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Kaine's Two Loudoun Visits Highlight Public Service

BY VALERIE CURY

GOVERNMENT

Two days, two very different destinations and a common thread—the enduring importance of public service.

On Wednesday, Oct. 21, U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) visited Dodona Manor in Leesburg, the former home of Gen. George C. Marshall, to celebrate its new affiliation with the National Park Service and explore how that recognition could strengthen its preservation and educational mission.

The following day, Kaine toured Loudoun County's new $21 million Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Center, designed to provide immediate mental health and substance-use crisis care while easing the burden on hospital emergency rooms and law enforcement.

One visit looked back at a remarkable American life. The other looked ahead to a different way of caring for people in crisis.

At Dodona Manor, Kaine and U.S. Rep. Suhas Subramanyam (VA-10) joined leaders of the George C. Marshall International Center for a tour of the historic home and discussions about its future.

The National Park Service affiliation follows years of work by Virginia's congressional delegation, beginning with efforts launched in 2019 by former Rep. Jennifer Wexton, Kaine and Sen. Mark Warner.

Subramanyam described the persistence required to secure the designation, recalling how he approached a House committee chairman directly and continued pressing for action on the legislation.

Although the designation has been secured, its practical benefits are still being explored.

"I don't think I've worked on helping somebody become a National Park Service affiliate," Kaine said. "So, like, exactly what does that mean? What does that give the Marshall House that it didn't have already?"

Executive Director Valerie Beaudoin explained that the affiliation could provide access to National Park Service expertise in education, preservation and conservation, along with greater visibility through its website and promotional materials.

The designation could also introduce Dodona Manor to a much wider audience. Inclusion in National Park Service maps, publications and online resources may encourage visitors who might otherwise overlook the Leesburg landmark to discover the home of one of America's most influential military

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

A 250-Year-Old Cabin, a New Fire Station and One Woman's Fight to Save Her Home

BY VALERIE CURY

For nearly 250 years, a small log cabin known as Bowman Tavern, dating to approximately 1789, along Snickersville Turnpike in Philomont has stood through storms, changing seasons and generations of Loudoun County history including the Civil War.

For the past 17 years, it has been Fallon's home.

She has cared for it, repaired it and poured her heart into the property, creating a peaceful retreat where deer and foxes wander through a wildlife corridor she established.

She never imagined that one day she might have to leave it.

Just across narrow Snickersville Turnpike, Loudoun County is building a new fire station, with a retention pond approximately 50 feet from Fallon's historic cabin. Since heavy excavation and months of jackhammering began this summer, Fallon says the ground around her home has begun to sink, water has risen through her basement floor, and the home she has spent nearly two decades preserving may be in danger.

For 17 years, she says, she never experienced flooding in her basement.

She didn't even have a sump pump. She had never needed one.

Then, following approximately 3½ inches of rain Oct. 11 and 12, she discovered 18 inches of water beneath her home.

The water surrounded the furnace, water storage tank, hot water heater and a newly installed water treatment system. Construction workers from across the road came to help pump it out.

But even as the water level dropped, more water continued bubbling up through three locations in her basement floor.

For Fallon, the timing was impossible to ignore.

Only months earlier, heavy equipment had begun excavating bedrock approximately 50 feet from her property for the new fire station's stormwater management system. In September, she had noticed the ground sinking beneath her feet as she walked through her front yard.

Now water was emerging from beneath the home itself.

Fallon believes the excavation altered the underground movement of water and directed it toward her property. For Fallon, the connection is unmistakable: After 17 years without flooding or any water in her basement, the excavation began across the street,

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Sweet Dreams, Roses. See You in the Spring!

BY VALERIE CURY

The days are growing shorter, the air is turning crisp, and somewhere in gardens across Loudoun County, roses are getting ready for a long winter's nap.

But before we tuck those beauties into bed, there's a little housekeeping to do. After all, nobody wants to wake up in April to discover that their beloved roses didn't survive the winter.

Who better to explain the proper bedtime routine than someone who has spent years helping roses flourish?

Pam Powers, president of the Arlington Rose Foundation and a nationally recognized rose expert, brought her knowledge, humor and infectious enthusiasm to Abernethy & Spencer Greenhouse and Garden Center in Purcellville on Oct. 11.

Her workshop, appropriately titled "Putting Roses to Bed," was part gardening lesson, part storytelling and a delightful reminder that a little love in autumn can bring glorious rewards come spring.

Powers has a wonderfully practical way of looking at winter rose care. She calls it insurance.

We insure our homes, our cars and our valuables, she explained. Why wouldn't we protect the beautiful rose bushes we've spent months, sometimes years, nurturing?

And winter, even in Northern Virginia, can be unpredictable.

Powers recalled a fellow rose grower who decided winter protection wasn't necessary after several mild winters. Then came the bitter cold. The gardener lost roughly a third of her roses.

Powers lost none. Her secret? A little preparation, some mulch and knowing when to leave well enough alone.

First, stop feeding the roses.

As the days grow shorter, roses need to understand that bedtime is approaching. Fertilizing too late encourages new growth when the plant should be preparing for dormancy.

In Northern Virginia, Powers recommends stopping granular fertilizer around Labor Day and liquid fertilizer by late September.

Those faded blooms? It's time to stop deadheading, too. Some varieties will reward gardeners with colorful rose hips, little red and orange treasures that brighten the winter garden and provide food for birds.

Next comes a little housekeeping.

Remove fallen leaves and garden debris that could harbor diseases and pests over winter. Check the soil, too. Powers explained that roses prefer a soil pH between 6.25 and 7, with about 6.5 being ideal.

Then comes pruning, but not the dramatic spring haircut.

