000 will go to the three highest-placed riders in the overall series standings.

Competition will take place rain or shine. The full schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, Oct. 9
11 a.m. – Dressage
- Friday, Oct. 10
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Dressage
- Saturday, October 11
9 a.m. – Show Jumping
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Cross-country
- Sunday, Oct. 12
8 a.m. – Horse Inspection
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Cross-country
12 p.m. – Show Jumping and Awards Ceremony

Spectator admission is free, and those interested in upgraded viewing options can find more information at morven-park.org.

The event will be broadcast live on ESPN3 and the USEF Network. Live-stream information and additional coverage details can be found on the event’s website under “How to Watch: Morven Park International & Fall Horse Trials.”



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Residents raise concerns over proposed Purcellville industrial rezoning

BY VALERIE CURY

On Sept. 17, Michael Romeo, senior land planner with Walsh Colucci Lubeley & Walsh, and Chuck Kuhn, the applicant behind the Valley Commerce Center rezoning proposal (17110 Purcellville Road, LLC), hosted a community meeting at Harmony Middle School to present details of the project and gather feedback from County and Town residents.

GOVERNMENT

The proposal seeks approval for up to 1,274,892 square feet of industrial development, along with a zoning modification to waive certain road, water, and wastewater infrastructure requirements. The property, located in the County, is currently zoned JLMA-3 (Joint Land Management Area – residential, allowing up to 39 homes). The applicant is requesting a rezoning to PD-IP (Planned Development – Industrial Park).

Loudoun County planning staff has recommended against approving the rezoning request, citing inconsistencies with the County's 2019 General Plan. In a recent report, staff stated that the proposal conflicts with land use policies for the Purcellville Joint Land Management Area (JLMA), which designates the site as part of the Rural Neighborhood Place Type—a designation intended for lower-density residential development.

The report also raises concerns about the development's compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, noting that the impacts of industrial zoning "are not adequately mitigated given the immediate proximity to residential uses." Staff concluded that the proposed use "is not

consistent with the Rural Neighborhood Place Type."

As part of the application, the developer is also requesting a zoning modification to eliminate the requirement for industrial uses to connect to public water. Instead, the applicant proposes relying on private well water. Given the scale of the project—more than 1.27 million square feet—staff expressed concern that groundwater usage could affect nearby residents who also depend on well water. According to the report, such a project would be more appropriately located within the Town of Purcellville, where infrastructure is already in place to support industrial development.

Since 2015, the property has been proposed for annexation into the Town of Purcellville on two separate occasions. Both times, different Town Council majorities voted against the annexation. Community meetings were held in 2022 and 2024, along with a design charrette in 2015. At each of these events, residents overwhelmingly expressed opposition to annexation and increasing the proposed density.

A 39-home residential development on the site, which is currently allowed, is estimated to generate approximately 32 trips during the morning peak hour, 41 during the evening peak, and 424 total trips on an average weekday. In contrast, the proposed 1.27 million-square-foot industrial park is projected to generate 433 trips during both the morning and evening peak hours, and a total of 3,527 weekday trips.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 »

RESIDENTS RAISE CONCERNS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

As part of the Valley Commerce Center rezoning application, the applicant is requesting a zoning modification to allow industrial development without connecting to public water—relying instead on private wells. According to the Hydrogeologic Report prepared for the site, such an approach raises serious concerns about the long-term sustainability of local groundwater resources.

Excessive groundwater withdrawal from high-capacity wells, particularly for a development of this scale, can lead to a phenomenon known as “drawdown,” where water levels in the aquifer drop significantly due to pumping. The report outlines several possible consequences. Among them: wells running dry, pumps overheating or failing, and the need for increased maintenance as sediment and minerals are drawn into the water system.

Beyond infrastructure, the report also highlights environmental risks. Over pumping can lead to aquifer depletion, reduced water quality, and interference with neighboring wells. In some cases, local springs, wetlands, or streams that are hydrologically connected to the groundwater system may begin to dry up, threatening nearby ecosystems. In more extreme scenarios, land subsidence—permanent sinking of the ground—can occur, especially if the aquifer’s supporting layers become compacted.

The report notes that recovery from this kind of groundwater depletion can take decades or longer, and in some cases, the aquifer’s storage capacity may never fully return.

Purcellville resident Lydia M. Clark said the community has participated in multiple meetings over the years, and at each one, neighbors have consistently voiced concerns about noise, traffic, safety, and water availability. She noted that the lack of adequate buffering between the proposed industrial site and nearby residential properties has been a repeated point of contention.

Clark also pointed out that a previous proposal by a different property owner—which included a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential

uses—was ultimately rejected.

Owen Brown said, “It’s pretty simple—the County’s own planning and zoning staff have already said multiple times that this proposed rezoning is completely out of line with the Coun-



ty’s own strategic planning documentation. But guess what is in line with that strategic guidance—residential homes like those that border this property on all sides. Nothing was presented at this meeting that changed or dealt with any of this reality.”

Mayfair resident Dan Carvill said he hoped the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors would seriously consider the risks the proposed development poses to nearby elementary and high schools, as well as to residents in surrounding neighborhoods like Mayfair and Wright Farm. He called the project a serious safety concern and warned that, if ignored, it could ultimately result in someone getting hurt—or worse.

While many residents voiced opposition to the proposal, property owner Chuck Kuhn expressed optimism about the project’s future and its potential benefits to the broader community. In an email to the Blue Ridge Leader, Kuhn wrote:

“We remain optimistic about the future of the proposed Valley Commerce Center and enjoyed meeting so many members of the community last night at the public meeting. We will incorporate their feedback into our planning process. With so little commercial space available in the county, this center will fill an important gap and be a job and tax generator. In addition, the center will be an attractive business park with proper buffers—and no data centers. Our county—including Purcellville—benefits from building a business-friendly climate that balances community and conservation.”



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Becoming Charlie

BY CHARLIE HOUSTON

Yes, this is all about me, from way back when to today. About fifteen years ago I was walking my horse to let him—and myself—cool down after a riding lesson, when my trainer said, “You live an interesting life.” I just smiled but that’s been on my mind ever since.

OPINION

A few near-death experiences

I was swimming across a big lake near my hometown, Augusta, Georgia. I was sixteen and had had an unexpected bit of common sense—I asked a friend to follow along in a boat. Wham! Lightning struck the lake perhaps a quarter-mile away. I was knocked for a loop and had to be rescued

by my boatman buddy.

We were hanging out at a fraternity brother’s rented house in Lexington. It was a slow weekend and we were just chillin’ and guzzling beer. One of my pledge brothers—I’ll call him Hunter—had consumed much more than I did. New fraternity brothers form a “pledge class” each year and they stay close for decades. There are exceptions; Hunter and I didn’t like each other. You would’ve known that if you had seen him, a loaded .45 in his wobbly hand, the muzzle six inches from my forehead. I reacted by sitting still and keeping my mouth shut. As you might guess, he didn’t pull the trigger. Other brothers talked him down.

Some years later I was once again in deep water and Poseidon almost got me again. I was heading back to Atlanta from Hilton Head. My friends were staying to play golf and gave me a wave as I left. But I didn’t leave. It was a beautiful day and just right for a quick sail, so I rented a boat. That casual sail ended with me astride the hull of a capsized catamaran, being inexorably pulled out into the Atlantic by winds and currents. Two hours late a passing fisherman rescued me.