Around Thanksgiving, Powers recommends a light cosmetic trim for most modern roses, particularly long, unruly canes that could snap under heavy snow or ice. Once-blooming old garden roses and ramblers are exceptions because pruning them at the wrong time can sacrifice next year's flowers.

The serious pruning can wait until March.

And finally, the winter blanket.

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What does financial fulfillment feel like?

SUBMITTED BY JOSHUA WOLINSKI, EDWARD JONES FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Feeling financially fulfilled means so much more than just the number in your bank account. It's about being able to take your family out to dinner without calculating whether you can afford it. It means sleeping soundly on a Sunday night, knowing that if the water heater gives out tomorrow, you can handle it. And it's saying yes to a vacation because you planned ahead and the money is there.



JOSHUA WOLINSKI

In short, financial fulfillment is the feeling that your money is supporting the life you want.

Yet true fulfillment is surprisingly rare. Only 16% of Americans are financially fulfilled, according to a 2026 study by Edward Jones and Gallup, "Money and Meaning: Understanding Financial Fulfillment." Those at the other end of the spectrum, the financially stressed (32%), often say that money regularly controls their daily decisions. Most Americans (51%), however, fall in the middle—the financially conflicted. They manage to get by but often carry a persistent undercurrent of worry.

Notably, where you land on this spectrum has less to do with your income than you might expect. More than half of households earning $175,000 or more are still financially conflicted.

Building the foundation

So, the question becomes, "What do financially fulfilled people do differently?" Simply put, they tend to have foundational planning structures in place. Five behaviors show up consistently among the financially fulfilled, and they're simple steps you can take, too.

- **Build an emergency fund** (98% of fulfilled have this). Aim for saving three to six months of living expenses in a liquid, easily accessible account. When you know you can handle the unexpected, you stop bracing for it, and lower stress gives you a higher

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When Love Becomes Pressure: Helping Immigrant Families Raise Thriving Children

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

As a child psychologist, I frequently work with first-generation parents who have made extraordinary sacrifices. They arrived in the United States from all corners of the world seeking safety, opportunity, and a better life. Many left behind established careers, extended families, and cultural familiarity. They navigated language barriers, worked grueling hours, and built a foundation for their children to excel.



DR. MIKE

This history matters deeply, yet it can also create a painful psychological divide between generations.

For many immigrant parents, a child's academic success is not merely about grades; it is a metric of security and a validation of family sacrifice. A report card carries the silent, heavy weight of years of struggle: *"We gave up everything for you. Do not waste this opportunity."*

Children, however, often translate this devotion into a distressing core belief: *"I am only worthy of love if I achieve."*

Two Different Lived Experiences

First-generation parents often grew up in environments where resources were scarce, competition was fierce, and failure carried severe consequences. From their perspective, pushing a child toward high-status, stable careers is an act of profound love and protection.

But children raised in the West grow up immersed in an individualistic culture. They value autonomy, creative expression, social connection, and unstructured time. Where parents see family duty and collective honor, children see personal choice and self-actualization.

Neither perspective is wrong, but conflict arises when there is no room for both.

When a teenager wants to pursue athletics, arts, or simply spend an afternoon with friends hanging out, a worried parent may view these activities as dangerous distractions. The resulting household dynamic is a classic cycle of anxiety: the child pulls away to seek autonomy, the parent increases control to manage their own fear, and emotional distance grows.

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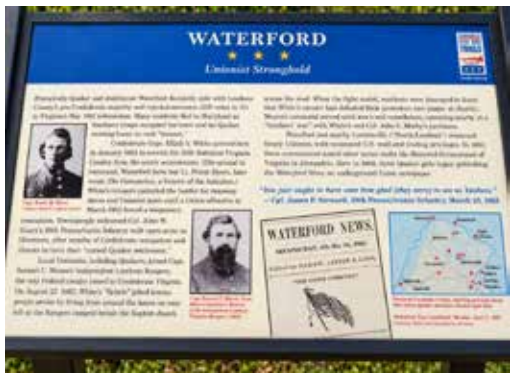
Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Waterford Baptist Church

BY TIM JON

Before we even get started, I submit a humble request to forgive my factual inaccuracies, rambling tangents and sketchy memory. You see, I set down the first mental notes for this tale more than a quarter century ago. Thank you: so, now, with a grateful heart on my end, we can proceed with our (see how we worked you into this already?) personal brush with the sole Union force in the American Civil War (organized and operated in Loudoun County, Virginia).



TIM JON



It seemed like fate. You see, my decades-long love for live dramatics brought me to a local community theater tryout—all those years ago—in the tiny, historic Village of Waterford.

Now, you have to understand—the building section containing the proscenium stage at the old Second Street School is now gone—lost to a fire in the intervening years (chronicled in my first story of Waterford earlier in this series)—but those events (now almost 30 years gone, yet not gone) live on inside at least some of us, and I fondly recall embodying the character of Union Army Lieutenant Luther Slater, and experiencing the friends and enemies, times and troubles of Northern Virginia in the latter half of the Year 1862—as well as the inimitable personalities among the creative group assembled for the modern-day project.

Now, here's where the lines of historical accuracy and memories from the heart start getting a bit blurry. My recollections tell me that the Loudoun Rangers suffered

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The Boomerang Hour: Why Kids and Cows Should Care

BY RIA NARAYAN



RIA NARAYAN



In a world where rabbits are always late, Mad Hatters are stuck at teatime, and clocks can't seem to make up their minds …

Starring: One kid. Two parents. Three very different times.

Coming this November to a household near you … IT'S THE BOOMERANG HOUR!

Rated G for General Confusion.

Welcome to Ria in Wonderland, where my mom morphs into the Mad Hatter, my dad plays Father Time, and I play … well, moi! All I'm trying to do is figure out WHAT TIME IT ACTUALLY IS!