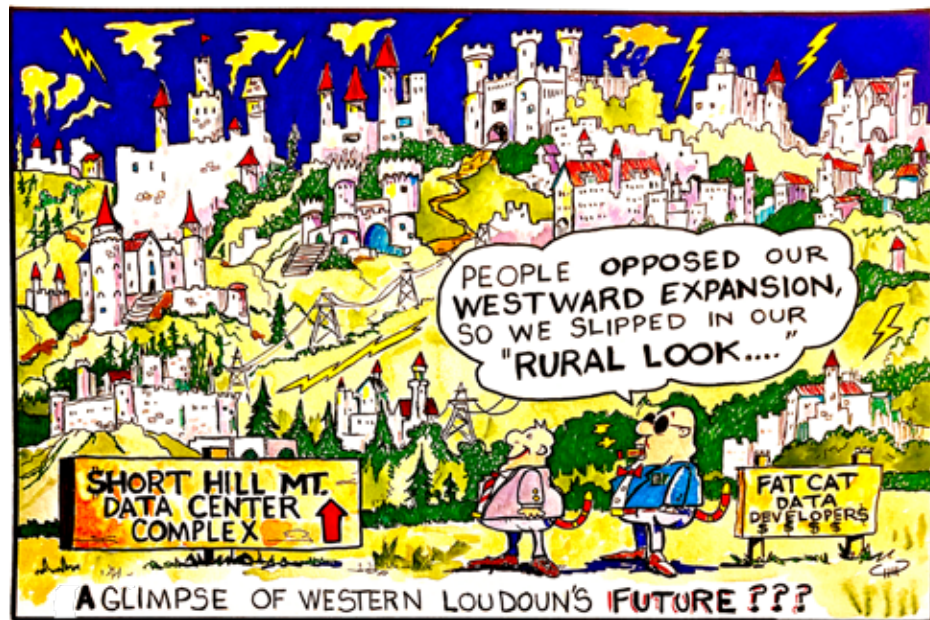
That sea god had it in for me and years later reappeared as I was diving in the Red Sea. I was getting low on air and popped up to the surface only to see the dive boat—a really, really big and tall boat—heading right at me. Its skipper couldn’t see me and death was coming as its propellers would churn me into hamburger. I turned turtle and kicked myself down to about fifteen feet and safety.

Back to the Beginning: Growing Up

Dad was a small-town lawyer who hated the law. He was a polymath with a primary interest in the classics—Greek and Roman times, literature and myths. He also was fluent in six or seven languages, including Greek and Japanese. Dad left the law and became a Professor of the Classics. Mother was an antiques dealer and collector. They were great parents despite the occasional spankings, which were deserved. Add two younger brothers and we were a prototypical solid, happy, nuclear family. We boys were gifted. We read voraciously, played board games, especially Scrabble, made up various word games. While those things were fun, they were Mother’s effort to stimulate us.

This is conjecture: I believe I was tested and evaluated when I was very young. My IQ was more than four standard

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Service or Sleaze?

BY JOHN ELLIS

A core principle of public service is that officials should not personally profit from the decisions they make in office.

In the early 2000s, the then head of Loudoun’s Planning Commission voted to approve development applications submitted by a firm from which he received substantial personal business.

In 2004, a former County supervisor helped recruit a strongly pro-growth Board of Supervisors. That Board promptly re-zoned one of her private properties to make it much more valuable for potential developers. She sold the property for \$12 million—four times its previously assessed value.

These activities caught the attention of the Washington Post’s editorial board, which in January 2007 described the transactions as “sleaze.”

Things do not seem to have changed much since then.

A recent series of reports in the Fauquier Times describes how Loudoun’s habit of mixing public and private business has recently infected our neighboring county.

In February 2025, two Loudoun County Planning Commissioners purchased a property in Fauquier from an elderly landowner. On August 4, 2024, one of them sent the following text to the elderly property-owner: “Believe me, if I thought for a second the land could be approved for more houses or a data center, I’d offer you a lot more money.” However, he has not denied that, at the time he sent this text, he was in fact aware of a plan to build a

data center on the same property.

The mastermind behind the same data center project is a former Loudoun County supervisor. When he was in office, he met frequently with data center representatives to hear their pitches for new projects. Now, the industry is paying him to pitch more projects on their behalf in both Loudoun and Fauquier. And Loudoun’s Planning Commissioners seem to be well-informed about his plans.

Developers are also cozy with current and former Loudoun County staff. Less than a year after resigning his position as Deputy County Administrator, one former staffer began appearing before both the County Board of Supervisors and the Leesburg Town Council on behalf of his new employer—a data center developer.

This revolving door works both ways. Just last year, the former County supervisor who earned the unfortunate attention of the Washington Post editorial board 20 years ago was appointed to lead our Planning Commission.

Do all these connections between developers and Loudoun County officials affect the County’s policies regarding the data centers?

The Planning Commission recently considered whether the County should tighten its zoning restrictions on data center development. Not surprisingly, the two Commissioners who were involved in the data center land deal in Fauquier expressed grave concerns about any efforts to rein in the industry.

Neither Commissioner mentioned or seemed concerned that Loudoun’s data

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The noise is loud, but the truth is clear

BY PURCELLVILLE MAYOR CHRIS BERTAUT

After the September 9 Town Council meeting, a wave of misinformation has spread—through social media, private forums, and public commentary—distorting what actually happened and misleading the public. This isn't just political disagreement. It's part of a broader, ongoing pattern.

OPINION

At the heart of this disruption is a deeper motive: to stall reform, block meaningful progress, and pave the way for unchecked growth and bigger government—on their terms. The louder the chaos, the less this Council can accomplish. That's not accidental. It's strategic.

Let's call it what it is: mob rule.

Recent tragedies—from the assassination of Charlie Kirk, to the murders of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky outside the Capital Jewish Museum, to the killing of Iryna Zarutka, a Ukrainian refugee—are sobering reminders of where unchecked

hatred and division can lead. Violence is the darkest expression of political discord. If we fail to protect our public square—locally and nationally—from fear, intimidation, and distortion, we risk losing not just civility, but our shared humanity.

A coordinated group has decided that the path to power lies in disruption, distortion, and intimidation. Facts are ignored. Decorum is discarded. And anyone who stands in the way—elected officials, staff, residents who speak out—is targeted.

The goal is not dialogue. The goal is dominance.

This behavior is amplified through a private Facebook group called Purcellville Matters Uncensored. It presents itself as an open forum but functions as a propaganda machine. The group is run by a developer with vested interests in local land-use decisions and bans anyone who challenges its narrative or asks inconvenient questions. It's become a central vehicle for division—not

public information.

Even more troubling, a sitting councilmember actively participates in this group—repeating falsehoods, sharing distorted accounts of meetings, and presenting opinion as fact. The result is confusion, mistrust, and a community pulled further apart.

Let me set the record straight:

- All councilmembers have the ability to submit relevant proposals for the agenda. Claims that ideas are being “silenced” are simply false.
- Public comment is welcome at our meetings, but we expect the same basic standards of respect seen in any governing body. Speakers are expected to address the Council as a whole, not attack individuals.
- When standards are violated—when speakers shout, curse, or target individuals—the chair has a responsibility to restore order. That is not censorship. That is leadership.

What we are seeing now is a backlash—one that comes when entrenched interests are challenged. The development lobby, political opportunists, and even some within the system are pushing back against efforts to bring transparency, accountability, and a resident-centered vision to Purcellville.

But this Council majority is not here to protect special interests. We are here to serve the public.

We were elected to clean up a system that operated for too long without oversight. And we will not be deterred by those trying to drag us backward through chaos.

I know this moment is noisy. I know it's frustrating. But I ask you to look through the noise. Ask who benefits from the fear, the outrage, the misinformation. Then ask who's actually showing up to govern—quietly, consistently, and with integrity.

Purcellville deserves better than mob rule. And I believe the people of this town want responsible leadership, low taxes, redevelopment consistent with our Comprehensive Plan—and a future shaped by facts, not fear.

Purcellville business seeks downtown apartment expansion

BY VALERIE CURY

On Sept. 10, the Purcellville Board of Zoning Appeals considered a request from Nichols Hardware for a zoning variance to exceed the number of by-right apartments allowed at its property at 131 N. 21st Street, located in the Historic Downtown C-4 District.