You see, my mom believes clocks should always be set ten minutes ahead and refuses to move a muscle when it's time to spring forward or fall back. Meanwhile, Father Time believes clocks should actually tell the correct time. His North Star? The stove clock, which the Mad Hatter somehow forgets to change every year.

Every year on the first Sunday of November it's showtime. November 1, 2026, our opening scene starts exactly at 2 a.m. and the clocks across the U.S. fall back one hour. That means that the hour between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. happens twice! Déjà vu on purpose? Yup. You're not losing your mind but the clocks are pretty sus at this point.

And just when we finally, get used to the new time, March 14, 2027, rolls around and we spring forward again!

Okay, so let's go behind the scenes and find out what does falling back look like in my world? Let's say I normally wake up at 6 a.m. Guess what? After falling back, my body might decide it's hey kid time to wake up at 5 a.m.! I'm sure most parents wouldn't find

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Who Cares?

BY CHARLIE HOUSTON

Some issues spark countywide public outrage: Data centers and transmission lines are two of the rawest issues today. Other things trigger outrage among a smaller cohort of citizens. Two of these are the obscene proposal for a $200+ million Western Loudoun Recreation Center, and the plan for turning the George Washington University campus on Route 7 into a data center site.

OPINION

There are many—too many—problematic proposals that trigger intense anger, but for a smaller group of people. Examples include the R & D Baseball Academy, Chuck Kuhn's scheme to ignore his own conservation easement and build an event center off Paxson Road, and Kuhn's (again) sale of the Middleburg Training Track to the US Army for its ceremonial horses.

Then there are problems that incite just a handful of people: Slack zoning enforcement in general, a fancy restaurant on a too-small site, plans for various breweries that would abut residences, and wedding venues that violate covenants against commercial activities.

I could go on.

Eastern Loudoun

For the most part, this is *terra incognita*—unknown territory—for me. I know enough about that part of the county to be aware of the George Washington contretemps and the widespread fury over data centers. There may be local issues in Eastern Loudoun about which I know zilch.

There may not be many such local issues there, according to someone I know. She speculates that many in the east have moved there for Loudoun's schools, and when little Dick and Jane graduate, the parents will decamp Loudoun for their old hometowns.

As a result, for them Loudoun is just a short-term waystation, not really a home. If my friend is right, these people probably don't care about land use issues, except maybe a data center or transmission line at

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The Chickens Have Come Home to Roost: An Open Letter to the Virginia State Senate

Members of the Virginia State Senate:

When you establish a standard for another person, you should be prepared to face it yourselves.

Senator Louise Lucas has now been indicted. She is entitled to defend herself, challenge the government's evidence, and insist that an accusation is not a conviction. I defend those rights for her without hesitation.

OPINION

But I ask this chamber: Where was that conviction when you advanced SB 648 against me and Purcellville?

The chickens have come home to roost. The consequence now confronting you is the demand that you explain your own standard.

Senator Russet Perry sponsored legislation whose suspension provision applied to officers of towns in Planning District 8 with populations between 8,000 and 10,000—a description that singled out Purcellville. The Virginia Association of Counties itself described those provisions as applying only to our town. Geographic language did not make the target disappear. It supplied the address.

I was under indictment, awaiting trial, and already on administrative leave. No jury had heard my defense. No verdict had established my guilt.

Yet Richmond intervened.

The Senate accepted the Governor's recommended amendments by a vote of 21 to 18, and Governor Abigail Spanberger approved the legislation on April 22, 2026. Legislative power was brought to bear on a small town while the criminal proceedings remained unresolved.

After that intervention, Purcellville stripped me of access to my salary. My family experienced the consequences before I

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The American Struggle(s)

BY KEN FALKE

America's greatest problem isn't just debt, politics, or division. It's our mindset. We forget too quickly, demand too much too fast, and convince ourselves that real crises won't touch us. These aren't harmless cultural quirks. They are dangerous weaknesses. Weaknesses that threaten our economy, our democracy, and our national security.

OPINION

Short Memories

Americans have a habit of moving on too quickly. Wars, recessions, natural disasters: we react, we rage, and then we forget. By the time real reform becomes possible, the public has already shifted to the next headline.

The 2008 financial crash is a perfect example. Reckless gambling on Wall Street and weak regulation nearly collapsed the global economy. Politicians promised sweeping reform. Regulators vowed vigilance. Yet within a few years, risky behavior crept back into the markets. Outrage faded. Reform stalled. And the cycle quietly restarted.

This isn't simple ignorance. It's willful amnesia. A nation addicted to the 24-hour news cycle and fueled by social media outrage lacks the stamina for problems that require patience, focus, and follow-through. We respond to the explosion but lose interest in the rebuild.

Impatience

That amnesia feeds another dangerous trait: impatience. We have become a culture of instant gratification. Food, entertainment, information and even outrage is available on demand.

But the hardest national challenges cannot be solved overnight. National debt, Social Security, healthcare, immigration, infrastructure, and defense require long-term planning, sacrifice, and discipline.

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Purcellville's Water and Sewer Systems are Not Falling Apart

BY SUSAN KHALIL

Purcellville's water and sewer systems face the same challenge confronting many established communities—aging infrastructure must be maintained and replaced while the town plans for future demand.

But aging infrastructure is not the same thing as a system on the verge of failure.

OPINION

A comprehensive water study prepared by Jacobs Engineering identified improvements to strengthen water quality, reliability and supply, including replacement of older water mains and additional finished-water storage.

Some of Purcellville's oldest mains are cast iron, making them increasingly susceptible to corrosion and breaks.

The town is prioritizing older lines for replacement through its multi-year Capital Improvement Program.