Nichols is proposing to redevelop the unused second floors of two buildings—

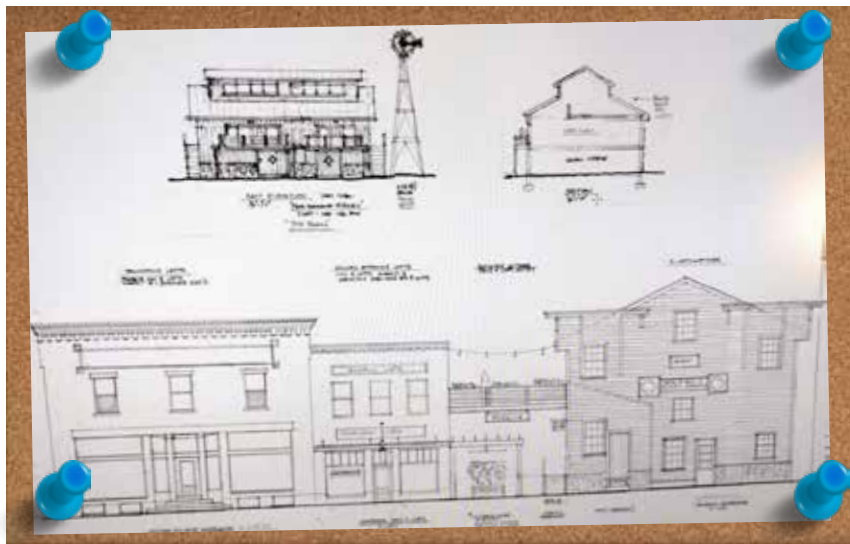
GOVERNMENT

Nichols Hardware and the adjacent Hardware Café—into income-producing residential space. Under current C-4 zoning regulations, two apartments are permitted per building by-right.

In the first phase of the proposed redevelopment, the applicant is seeking to create four apartments in the Hardware building and three in the Hardware Café building, exceeding the allowed limit by three units total.

Architect Gaver Nichols—no relation to the Nichols family—said the proposed four apartments in the Hardware Store would each range from 700 to 1,000 square feet. If only two units were built, as permitted by-right, they would each be approximately 1,800 to 2,000 square feet. The adjacent Hardware Café building would house smaller units.

“Our plan is to renovate the unused upper floors of the Hardware structure,” said Gaver Nichols, who added that the plan includes four loft rentals in the Hardware building and three smaller units in the Café building—intended for business employees.



In future phases, the team plans two apartments in each of the rear structures bringing the total number of apartments to 11, including the three additional not currently allowed. They also envision creating a music venue and a water feature near the Livery Mill structure, with two lofts on the second floor. A salvaged windmill, up to 45 feet tall, will be installed as an architectural feature, said Nichols.

Nichols said that strict enforcement of the zoning code would create a hardship by restricting the reasonable adaptive reuse of existing buildings that contribute to the town's architectural character and historic fabric.

Purcellville Planner Jordan Andrews said the first question is whether a variance is the appropriate

mechanism for the request, as the Board of Zoning Appeals cannot permit a use that is not allowed within a zoning district. He also noted that it's unclear whether the inability to build the additional apartments would constitute a true hardship.

Andrews added that anything over 2,000 square feet would not be viable, as it would be comparable in size to a townhouse. He also said in the C-4 District, existing structures on 21st Street are exempt from parking requirements, and are not required to provide parking.

Nichols said even though parking isn't required, “we think we have 20 spaces,” noting that they currently have six spaces in front. He said the parking would most likely be shared parking.

Purcellville resident Dan Reed said that although he was not there to oppose the request, “it is an upzoning and you're being asked to upzone, and once you do that—you've made the decision.”

On the parking issue, Reed questioned whether the Town should give a “blanket approval” for the project. On the idea of shared parking he said, “I have watched it fail miserably—the daytime and nighttime uses collide.”

He also suggested that the applicant consider using water-charged fire suppression systems, given the age of the structures.

“Once you approve it, the other people in the area

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The Hidden Divide in Virginia's Governor Race Isn't Just Political—It's Cultural

BY KATHIE BELROSE-RAMEY

There's a concept I've come to understand that finally gives language to the disorientation many of us have felt in recent years. It's called a permission structure—the unwritten framework that tells people what they're allowed to say, feel, or do without being punished or pushed out. It's not just about laws or policies. It's about what's culturally permitted, and what's quietly condemned.

OPINION

Once you start seeing it, you realize it's everywhere: in our schools, our workplaces, our families, and especially in our politics. And in Virginia's upcoming governor's race, it's the real divide—not just between parties, but between two fundamentally different visions of how society should function.

Progressives tend to build their permission structure around emotional safety, systemic reform, and identity-based justice. They speak of creating safe spaces, calling out injustice, and disrupting harmful systems. These values are often framed as moral imperatives, especially in education

and public discourse. But for many independents and conservatives, this structure can feel coercive—where disagreement is punished, dissent is silenced, and even violence is sometimes excused if it serves a favored cause.

Conservatives, by contrast, operate within a permission structure that emphasizes restraint, personal responsibility, and open debate. They prioritize parental authority, protect speech even when it's uncomfortable, and condemn violence regardless of ideology. This structure doesn't demand ideological purity—it tolerates disagreement and values tradition. Yet to some progressives, it can feel rigid, emotionally detached, or resistant to necessary change.

These aren't just abstract ideas. They're embodied in the platforms of the two leading candidates for governor—and they shape how Virginians live, speak, and participate in civic life.

Abigail Spanberger's priorities reflect a progressive permission structure. She says she supports healthcare, housing, and

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Spanberger would save families money—provide more effective government

BY MICHAEL ZUCKERMAN

While I admire and firmly support Abigail Spanberger's forward leaning, detailed platform—to lower costs of healthcare, housing, and energy—it seems equally important that her candidacy promises to restore professional governance, ending the hazardous chaos generated by the grave political whims of the MAGA movement trickling down from Donald Trump's unbridled childish need for authoritarian control.

OPINION

Her opponent, Winsome Earle-Sears, has made clear from the get-go that there won't be a hint of daylight between her administration and Trump's crushing, chaotic policies.

So, it seems, ironically, time has come for Democrats to adopt a "Don't Tread on Me" philosophy:

- Don't make it more difficult for me and others to vote
- Don't tell women what established medical procedures they can have
- Don't tell us who we can and can't love

or marry

- Don't persecute free speech—including satire—just because it may hurt someone's feelings or be critical of government policies
- Don't put troops on the streets of cities, especially those that are already successfully enjoying the lowest violent crime rates in decades
- Don't detain people merely because they aren't Caucasian, even if the Supreme Court says it's OK.
- Don't continue to allow gun violence to be the number one cause of childhood death in America
- Don't eliminate healthcare for the most vulnerable among us as a way of paying for tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, including billionaires (whose numbers have doubled from 540 to more than 1,100 since Trump's tax breaks for the wealthy took effect, according to the Wall Street Journal)
- Don't continue to ignore the seemingly endless stream of (provable)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Frying Pan Farm Park

BY TIM JON

One of my fondest possessions is an old black and white photograph, showing an ecstatic little boy—probably around six or seven years of age, with a baby deer in his arms. You see, as a child, I was absolutely insatiable when it came to animals: birds, beasts, insects, fish, reptiles and amphibians—



TIM JON

even dinosaurs. I can just about imagine the hand-ful I must have presented at what must have been one of the nearly-ubiq-uitous “Bambi-Land’s we often visited on vacation

in Northern Minnesota. Virtually any living creature was—if possible—dearly clutched to my heart: I would—undoubt-edly—if given the opportunity—have taken them all home. I’ve felt this way about critters (and even people) I’ve



loved for over six decades.

So, you can imagine my delight in sifting through the recent sensory, emo-tional and even spiritual memories from my first-ever walk around a local gem of a place—Frying Pan Farm Park, in Hern-don. This marked the first time in my life that I actually felt that the animals (bless their souls) at the facility wanted to adopt me, instead of the usual, other way ‘round.

It started at the sheep pen, when these wooly beings ambled right over to the nearest proximity they could access, and gave me the best google eyes they could muster. It got even more steamy at the

next stop—when the two baby calves did everything but crawl through—or over—the wooden partition, to most likely lick me to pieces. About all I remember seeing of them was saucer-sized eyes, tongues of which an anteater would be proud, and noses that reached so far they obliterated all hope of any useful camera shots.