One of the most visible improvements is the new 500,000-gallon elevated water tank at Fields Farm. It increases storage and reserve capacity. The project also includes approximately 2,700 linear feet of new 12-inch water main.

The first phase of the WTP-to-Town Water Main Replacement project calls for approximately 5,000 linear feet of new 12-inch ductile-iron water main. Together, the projects represent nearly a mile and a half of new 12-inch water main and the new 500,000-gallon storage tank.

The town's FY27 budget identifies substantial long-term water and wastewater capital needs.

The Council also approved General Fund revenue, largely generated through the

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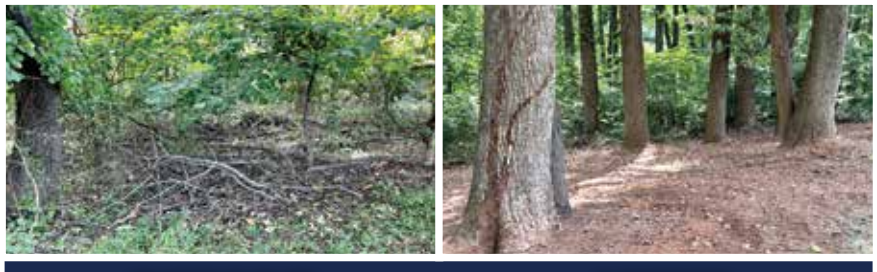
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I Continue My Support for Subramanyam

LETTER

Dear Editor:

In my two previous op-eds, I voiced my support for Suhas Subramanyam to represent our District 10 in Congress. I watched the two candidates debate at the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce on September 22 and studied each of their websites.

We have a track record with Suhas, which I think is an important indicator of how he represents our district, and in that regard he has a strong record of good policy.

He sponsored several bills with direct impact on our communities. Two examples: 1) The Data Center Fair Share Act to establish regulatory standards for public utilities to recover the full incremental costs of supplying energy to large load customers; i.e. data centers, so that the rest of us don't foot the bill. 2) The Data Center Siting Act to establish best practices for siting these monster facilities. His prior record in the Virginia Assembly was similarly focused on our community. This focus should be key for all of us.

Moreover, he's been a hard-working Congressman in his short time there with 49 bills sponsored, several of which were inspired by constituent requests (he listens), and 405 bills that he co-sponsored.

In all honesty, I didn't find much to disagree with on Dave Beckwith's website, because it's also focused on our community, but here we have no track record on whether he can be an effective legislator, and as a Republican, I am concerned that he would fall in line with the party in supporting Donald Trump's agenda, wherever that may lead, and that is where my concern lies.

Representative Subramanyan has taken clear positions against Trump's policy errors, such as the Iran war; excesses such as ICE overreach; and the willy-nilly tariff policies which resulted in higher inflation for all of us consumers.

In the debate, I thought Suhas took an objective look at Trump's One Big Beautiful / Ugly Bill (as you prefer) praising no tax on tips and lowering taxes on small business and families, while criticizing huge cuts to food assistance and Medicaid.

Dave Beckwith spoke about putting more money back in people's pockets and his website speaks of the spiraling national debt, but I heard no pushback on the costs of the Iran War's $45B in military spending and an additional $220B impact to US households (per Moody's Analytics)—a combined almost $2,000 per US household.

As a career Air Force Colonel, Beckwith should also be concerned about the depletion of our weapons stockpile—silence on that issue as well.

I continue in my support for Suhas Subramanyam.

Oscar N. (Mac) McNeil, Jr.
Waterford



Perry's Election-Season Financial Warning Omits Key Facts

BY VALERIE CURY

GOVERNMENT

Just 24 days before Purcellville's Nov. 3 election, State Sen. Russet Perry (D-31) warned constituents about the Town's finances while promoting legislation she said would finally provide an independent financial accounting and a plan to address its challenges.

But her Oct. 10 newsletter omitted significant findings from the Town's financial record, including increasing reserves, declining debt, established repayment schedules and years of independent financial oversight.

Perry highlighted SB 648, legislation she sponsored requiring Purcellville to commission an independent financial study.

"Because of SB 648, Purcellville residents will finally get an independent accounting of where the town stands and a real plan to address these problems," Perry wrote.

Yet Purcellville already undergoes annual independent financial audits, employs Davenport & Company as its financial adviser, retains a utility-rate consultant and maintains multiyear capital improvement plans. The Town has also spent years restructuring debt, establishing repayment schedules and securing outside funding for infrastructure improvements.

Existing debt is scheduled for retirement in the General Fund in 2034, Parks and Recreation in 2037, Water Treatment in 2038 and Wastewater Treatment in 2040.

Perry's newsletter emphasized financial pressures identified by S&P Global Ratings. However, the same report documented substantial reserves, balanced General Fund operations before transfers and declining net direct debt—findings absent from her account.

On May 4, S&P lowered Purcellville's general obligation debt rating from AAA to AA+ and assigned a negative outlook, citing operating imbalances in the Water and Wastewater funds, increasing debt-service payments and anticipated infrastructure costs.

S&P cautioned that continued General Fund support for utility operations could place pressure on reserves if financial imbalances persisted. The agency also described Purcellville's reserve position as "exceptional."

The downgrade occurred eight days before the Town Council adopted its FY2027 budget and utility rates. S&P's assessment therefore preceded the Council's final budget decisions.

On May 12, the Council approved a $31.78 million budget with a 16.5% water-rate increase and a 14.5% wastewater-rate increase.

Mayor Chris Bertaut, Vice Mayor Ben Nett and Council Members Carol Luke and Susan Khalil voted in favor. Council Members Erin Rayner, Kevin Wright and Caleb Stought opposed the budget, having supported substantially higher utility-rate increases, including a water-rate increase of more than 50% advocated by Wright.

S&P **also** identified several financial strengths supporting Purcellville's AA+ rating:

"Despite operating stress, Purcellville's legal revenue-raising ability, stable and appreciating tax base, balanced general fund operations before transfers, and exceptional reserve position support the 'AA+' rating."

The agency's analysis incorporated approximately $63 million in anticipated borrowing for water and sewer improvements through FY2031, with another $15 million projected for subsequent years.

The combined $78 million represents anticipated future borrowing—not money the Town has already borrowed or debt it currently owes.

The figures came from Purcellville's Capital Improvement Program, which identifies proposed projects, estimated costs and anticipated funding needs. The program does not obligate the Town to undertake every project or borrow the amounts projected.

Projects can be prioritized, redesigned, delayed or supported through grants and other outside funding. Some improvements may be necessary or legally required, but their financing and schedules remain subject to evaluation.

According to S&P, available reserves increased from $10.17 million in 2023 to $11.50 million in 2025, a gain of $1.33 million.

During the same period, net direct debt declined from $51.84 million to $47.99 million, a reduction of $3.85 million.

S&P questioned the Town's reliance on General Fund resources to support utility operations. However, Davenport & Company has advised that meals-tax revenue may be transferred to utility funds when authorized by an adopted Town policy. Purcellville has such a policy.

The General Fund receives more than $3

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

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Robin Linn Brings a Creative Vision to Hamilton's Future

By Valerie Cury

Robin Linn has worked on blockbuster movies, managed hundreds of creative professionals and helped build teams for some of the entertainment industry's biggest names. These days, however, he's just as happy tending his garden, working on his home and getting to know his neighbors in Hamilton.

GOVERNMENT

Now, the former Hollywood executive hopes to take on a new role as mayor of Hamilton.

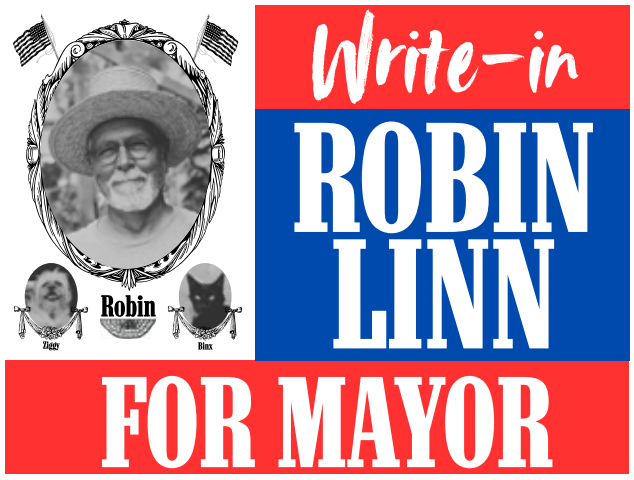
For Linn, the journey from Hollywood to Hamilton has been anything but conventional.

He grew up in Orange County, California, the youngest of five children in a working-class family with deep ties to law enforcement. His father was a police officer, as were other family members. Their home stood in the shadow of Disneyland, where Linn spent countless childhood hours exploring attractions, particularly the Haunted Mansion.

Those experiences, along with classic television cartoons, sparked an early fascination with art and storytelling. Sculpting became one of his creative passions, although he had little reason to imagine it would someday become his career.

Linn began working at about age 12, taking jobs after school and on weekends. College wasn't financially possible. When he turned 18, his parents gave him a set of luggage, and he set out to make his own way.

He worked as a grocery bagger, window dresser, bouncer and bank manager. Money was often scarce, and he sometimes survived on breakfast cereal because it was inexpensive and could stretch across several meals.



Yet he continued sculpting whenever he could, and work eventually caught the attention of an executive at Hanna-Barbera, the animation studio responsible for some of television's most beloved cartoon characters.

That opportunity led to Sony Pictures, where Linn worked on productions including *Spider-Man*, *Harry Potter*, *Stuart Little* and *Starship Troopers*. His responsibilities expanded from creating sculptures for animators to managing multimillion-dollar budgets and leading teams of hundreds.

Later, his career took him to major entertainment and gaming companies, including Netflix, Riot Games and Activision, where he worked in leadership and recruitment.

Those experiences taught him that successful organizations depend on more than talent. They require communication, collaboration, accountability and the ability to bring people with different perspectives together.

Linn became a speaker at art schools around the world and taught classes at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

Yet after decades in an industry known for spectacle, deadlines and constant reinvention, Linn found himself drawn to something quieter.

Hamilton.

He had long dreamed of living in a small town. When retirement offered the opportunity several years ago, he embraced it wholeheartedly.

The man who once spent his spare time rebuilding Mustangs, riding quads, steering boats and constructing decks now pours much of that energy into his home and garden.

Gardening, he discovered, offered something beyond the satisfaction of growing things. It brought him outdoors, introduced him to neighbors and deepened his appreciation for the community around him.

He began to see parallels between tending a garden and caring for a town. Both require patience, thoughtful planning and an understanding that what is nurtured today will shape what grows tomorrow.

That philosophy now informs his candidacy for mayor.

Having served as a commissioner and Town Council member, Linn wants to build on the work of previous town leaders while addressing the practical challenges of maintaining a small community.

Traffic safety is among his priorities.

For years, Hamilton residents and officials have sought solutions to speeding and traffic along the town's main thoroughfare. Linn points to recent progress in securing attention and funding through cooperation among residents and local, county and state leaders.

He hopes to build on that momentum toward safer streets while strengthening the sense of community that makes Hamilton special.

He wants to encourage more community gatherings that bring neighbors of different generations together and celebrate Hamilton's distinctive history.

"Connecting and celebrating in person together is not old-fashioned, it's the best solution to establishing trust and cooperation," said Linn.