Well, the sheep and cattle racked up some high scores, but the third enclosure I walked up to was the charm: a litter of very small, all-black, baby pigs—two of whom instantly trotted over to my end of the pen, sat down on their haunches and promptly gave me ... what else: the ultimate cute piglet look. The smaller of the two—perhaps the ‘runt’ of the litter of several I eventually saw— appeared quite satisfied to spend the rest of the day in this fashion. Well, so was I. And it was quite early in the morning. Not sure if I’ll ever get over that little guy.

After I’d partially recovered from this intimate, heart-to-heart meeting, it’s probably fortunate that the goats—who next introduced themselves—were of the adult variety: they were very engag-ing and of course full of personality, but I’m almost grateful I got a break from the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

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SUBMITTED BY JOSHUA WOLINSKI, EDWARD JONES
FINANCIAL ADVISOR

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JOSHUA WOLINSKI

It's wise to apply that same holistic thinking when you plan for your financial future—that is, bringing into the picture all elements of yourself.

Here are some things that may affect your financial strategy:

- *Your views on helping your family*—Your decisions about helping your family are clearly going to be a major part of your financial strategy, and this is true at virtually all stages of your life. When your children are young, you'll need to decide

if you're going to save money for their college education, and if so, how much, and in what investments. When they're young adults, you may also need to decide how much financial support you're willing to provide for major expenses such as down payments on a new home or a new car. And when you're drawing up your estate plans, you'll need to consider how and when to distribute assets to your children, grandchildren or other family members.

- *Your personal beliefs*—As someone with civic, ethical and moral concerns, you may feel compelled to make charitable gifts throughout your life and then make philanthropy part of your legacy. To accomplish these objectives, you'll want to include gifting techniques in your financial strategy today and your estate plans for tomorrow. Of course, for the estate-planning component, you'll need to work with your tax and legal advisors.

- *Your purpose in life when you retire*—Having a purpose can bring fulfillment beyond financial security. Leading up to retirement, your purpose may involve providing for your immediate family, bringing value to your profession or contributing to your community. When you retire and step off your career path, you're entering a new world of possibilities. How will you define, and live out, your new sense of purpose at this stage of your life? Do you seek to broaden your horizons by traveling around the world? Or

spend more time volunteering? Can you pursue hobbies that give you a chance for self-expression? Each of these choices will carry different financial implications for how much you'll need to accumulate for retirement and how much income you will need to take out each year from your retirement accounts, such as your IRA and 401(k).

- *Your health*—Your physical and mental health can play big roles in your financial plans and outlook. On the most basic level, the healthier you are, and the better you take care of yourself, the lower your health care bills will likely be during

retirement, which will affect the amount you need to put away for health care. And you also may need to prepare for the costs of long-term care, which can be enormous—in fact, a private room in a nursing home in can easily cost \$100,000 per year, according to Genworth, an insurance company.

It can be challenging to weave all these elements into a single, unified vision, so you may want to get some help from a financial professional. But, in any case, be prepared to look at your situation holistically because, when putting together a

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Understanding AuDHD: When Autism and ADHD Intersect

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Does your child struggle with both attention and impulse control as well as social or sensory challenges that feel more aligned with autism? If so, you're far from alone.

As a child psychologist, I see more and more children and teens who don't fit neatly into a single diagnostic category. They may have qualities of both Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Increasingly, professionals and parents are using the term AuDHD to capture this intersection.



DR. MIKE

Let's explore what AuDHD means, how

the diagnosis has evolved, and what steps you can take if your child is showing traits of both conditions.

What is AuDHD?

AuDHD refers to individuals who show significant traits of both autism and ADHD. A child with AuDHD might:

- Struggle to focus or control impulses
- Experience sensory sensitivities, such as difficulty with loud noises or bright lights
- Prefer rigid routines and find transitions stressful
- Have trouble understanding social communication or cues
- Develop intense interests or hyperfocus for long stretches

Imagine a child who is constantly moving, blurting out thoughts, and losing belongings—classic ADHD traits. Now add difficulty interpreting facial expressions, a deep need for routine, and heightened sensitivity to sensory input. This combination is AuDHD. It doesn't just mean having "two conditions." Instead, it reflects a unique

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

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Loudoun BOS approves Phase 2 of data center plan

BY SOPHIA CLIFTON

At their Sept. 16, business meeting, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted 8-0-1 to approve the Data Center Standards and Locations Phase 2 Project Plan, with Supervisor Kristen Umstattd (D-Leesburg) opposing the motion. The move launches the second phase of a multi-year effort to update how new data centers—and the substations and backup power that serve them—are evaluated and regulated in Loudoun.

“Phase two is anticipated to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026, with a final board action potentially occurring in December 2026. “However, I would like to emphasize that any delay in approving the project plan or the addition of any extra work session may push the timeline into 2027,” Project Manager Abdul Jaffari told the Board.

According to the county’s project description, Phase 2’s focus will be on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance that address emerging industry needs and site impacts. “For this project, we’re focusing on supporting staff and the board as they evaluate data center applications by addressing compatibility concerns

through the special exception process,” Jaffari told supervisors. Staff emphasized they will evaluate whether impacts “are best managed through policy, zoning regulations, or a case by case conditions of approval or a combination of these tools,” and will consider the industry’s evolving operational needs.

Phase 2 will look at land-use policy and zoning text updates including clearer definitions of substations, building and site design guidance, landscaping and buffering, parking and aesthetics, and operational matters like noise, lighting, on-site power generation and energy storage. “Most importantly, we want to make sure that any new rules do not place an unintended burden on existing data centers or limit opportunities for positive redevelopment and investment,” Jaffari said.

He clarified one important scoping point: “Phase 2 does not have a mapping component,” meaning the work will be focused on policy and ordinance text rather than drawing new map-based place-type boundaries.

Loudoun is a national hub for data centers, with a large cluster commonly called “Data Center Alley.” Rapid growth over

the last decade prompted Phase 1 changes earlier in 2025 that made data centers a conditional use in many industrial zoning districts—meaning projects would require a special-use permit rather than being allowed automatically. Phase 2 continues that trajectory, refining standards so new proposals are balanced against neighborhood and environmental concerns.

“The commission also recommended maintaining flexibility in both the scope of their resolution of intent to end the zoning ordinance and the development of related policies and regulation,” staff noted, summarizing Planning Commission input. TLUC, the county’s Transportation and Land Use Committee, had previously highlighted “aesthetics, visual impacts, and noise associated with data centers and substations.”

A focal point of the Board’s Sept. 16 discussion was Loudoun’s Transition Policy Area (TPA)—portion of the county intended to remain lower-intensity than heavy industrial zones—and an earlier economic development study that identified a large area south of Rt. 50 called “Dulles Cloud South.” Several supervisors argued

Phase 2 should make clear that data centers do not belong in the TPA.

“I do believe that the TPA was never meant ... to have data centers or have heavy industrial,” Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) said. Several board members pushed for the motion adopted on Sept. 16 to “add a policy to the Loudoun County 2019 General Plan clarifying that data centers’ uses should not encroach in the areas of the Transition Policy Area outside the transition light industrial and the transition industrial mineral extraction place types.”

Supervisor TeKrony (D-Little River) framed the vote as drawing “a hard line on the encroachment of data centers into the Transition Policy Area. It sends a message to the data center developers that there will be no exceptions at all.” She warned of the scale of what was once proposed for Dulles Cloud South: “It would have enabled 56 million square feet of data center space south of Route 50. Just so you know the magnitude of what was being proposed.”

Staff and some supervisors said calling out Dulles Cloud South by name in the Plan was unnecessary because the proposed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 »



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LOUDOUN BOS APPROVES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

policy language already excludes the TPA’s non-industrial place types.

“I don’t think it is necessary to call it out by name in any fashion, and I do think that the language and direction provided in the current motion also covers that in its language because that area is not in one of the two place types mentioned in the motion,” Supervisor Koran Saines (D-Sterling) responded during the meeting. Randall echoed that view: “I think that this covers that as far as I am concerned.”

Loudoun County attorney Leo Rogers clarified a practical implication: if the Board adopted the motion, “the board would have a justifiable basis for turning down that application” for data centers in Dulles Cloud South even before Phase 2 remains finalized—meaning the motion helps provide immediate enforcement footing against encroachment.

Board discussion also flagged several technical topics that staff will continue to study closely. Supervisors urged the noise analysis to be narrowly tailored to data centers rather than applied countywide: “I do think the noise study, the noise analysis that we’re doing should be data center focused only. Not for the entire county,” TeKrony said.

Vice Chair Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) suggested the county consider broader green-building standards in its draft language: “We only talk about lead, silver or gold as building certification. And I had wanted to include a supplemental standard now in the industry. It’s called the Green Building Initiative ... It’s a much more extensive environmental analysis of a facility that’s being built. And I would like to, if we can, include that as a possibility in the language, as we draft phase two, that can be one of the rating standards that we can apply,” Turner said.

Staff also noted that Phase 2 will review whether to regulate onsite power generation and battery energy storage systems, and the definition and visual impacts of electrical substations.

With Phase 2 now approved, staff will draft Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan text amendments, hold public outreach and informational sessions, and schedule Planning Commission and final Board hearings throughout 2026.

For Loudoun residents, Phase 2 aims to keep the county’s economic benefits from data center investment while adding clearer rules to protect neighborhoods, limit visual and noise impacts, and manage utility needs.

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First of fifteen village plans passes

BY KATIE NORTHCOTT

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to establish the St. Louis Village Plan.

The plan attempts to represent residents who have expressed concerns about development pressures on the Rural Historic Village. It seeks to address infrastructure concerns such as quality and quantity of drinking water and increased traffic while preserving the historic elements of the village.

The St. Louis Village Plan is the first of fifteen small village plans to receive approval. The Board initiated the CPAM in January 2022. At the time, the project plan predicted that the public hearing about the CPAM would take place in November or December 2023. The project finished about two years behind schedule.

“I do want to thank St. Louis and all those who participated for kind of being the guinea pig in this process,” said Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin). “Each village defines the area in many ways. The idea is to preserve the way of life, the area, the feel, the look, the historical aspects, etc., in Western Loudoun and these various areas.”

The plan implements five policies and proposes actions to implement the policies. These policies address drinking water issues, historical preservation, community gathering spaces, traffic complaints, and commercial activities.

“One of the big issues is that we feel like our public servants are not listening to us. We felt heard, this time. Thank you

for that,” St. Louis Village resident Jen Imhoff said.

Imhoff said St. Louis Village residents are supportive of the plan with a few caveats. They are waiting on promised zoning changes, do not want commercial developments, housing developments, or community water, and do want a passive park instead of a park with equipment for exercise or play.

“We don’t want this part of Loudoun County to look like Eastern Loudoun County which is fraught with data centers,” Imhoff said. “We want to preserve what traditional Loudoun County is, and right now, we don’t feel heard about that.”

A survey held by the St. Louis Village Plan Task Force found that about 29 residents supported commercial developments while about 26 did not.

Madeline Skinner, a member of the St. Louis Village Plan Task Force—a committee to collect community feedback about the plan—appeared before the Board to give feedback on her experience. She expressed concern that residents had been pushed out of the planning process too soon.

“After spending years as a part of this, it was unfortunate that task force members were not asked to continue to participate as the Design Cabinet took over and also not being included in the community meeting held on August 25,” Skinner said.

She asked if residents would be involved as the planning is implemented and asked that other small village plans be prioritized over other projects.

The CPAM passed 8-0-1. Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) was absent.

FINANCIAL FOCUS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

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

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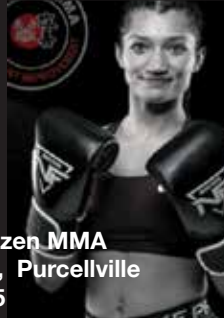
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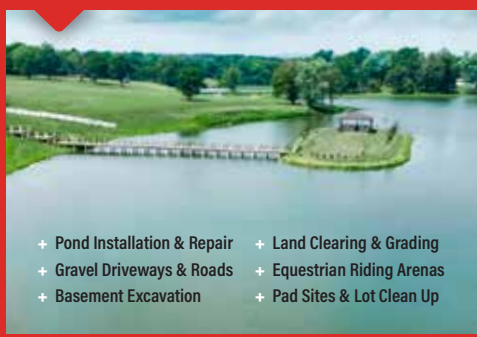
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ABERNETHY & SPENCER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

offering classic drinks and signature refreshments, and a native-planted walking trail for visitors to explore the grounds and connect with the landscape.

“Without the support of the community members who share our passion, we could’ve never brought this vision for Abernethy & Spencer to life,” said co-owner Jim Knowles. “With such a rich, strong foundation from the past 100 years, I want our nursery to be more than just a business. It will be a hub for everything horticulture, offering the best selection of plants anywhere in the Mid-Atlantic. We’re so grateful for all the encouragement we’ve had so far and I look forward to everything we can do together in the future.”

The ribbon cutting was attended by representatives from the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development, local business partners, and community leaders. Jim Knowles and co-owner Autumn Knowles and partners Hillary Pennington, Jacob Baker, and Matt Lamberski celebrated by cutting the ribbon.

The celebration continued all weekend and included live local music, a scavenger hunt, family-friendly entertainment, face painting, and a raffle featuring a luxury outdoor



patio set from Summer Classics, in partnership with local designer Kim Kendall Interiors.

The Grand Opening highlighted Abernethy & Spencer’s continued commitment to community and environmental stewardship. Over the past year, the garden center has supported local efforts including replanting flower beds at Lincoln Elementary School, sponsoring Loudoun Wildlife

Conservancy’s Walk for Wildlife, and contributing to school theater productions.

“We’ve fallen madly in love with gardening and it’s a relationship that we get to share with all the communities we call home,” said Autumn Knowles. “This care for and celebration of the wisdom of the earth, for the joys and wonders that plants have brought the world and its cultures, is something I’ll always pay forward by growing and sharing plants.”

“Every time you plant a tree or work in the garden, it’s like writing little love letters to the land and nature provides endless stories in return. We are dedicated to continuous hard work at Abernethy & Spencer so that this love story goes on for another 100 years and many more to follow,” she said.

Founded in 1925, Abernethy & Spencer has long been a destination for gardeners in Loudoun County and the greater Mid-Atlantic region. Today, it offers more than 700 varieties of perennials, 200 shrubs, and over 100 tree species, alongside a wide array of garden decor, fountains, statuary, and birdbaths. The addition of new gathering spaces and expanded greenhouses signals a new chapter rooted in tradition, community, and a shared love of the natural world.

For more information, contact Hillary Pennington at hillary@abernethyspencer.com or visit them on Instagram at [@abernethyspencer](https://www.instagram.com/abernethyspencer).

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Remembering Arlene Marie McGinnis

Arlene Marie (Becker) McGinnis died peacefully on September 14, 2025, at home and surrounded by family. Daughter of Charles and Helen Becker, Arlene was born on January 18, 1939 in Brooklyn, New York. Having split her childhood between Queens, NY and a dairy farm in the Pocono Mountain region of Pennsylvania, Arlene held a lifelong appreciation for the environs and operations of farming and all that the Big Apple had to offer.

She grew up sharing a passion for baseball with her grandfather and close family ties with her extended family. She was educated in both locations and finished her BA in Education at Molloy College in New York.

In 1961, Arlene married Daniel L. McGinnis of Honesdale, PA. They moved to Michigan where she got a job teaching while Dan finished his undergraduate degree. Following a year in Michigan and two in New Jersey, they settled in Trexlertown, PA for many years, and raised three daughters.