Historical home tours, garden walks and other events could become regular traditions, connecting long-term residents with newcomers and introducing visitors to the town's character.

He has already helped get things started with a Labor Day picnic.

His invitation is simple: "Let's make memories without screens!"

Linn also sees opportunities to strengthen Hamilton's small-business community without compromising the qualities that make the town appealing.

He points to Hamilton Mercantile, Dough Baby! and Serendipity Spa, along with Abernethy & Spencer in nearby Lincoln, where he works several days a week, as examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that contributes to western Loudoun's character.

He envisions closer cooperation between town leadership and local businesses, encouraging compatible enterprises and creating opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy Hamilton.

He even suggests exploring a Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.

For Linn, the objective is not growth for its own sake, but economic vitality at a scale appropriate for the town.

Water and sewer infrastructure also figure prominently in his priorities.

A self-described do-it-yourself, *This Old House* kind of guy, Linn understands the importance of maintaining what already exists. He favors practical, financially responsible solutions that anticipate future needs rather than simply responding to problems as they arise.

His experience managing budgets and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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Remembering Asbury Lloyd Jr.

Asbury Lloyd Jr. was born in Philomont, Virginia, on August 30, 1928, to Louvenia Moore Lloyd and Asbury Lloyd Sr. He was the second of ten children. On Tuesday, October 13, 2026, the Lord called him home.



He attended Banneker School in St. Louis, Virginia. On June 14, 1952, he married Sarah Jane Brooks. Shortly after getting married, he was drafted into the Army to serve as a soldier in the Korean War. He served for two years, during which he received the Bronze Star and departed the military with honors.

He was a lover of sports. He was a pitcher for the Middleburg Braves, an all-African American minor league baseball team. He played the game for many years until back problems forced him to stop. He turned to bowling at that time, playing on many teams and earning countless trophies. During this time, he coached little league baseball teams, girls' softball and men's baseball teams. His favorite sports teams were the Washington Commanders and the Washington Nationals.

Asbury was very active in the church. For many years, he served as the chairman of the deacon board at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Lincoln, Virginia, until he had to step down due to his declining health.

In September 2016, Asbury traveled to South Korea, accompanied by his daughter, Regina Lloyd Banks, to be honored by the South Korean government. While there, he was given the Ambassador for Peace medal. In 2025, Asbury was honored at the Korean War Commemoration Remembrance on Capitol Hill and given a second Ambassador for Peace medal.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution on February 18, 2026, to recognize Asbury as a community member who, against all odds, stood against injustice, served the nation and played and coached the game of baseball. A plaque honoring him as a star pitcher, baseball player and coach is to be placed at Mickie Gordon Park in Middleburg, Virginia.

Asbury leaves to cherish his memory his devoted daughters, Deborah Lloyd Morton of Manassas, VA; Regina Lloyd Banks (Kelly) of Leesburg, VA; Amanda Lloyd Ellis of Sterling, VA; a special nephew who was raised as a son, William Lloyd (Paula) of Stephens City, VA; also raised as a son, Derrick Evans of Gulfport, MS; fourteen grandchildren; a host of great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; two sisters, Gloria Corum of Manassas, VA, and Rose Lee Lloyd of Culpeper, VA; and godson Jeffrey Hall (Arleen) of Manassas, VA.

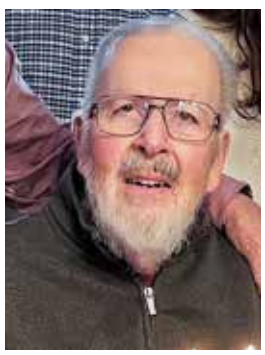
Asbury was preceded in death by his devoted wife, Sarah Brooks Lloyd; daughter, Wanda Lloyd Hill; son-in-law, David Morton; two sisters, Ida Mae Lloyd and Alvernia Tracy; and five brothers, Bruce Lloyd, Melvin Lloyd, Randolph Lloyd, Theodore Lloyd and Willard Lloyd.

He also leaves to cherish his memory many nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

Asbury Lloyd Jr. was more than a decorated veteran, gifted athlete and devoted community leader. He was a cherished part of Loudoun County's history, and his legacy will live on through the generations he inspired and the community he helped shape.

Remembering Joseph Nicholas LaFiandra

Joseph Nicholas LaFiandra died recently in the loving embrace of his wife of 65 years, Johanna, and his children. He was 89.



The family will see visitors at their home from 2 to 4 pm on Tuesday, November 3. A Funeral Mass will be held on Wednesday, November 4, at noon at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Purcellville, Virginia. A graveside service will be held immediately after the Mass at the Hillsboro Cemetery, located at the intersection of Charles Town Pike (State Highway 9) and Hillsboro Road (State Road 690) on the eastern end of the Town of Hillsboro. A reception will follow.

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Spanberger Calls for Six-Year Electricity Rate Freeze in $67 Billion Utility Merger

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger is calling for a six-year freeze on residential electricity base rates and larger monthly customer credits as conditions for approving the proposed $67 billion merger between NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy.

In testimony filed with the State Corporation Commission, Spanberger urged regulators to reject the merger unless the companies agree to enforceable commitments protecting customers, utility workers and Virginia's long-term energy needs.

GOVERNMENT

Under her proposal, monthly customer credits would triple to $29 for four years, providing households with $1,392 in total credits over that period.

The proposed six-year freeze would apply to base electricity rates, not necessarily every charge on a customer's bill. Base rates cover certain utility operating and infrastructure costs, while other charges can fluctuate.

"Any proposed merger involving Virginia's primary state-regulated utility must benefit families, small businesses, and Virginia's workforce—not just the shareholders of these multi-billion-dollar corporations," said Spanberger.