Dan's career took them to Rochester NY, West Chester, PA and Long Island, New York, where, in each place, Arlene recreated a home for the family. In 1994, Arlene and Dan moved to Round Hill, VA and established a beloved homestead farm where they hosted every



holiday and their grandchildren grew to love it as a second home.

While in Virginia, Arlene participated in the Leesburg Garden Club and Capital Speakers of DC, and was a foundation board member for Loudon Hospital for many years. Everyone who met her described Arlene as the life of the party: spirited and engaging; and a force of nature. She loved gardening, entertaining, excellence in all things, and being the heart of the family.

Following Dan's death in 2021, Arlene sold the farm and moved to Columbia, MD to be closer to her three daughters. She is survived by them: Colleen McGinnis (Rod Kornrumpf), Kelly Royston (Bo Royston), and Erin Meitzler (Rich Meitzler); her five grandchildren: Kaitlin Very, Connor and Taylor Royston, and Tristan and Jonathan Meitzler, and her great grandson, Graham Very Ruby.

Donations in Arlene's memory can be made to the V Foundation for Cancer Research, using this link: <https://vfoundation.donordrive.com/campaign/ArleneMcGinnis>.

A Celebration of her Life for family and friends was held at the Scot's Glenn Clubhouse 10700 McGregor Drive, Columbia MD on September 28, followed by a visitation with family and friends at Teeters Funeral home 505 Church St. Hawley, PA 18428 on September 29.

Funeral Mass at Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace & St. Veronica Church 314 Chestnut Ave, Hawley, PA was held on September 30, with a burial at St. Mary Magdalen Cemetery.

UNDERSTANDING AUDHD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

developmental profile where traits of ADHD and autism coexist and often magnify one another.

How Did This Diagnosis Emerge?

For decades, autism and ADHD were considered mutually exclusive. Clinicians were trained to diagnose one or the other, but not both. Autism, often seen as the "more severe" condition, would typically take precedence, with ADHD-like symptoms folded into that diagnosis.

Research, however, shifted our perspective. Studies revealed that 30–50% of autistic individuals also meet criteria for ADHD—and vice versa. The release of the DSM-5 changed clinical practice significantly by allowing dual diagnoses. This was a turning point, recognizing what many psychologists had long observed in their patients: ADHD-like behaviors in autistic children were not merely incidental. They represented a meaningful pattern of co-occurrence.

How Is AuDHD Treated?

Because AuDHD involves two complex neurodevelopmental conditions, treatments need to be tailored to each child. There is no single roadmap, but effective interventions often include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: To build coping skills, strengthen executive functioning, improve impulse control, and support social interactions.
- Educational Accommodations: Individualized Education Programs or 504 plans can address attention difficulties, sensory needs, and social development.
- Medication: Stimulants may help with ADHD symptoms, while other medications can support anxiety, mood, or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

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JUDGE SETS NEXT DATE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Following the hearing, former State Senator Dick Black, who was in attendance, spoke with reporters. He said that both Fraser and Nett are seeking access to the grand jury transcripts in order to better understand the nature of the charges against them.

When asked why he was interested in the case and whether he had any business or financial ties to Fraser, Black responded, "No, I don't have financial connections with anybody at this point in my life."

He was then asked if he had any active dealings with Fraser in Guyana. Black said, "No, I don't have any active dealings, no, not at all." Black explained that Fraser is a friend of his and they are both Republicans.

Black explained that Fraser was one of the mayors who served during his time in office. He said he represented a quarter of a million constituents, including the 10,000 residents of the Town of Purcellville. Black added that he became particularly aware of Purcellville after campaigning door to door and being struck by the strong opposition many residents had toward Fraser's predecessor (former Mayor Bob Lazaro).

Black said the backlash toward the former mayor (Lazaro) stemmed from a vote to significantly expand the town's sewage plant. He explained that sewage and water infrastructure are essential for high-density development—without them, such development isn't possible. The expansion, he said, was far beyond what the town could realistically use, and as a result, it left residents burdened with massive debt.

Black said the expansion was designed to pressure Purcellville residents into accepting high-density development. He argued that it saddled the Town with significant debt and exacerbated long-standing tensions over growth.

The Town of Purcellville has had "this huge growth-versus-anti-growth struggle that has consumed County politics for

many years," he said.

According to Black, many residents believed the expansion was a deliberate tactic—forcing voters to choose between high taxes or accepting annexation with dense development as a solution.

"So I operated under that realization all the time," he added.

Then Fraser was elected. He was, Black said, "very well qualified," with an MBA from Rutgers and time spent at Harvard. Fraser ran on a platform of keeping taxes low and, notably, "did not expand the boundaries." According to Black, during his eight years in office, Fraser never raised taxes and worked to pay down the town's debt.

"The politics of Purcellville will always be tumultuous because you've set in place this mechanism where you have people with land interest who are naturally going to favor expansion, and you know, the towns people who just want Mayberry—they want the small-town atmosphere."

Black said that when the Town did the evaluation of the Police Department the range of the cost was put at \$12,000 and it was posted publicly on the Town's bid board (in the Addendum 1).

Black said it was extraordinary to have a grand jury over a \$12,000 contract. "This is not about a \$12,000 contract. This is about hundreds of millions of dollars that stands to be made from high density development."

"I know how politics works, and there is a tendency for politicians to do things that favor the very wealthy, very powerful interests, and I think that influences what's happened here," Black said, "There is a potential to break the majority of the Town Council."

"Justice is my business," said Black continuing to explain to the press why he is interested in this case. "I was the chief of the criminal law division for the army of the Pentagon, and I was responsible for all Department of Defense capital punishment cases."

SERVICE OR SLEAZE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

centers are already using nearly a billion gallons of fresh water a year or that citizens' electricity bills will have to double in order to pay for the new power generation and transmission infrastructure the data centers demand.

It may be that these individuals would have taken a principled stand against stricter zoning standards even if they didn't have the prospect of personally profiting from the development. We can't know for sure.

But we should not be left to wonder. Loudoun has a long history of inviting the fox to guard the hen house. Even if our

foxes were the most honest and impartial guards in the world, that needs to change. Public service must prevail over even the appearance of sleaze.

John Ellis lives in the "Between the Hills" area north of Hillsboro. He is a member of the boards of Save Rural Loudoun and the Between the Hills Conservancy (a "friends organization of Sweet Run State Park). He is an avid Virginia Master Naturalist who participates in a range of related volunteer activities, including Purcellville's mini-forest project and Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's stream monitoring program.

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BECOMING CHARLIE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

deviations past the mean. Later I took the PSAT, SAT, LSAT and ATGSB (Business SAT) and was in the 99th percentile on all of them.

That's been a blessing and a curse.

In high school I developed atrocious study habits—I didn't study. Nevertheless, I won awards and scholarships. When I left for Washington & Lee my parents thought a Rhodes Scholarship was possible, and surely, I would win a Fulbright.

My first semester disabused them of those dreams, with two Cs, a D and a D-, and an F. That translates to a 1.125 GPA. Remember the movie *Animal House*? That was my collegiate life. Finally, in my senior year and then in graduate business school I began to use my blessings and actually

study. It worked, evinced by a string of 4.0s.

Work

As mentioned in the mini-bio at the end of my OP-EDs, I worked for a huge commercial developer in Atlanta. For years it was the second-largest office building developer in the country, and also a major player in regional malls and warehouses. I was initially tasked with leasing a new office park. My first deal was with Cessna Citation, a lease for 412 square feet. I soon moved into a development manager slot (think a quarterback who manages a team of engineers and contractors as well as our subordinate managers.) The company prospered and so did I, eventually a Senior vice-president running a development division.

I have an elevator speech to explain this:

"The tallest building I helped develop was 612 feet high, the largest was 1.2 million square feet. I ran a 23-building joint venture with AT&T and a five-building partnership with the Duke of Milan. How about UPS's world headquarters and a building for Duke University? Add consulting for Coca-Cola, Norfolk Southern and others."

That was big-time and I thought I was, too.

Reality

Until my late thirties I just used intelligence. I never realized that personality, emotions and relationships counted for more. Going through a divorce led me to therapy and brought a sea change in Charlie Houston. I finally was a good guy.

That change was a real boost to my career... and let me move to Virginia and

its horse world. With bonuses and partnership interests, I retired young. After a failed marriage I met my wife Emily and life has been great for more than two decades.

Today

We have many trappings of success, which I won't list. They've come at an economic cost, though. I think I'm still a work in progress with a long way to go. My immediate goal is to depend less on mental acuity and let my life experiences give me a measure of wisdom. Some might disagree.

Charlie Houston and his wife live on a historic horse farm near Waterford. When a big cluster subdivision was planned nearby, he was energized to fight it. (He lost.) That led to his becoming a staunch conservationist.

PURCELLVILLE BUSINESS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

will come up and say 'Hey, I like that, I'd like to do the same thing or something on the same nature.'

Developer Casey Chapman who manages the former Vineyard Square project and envisions 36 apartments on 21st Street, said he was supportive of whatever the property owner wants to do.

Mayor Chris Bertaut said, "This is a

wonderful plan for downtown, however the application you have before you tonight is not coming to the right venue. This request does not meet the legal standards for a variance."

He explained that a variance is only appropriate when the strict application of the zoning ordinance would cause an unreasonable restriction due to the size or physical condition of the property—not because of economic concerns or a

preference for a particular use.

"This is an economic argument, not a physical hardship. It does not address other potential uses for upper stories like office space.

"A variance is not a tool to change land use policy or circumvent zoning rules. The proper step is a zoning amendment, not a variance," said Bertaut.

Board of Zoning Appeals Chair Eric Zimmerman said, "I am not sure if a

variance is the right venue for what they [Nichols] want"—or the appropriate remedy.

"This is the wrong venue. They can put two units in there. It might not generate the amount of cash they want—but they can put two units in there—so where is the denial?

This should be more of a rezoning effort. I know there are a lot of reasons

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »



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Bluegrass Concert: Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen

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Multi-Grammy nominated Frank Solivan and Dirty Kitchen is a torrent of mind-blowing bluegrass. Known for their meaty pile-driving rhythms and Frank's dynamic and bold vocals, the band's last two albums have both received a Grammy nomination for Best Bluegrass Album.

Frank Solivan and Dirty Kitchen's respect and deep understanding of the bluegrass tradition collides, live on stage, with rock-tinged fiery virtuosity that pushes the boundaries of the genre.

A Gold Star Event sponsored by the Friends of Franklin Park Arts Center; refreshments at intermission are included in ticket price. Reserved seating.



Music for Dessert Concert Series Select Wednesdays at 7:00pm \$15 per performance

This live music series provides an intimate concert with engaging musicians in a variety of genres that you can enjoy in-person or virtually in an intimate listening room setting. Concerts are 45-60 minutes without an intermission. No refreshments are served — let the music be your dessert!

- 10/8 Maddie Ettrich, indie-pop artist
- 10/29 Sweet Something, piano & vocal jazz duo
- 11/5 Corwin Roncace, Native American flute
- 11/12 Justin Lees, jazz guitar

The Spin-Outs present: Elvis! A Live Rockumentary Fri., October 10 at 7:00pm \$25

Elvis: A Live Rockumentary is a production that spans Elvis' life and music from the 1950s, TV appearances, the '68 Comeback Special, and the Vegas years. The Fan, played by Vicki Gontz, takes you back to Elvis' very first record as the live music begins. Elvis, played by award winning tribute artist, Austin Irby, sings Elvis' hits and fan favorites to live music by the internationally renowned tribute band, The Spin-Outs.

PURCELLVILLE BUSINESS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

why getting a rezoning could be difficult, not the least of which is an allegation of spot zoning.”

Zimmerman was referring to the R-15 District, which allows for more apartments, unlike the C-4 District

where the buildings are located. In this case, the Hardware Store would have to cease operation, and the property would need to be rezoned for use as an apartment building.

Nichols postponed the application to a possible further date.

UNDERSTANDING AUDHD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

behavioral regulation. Child psychiatrists often proceed with caution for children with AuDHD, as responses can vary widely.

- Occupational Therapy: To support sensory regulation, daily living skills, and motor coordination.
- Parent and Family Guidance: To equip parents with strategies for handling transitions, meltdowns, and challenging behaviors while strengthening family connection.

The key is individualization. Some children may need focused support for peer relationships, while others benefit most from strategies that target executive functioning. The treatment plan should always reflect the child’s strengths as well as their challenges.

Advice for Parents

If your child shows signs that cross both ADHD and autism—difficulty with

transitions, hyperactivity, sensory sensitivities, social struggles, or intense interests—advocate for a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation. A strong assessment often involves multiple specialists, including a neuropsychologist, pediatrician, psychiatrist, speech therapist, and occupational therapist.

Remember, a diagnosis is not about labeling your child—it is about unlocking the right supports so they can thrive at school, at home, and in relationships.

It’s also important to remind yourself: your child is not broken. They are complex, capable, and uniquely themselves. With the right understanding and tools, children and teens with AuDHD can grow into adults who flourish in their own authentic ways.

Michael Oberschneider Psy.D. 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.

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OPINION: THE HIDDEN DIVIDE, CON'T. FROM PAGE 9

education for all Virginians. But when you look closer, it's clear: not all Virginians are included. Her policies are tailored to serve select marginalized groups—undocumented individuals, identity-based coalitions, and those already embedded in government programs. Meanwhile, the broad middle of Virginia—the legal residents, working families, small business owners, and taxpayers who fund these services—are left out.

These are the people who show up to work, pay their taxes, raise their children, and try to participate in civic life without making headlines. They're not asking for special treatment—they're asking for fairness. Yet Spanberger's platform rarely speaks to them. She has not prioritized parental rights, law enforcement cooperation, tax relief, or individual liberty. She has remained silent on everyday kitchen-table issues that affect the majority of Virginians—like boys competing in girls' sports, biological males in female locker rooms, and the erosion of parental authority in public schools.

Her voting record and endorsements show alignment with policies that suppress dissent and punish families who disagree with progressive orthodoxy—for example, her opposition to the federal Parents' Bill of Rights, her support for all 73 Biden-backed bills including those limiting local control over education, and endorsements from national progressive organizations such as REPRO Rising Virginia PAC, EMILY's List, and End Citizens United—all of which advocate for identity-based mandates, expanded federal oversight, and diminished parental authority in favor of institutional control.

And the permission structure she reinforces has real consequences. It tells parents to stay quiet. It tells students that fairness is conditional. It tells communities that only certain kinds of people are valued—not all people. It governs not just policy—but tone, access, and belonging. It decides who gets to speak, who gets protected, and who gets pushed aside.

Winsome Earle-Sears's priorities reflect a conservative permission structure. Her platform emphasizes parental rights, fiscal restraint, and equal opportunity rooted in individual merit. She prioritizes law enforcement cooperation, energy affordability, and tax relief for working families—especially through her "Axe the Tax" plan targeting burdensome fees on tips and vehicles. These positions reflect a worldview that values personal responsibility, limited government, and respect for all citizens regardless of identity. She believes public resources should serve those who fund them, and that success should be earned—not assigned.

That said, Winsome's platform does not offer expansive new programs in healthcare or housing, but it reflects a consistent belief in market-based solutions. She supports deregulating the healthcare system to lower costs, expanding health savings accounts, and streamlining zoning to encourage housing development. To address looming Medicaid shortfalls, she's proposed tapping Virginia's \$4.7 billion rainy day fund as a temporary safeguard—ensuring coverage while exploring more permanent reforms. This approach prioritizes empowerment over bureaucracy and aims to reduce barriers for working families.

These gaps don't signal neglect—they reflect a deliberate choice to lead with principle rather than identity. Winsome Earle-Sears prioritizes fairness in process over favoritism in policy, trusting that when the rules of engagement are clear, respectful, and consistent, real solutions can follow. Economic tradeoffs are inevitable, but cultural clarity lays the foundation for honest governance. When speech is protected, when parents are heard, and when respect is extended to all—not just the favored few—policy gains the integrity to serve everyone.