A central issue in the Governor's filing is how the costs of Virginia's expanding electricity infrastructure are divided among residential customers, businesses and large energy users.

The issue is particularly relevant in Loudoun County, home to one of the nation's largest concentrations of data centers. These facilities require substantial amounts of electricity, raising questions about who should pay for the additional generation and infrastructure needed to serve them.

Spanberger is seeking structural changes intended to ensure that large data centers bear the costs associated with their electricity demands rather than shifting those expenses to residential customers.

Her proposal calls for establishing a separate Virginia-based company to develop zero-carbon electricity generation for large data centers. The company would be financially separated from other utility customers to limit their exposure to those costs.

The filing also recommends changing how certain electricity costs are allocated among customer groups, including a proposal that could reduce the residential share of those costs by 25%.

Other proposed protections would expand restrictions on electricity disconnections for households with infants, residents with serious medical conditions and customers experiencing financial hardship. Additional protections would apply during periods of poor air quality.

The Governor is also seeking expanded energy-efficiency programs, incentives for electric vehicles and heat pumps, and removal of the state's cap on rooftop solar net metering, which allows participating customers to receive credits for electricity they send to the grid.

The proposal includes changes to Dominion's financing structure intended to reduce the company's overall cost of capital and, ultimately, costs borne by customers.

The Governor is also seeking binding commitments to protect Virginia utility jobs, with enforcement provisions allowing regulators to hold the companies accountable if those promises are violated.

Chief Energy Officer Josephus Allmond said the companies have not yet demonstrated that the merger meets Virginia's legal standards for protecting customers.

Nett Rejects Plea Deal for Crime He Was Never Charged With

BY VALERIE CURY

Purcellville Vice Mayor Carl "Ben" Nett has rejected a plea agreement offered by Special Prosecutor Eric Olsen that would dismiss all six felony charges against Nett and two against Town Manager Kwasi Fraser in exchange for Nett pleading guilty to a misdemeanor offense with which he has never been charged, resigning from Town Council and agreeing not to hold public office in Loudoun County for one year.

The offer made Oct. 1 through Nett's attorney, Ryan Campbell, came less than four weeks before Nett's scheduled Oct. 26 trial on four felony computer-trespass charges.

Nett's trial is now scheduled for Dec. 7 and will address both the four felony computer-trespass charges and the separate fraud and conspiracy charges stemming from allegations of bid rigging.

Under the proposed agreement, Nett would be required to plead guilty to a misdemeanor violation of Virginia's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act. In exchange, prosecutors would dismiss all eight felony charges against him and Fraser.

The agreement would impose no active jail time, conditioned upon one year of good behavior, and require Nett to relinquish his elected position.

"I will not plead guilty to a crime I did not commit, and which I have not been charged with, in order to make six felony charges that I have been framed with magically go away," Nett said.

Nett questioned why prosecutors would offer to dismiss eight felony charges against two defendants in exchange for a misdemeanor guilty plea and his resignation from public office.

He contends that the proposed agreement reinforces his longstanding belief that the prosecution is politically motivated.

Olsen, the Stafford County Commonwealth's Attorney, was appointed special prosecutor following a recommendation from Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney Bob Anderson.

On July 23, 2025, a special grand jury indicted Nett on four felony counts of computer trespass stemming from allegations that he improperly accessed the Virginia Criminal Information Network.

In a separate case, Nett and Fraser were each indicted on one felony count

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

County Clarifies Who Proposed Sale of Purcellville Library Interest

BY VALERIE CURY

Loudoun County has clarified that County Administrator Tim Hemstreet, not Purcellville Town Manager Kwasi Fraser, presented the possibility of purchasing the Town's ownership interest in the Purcellville Library during discussions about additional financial support for the Town.

GOVERNMENT

The clarification follows an article published by Loudoun Now titled "Purcellville Ends Talks with County Over Library Sale," which Fraser challenged for inaccurately portraying his role in the discussions.

Fraser, who is currently on leave as Town Manager, had approached the County in 2025 about ways it might provide additional financial assistance to Purcellville.

In an Oct. 22 email to Fraser, Loudoun Now reporter Hanna Bloom said she had contacted the County regarding his concerns. Bloom reported that County Public Affairs and Communications Officer Glen Barbour explained that Hemstreet presented the library sale as one of several options in response to Fraser's inquiry.

"There is an important distinction between asking about ways the County could provide additional financial support to the Town and initiating a proposal to sell the Town's interest in the library," Fraser wrote to Bloom.

"The County's response now describes Mr. Hemstreet as presenting the library sale as an option. That is consistent with my central point: Mr. Hemstreet raised the proposed purchase with me."

According to Fraser, Hemstreet also conveyed the County's interest in converting the library into a satellite office for County administrative staff and discussed plans to sell two former group home properties in Purcellville.

Fraser subsequently informed the Town Council of the property discussions through his weekly management update.

In his July 18, 2025, update, under the heading "County Property Coordination—Advancing Redevelopment and Revenue Opportunities," Fraser reported that the County planned to sell two vacant, tax-exempt former group homes at 161 W. Main Street and 220 W. Main Street, with listed values of $650,000 and $600,000, respectively.

The update also reported that an updated appraisal of the Purcellville Library was underway, with results expected in August 2025, to help guide the Town's decision regarding a potential transfer of its ownership interest.

Possible future uses of the 27-acre Fields Farm Park property were also addressed.

The July 18 management update, publicly available

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »

Randall Announces Agreement with Amazon to Abandon GW Campus Data Center

BY VALERIE CURY

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) announced Oct. 20 that Amazon has agreed to abandon plans to construct four data center buildings on the former George Washington University Science and Technology Campus in Ashburn, replacing the proposal with a mixed-use development that would include housing and new public facilities.