Neither candidate offers a complete answer to every challenge facing Virginia. But elections are not about perfection—they're about choosing the framework that best serves the people in this moment and in the future. The permission structure we endorse will shape not just policy, but culture. It will determine how freely we speak at school board meetings, how fairly we're treated in public institutions, how confidently we raise our children in shared spaces, and how secure we feel expressing our values without fear of reprisal. It reaches into our homes, our classrooms, our courtrooms, and our conversations. It decides who gets to belong—and who gets pushed out.

That's why I'm voting for Winsome Earle-Sears. Not because I agree with every policy detail, and not because she's covered every issue. I'm voting for her because the permission structure she represents is the one I believe in. It's a structure where parents—not bureaucracies—guide their children's values. Where disagreement is allowed without punishment. Where violence is never excused in the name of justice. Where taxes serve the people who pay them. And where respect is extended to all Virginians—not just a select few. Because when the permission structure is right, everything else has a chance to follow.

Kathie Belrose-Ramey is a small business owner and former molecular biologist. She has lived and worked across Virginia, bringing both scientific insight and community-minded leadership to every chapter of her life.

JUST LIKE NOTHING (ELSE), CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

‘maternity ward’ section of the farm.

Now, the older, all-white billy-goat who tried to climb through the fence and gain access to—not me—his morning rations, of what looked and smelled like ground corn, probably took the showmanship prize of the morning’s creature cuteness contest. This wasn’t his first rodeo, you can be sure.

Adjacent to this memorable barnyard veteran was a magnificent (and massive!) dun-brown draft horse—in a pasture as expansive as its resident. I’m not sure of

the breed—possibly a Belgian, a Percheron or a mixture of some type—standing up close, very personal and all ready for his (or her) close-up.

By the time I’d reached the open fields housing the adult cattle, some with partially-grown calves, I discovered my camera had been working overtime, and I’d come to the end of my digital data allotment. This doesn’t happen very often.

From this point, it was pure enjoyment, as I could do little but savor the moments, as I pivoted, surveyed the expanses I hadn’t

even covered, made a promise to return at the first opportunity, and slowly, (and, yes, at least a bit regretfully) made my way back to my new transportation unit for the ride home and the rest of my day.

I was truly overwhelmed, in the very best sense of the word. After losing my two beloved companion dogs over the previous 18 months or so, I had just experienced more eye contact than I’d enjoyed in what seemed like lifetimes.

Now, I like delivering mail and the morning repartee with my fellow employees,

but it’s not exactly emotional or spiritual therapy—especially for one who—for years and years—lived as pretty much a real-life starving artist. A dear friend once told me, “You can have everything in life—just not all at once.”

Yup. And, yes, I realize that my term, “baby calves,” and probably a few other abuses of the English language in the above descriptions represent redundancies. To me, they are, and will always remain, baby calves and other such lovable little guys.

OPINION: SPANBERGER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

lies told by MAGA/Trump (according to anyone paying attention) to distract from the truth about Epstein, about vaccines, about climate change, about antisemitism on campuses, etc.

- Don’t make it more difficult for me and my family to obtain vaccines.

Speaking of vaccines, I recently had my annual Medicare physical and, despite RFK Jr’s insisting during his Senate testimony that no one needed a prescription to get a COVID vaccine, my doctor assured me that I needed a prescription to get a COVID vaccine. That was Sept. 9. On Sept. 10, the Virginia Department of Health finally got around to approving the vaccine without a prescription for those of us over 65.

Meanwhile, access to the COVID vaccine for young children is still adrift in uncertainty, arising from RFK Jr’s vaccine dictates.

Then, late last week, RFK Jr’s vaccine panel voted to “not recommend” that anyone get the vaccine, which observers on both sides of the issue agree is likely to cause further confusion. The Associated Press reported over the weekend that, as a result of the “not recommend” vote, it was now uncertain if all insurance companies would cover the vaccine.

This approach to policy making threatens public wellbeing. Given another few years of this healthcare turmoil under an Earle-Sears’ administration playing lapdog to Trump, we can anticipate innocent people dying. It’s not that every vaccine should be mandatory; it’s that any vaccine deemed sound enough to be made available should be accessible without irrationally secret and complicated procedures.

The stumbling indecision and bad decisions being made in service to MAGA won’t be in play during a Spanberger administration. As a former law enforcement officer, a CIA officer and member of Congress noted for her ability to work with those from opposing parties, Spanberger can bring sanity to this process.

Earle-Sears, on the other hand, has made it abundantly clear that she intends to govern in the mold of Youngkin and Trump.

In fact, Earle-Sears’ campaign is relying on the same old rabbit-in-the-hat trick that Youngkin used to bamboozle concerned citizens into voting for him four years ago.

Earle-Sears on her website and in her advertising is laser focused on which bathrooms our public-school students are using, what gender they identify with and denigrating trans youngsters. Youngkin danced

to the same tune four years ago and guess what: Nothing Has Changed. Why? Because local school boards make those policies, not the governor’s office. So, do you really think that she is going to be able to wave a magic wand and, presto change-o, bring about new policies that four years of Youngkin could not?

Earle-Sears is also promoting plans to slash spending on public education by a third, while Spanberger is proposing to improve public education, by “investing in our schools” by paying teachers a living wage and “ensuring that our kids have strong school building surrounding them.”

Conservative estimates place the number of federal jobs lost in the DOGE purges of 2025 at 7,800 in Virginia. And the Big Beautiful Bill has stripped about \$26 billion in Medicaid from the state, leaving roughly 350,000 Virginians without healthcare and at least six rural hospitals expected to close.

“That’s an impact you cannot just make up,” says Spanberger, whose website presents innovative changes to lower the cost of pharmaceuticals, improve low-cost access to medical treatment, and make housing and energy more affordable.

Spanberger’s proposals can be found in a professionally vetted, detailed blueprint

[<https://abigailspanberger.com/issue/abigail-affordable-virginia-plan/>] designed to ameliorate the damage done by Trump, and Republicans in Congress.

And, with the 2026 mid-term elections little more than a year away, it is vitally important that we protect Virginians’ right to free and fair elections.

Trump and his enablers have made it abundantly clear that they are looking for ways to disenfranchise Democratic voters. Youngkin’s appointees to the Loudoun County Board of Election, have already eliminated Sunday voting, which many voters, particularly Democrats who find it difficult to get to the polls during the work week relied upon.

And, deeply troubling, Trump has recently called for eliminating mail-in ballots, early voting and drop-off ballot boxes.

For all of these reasons it is imperative that voters turn out on November 4 for Spanberger.

Michael Zuckerman is an author and freelance writer, retired investigative journalist, a former Washington Editor at USA Today and adjunct Professor of Journalism at GWU.

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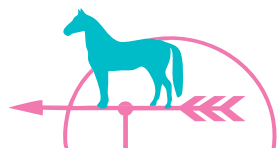
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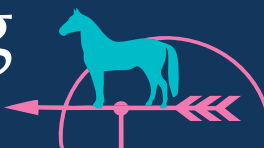
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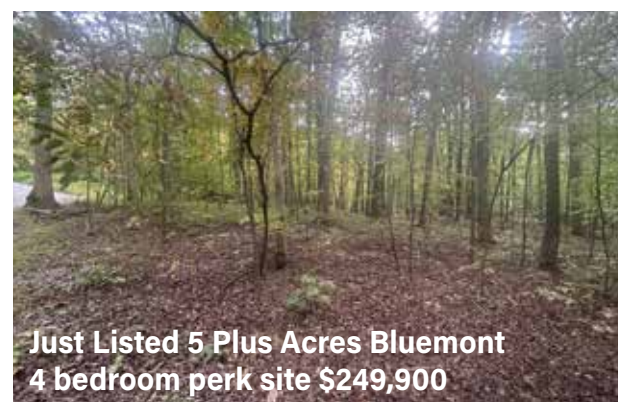


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