Under the agreement, called "Project Potomac Promise," Amazon will dedicate approximately 25 acres of the 122-acre property to Loudoun County for a community arts center and indoor sports facility. The land has an estimated fair-market value of $65 million.

Amazon also agreed to contribute $5 million to the county's Housing Fund, withdraw its data center site plan application and pursue rezoning the remaining property for mixed-use development, with an emphasis on attainable and market-rate housing.

However, at the Board's Oct. 6 meeting, Loudoun County Zoning Administrator Theresa Miller explained that data centers were not permitted as a principal use under the property's applicable 1972 zoning ordinance and that Amazon could not develop them by right. Miller had reached that conclusion in a July 2026 advisory opinion, months before the agreement was announced.

County Attorney Leo Rogers agreed that the proposed development would require Board of Supervisors approval, including public hearings and a Board vote before proceeding.

Supervisor Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian), whose district includes the campus, welcomed the announcement Oct. 21. Briskman had raised concerns about data center development on the property and advanced an initiative in April to examine its potential impacts.

The resulting review, presented to the Board in October, identified restrictions affecting the proposal, including a covenant limiting approximately 50 acres of the campus to higher education uses.

"From the beginning, I have maintained that the GW campus is not an appropriate place for data centers, particularly given its proximity to residential communities, Bles Park, and the Potomac River," Briskman said.

Briskman also spearheaded an effort to bring properties in the Route 28 Tax District under Loudoun's 2023 Zoning Ordinance, which would require public hearings and a Board vote for new data center proposals once the district's outstanding financial obligations are fulfilled in December.

Dozens of residents attended a September town hall hosted by Briskman, raising concerns about the proposed data centers and associated electrical infrastructure, including substations and high-voltage power lines near their homes.

Briskman credited residents and students who opposed the development. "The advocacy and public pressure from our community made all the difference," she said.

Amazon maintained a different interpretation of the property's development rights. "While we see the property's legal development potential differently than the County does, we concluded that the best outcome for all is to come together on a shared vision for this campus rather than engage in costly litigation," said Amazon Vice President Josh Weissman.

Amazon purchased the campus from George Washington University earlier this year. The university retains the option to continue operating on the property for up to five years.

Randall described the agreement as an example of what can be accomplished through cooperation between the county and private developers.

The proposed mixed-use development will require rezoning approval by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, with opportunities for public participation as the plans move forward.

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Fire Works Pizza Marks 20 Years in Leesburg

For 20 years, the ovens have been hot, the tables have been filled and generations of families have gathered over pizza at Fire Works Pizza in Leesburg.

On Oct. 1, the popular restaurant celebrated two decades in business with a ribbon cutting at its longtime home at 201 Harrison Street SE in Market Station.

COMMUNITY

For many customers, Fire Works has become more than a place to grab a pizza. Children who first came through its doors with their parents have grown up alongside the restaurant, and two decades later, some are old enough to return with families of their own.

That seems fitting for a restaurant whose own story is very much about family and community.

Fire Works is part of the Tuskie's Hospitality Group, which grew from Tuscarora Mill Restaurant, the Leesburg institution opened by the late Kevin Malone in 1985. The family's hospitality businesses today include Tuscarora Mill and South Street Under in Leesburg, Magnolias at the Mill in Purcellville and Birkby House, a historic Leesburg wedding and events venue, and the soon-to-open Maggie's Corner Cafe in Purcellville at the Shoppes at Main & Maple.

The Malone family is also preparing another chapter in downtown Leesburg. Evan and Meaghan Malone and Evan's mother, Kathleen, purchased the longtime Downtown Saloon property at 5 and 7 N. King Street and are transforming it into a traditional Irish pub—a dream Evan shared with his late father.

Long before diners gathered there for wood-fired pizza and craft beer, the building was a freight depot that served commerce along the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad for nearly 60 years. After the rail line was abandoned, the depot was moved to Market Station in 1984 and became home to Fire Works Pizza in 2006.

Since then, Fire Works has developed a personality all its own.

The restaurant is known for its wood-fired pizzas, with an extensive beer selection and a menu that has evolved to accommodate food allergies, sensitivities and different dietary preferences. It has also developed a particularly enthusiastic following among another group of customers— dogs.

Friendly, well-behaved pups are welcome on the patio, and Fire Works has embraced them with its Food for Fido menu, Pups on the Patio contest and logoed dog bowls.

"We are very proud of all we have created and the community that has embraced it all," General Manager Jennifer Miller said.



That relationship with the community was tested during the pandemic, when restaurants suddenly had to figure out how to survive without operating as they always had.

Fire Works' customers responded in a way Miller hasn't forgotten.

"Our guests kept coming out despite not being open inside," she said. "There were pizza parties in the parking lot and lots of love for our hardworking staff as we reinvented how to run a restaurant."

The restaurant made it through those difficult months and kept serving the community, earning recognition over the years for categories including "Best Pizza" and "Family Dining."

Twenty years after the first pizzas came out of the oven, Fire Works remains tucked into historic Market Station, steps from downtown Leesburg and next door to the restaurant from which the Malone family's hospitality story grew.

Miller said she enjoys being close to downtown and being part of Leesburg's growth and looks forward to what comes next.

And perhaps that is what makes a 20th anniversary worth celebrating. Restaurants come and go. The special ones become part of people's lives—the place for a family dinner, a first date, pizza with the kids, a beer with friends or, during one extraordinary period, a pizza party in the parking lot.

Twenty years later, Fire Works Pizza is still making pizza—from the Smokey Blue, layered with Gorgonzola, bacon, roasted onions, rosemary and a balsamic glaze, to the Sweet Heat, with pepperoni, chorizo, jalapenos and a drizzle of honey.

It has also made a lot of memories.

Plants With An Appetite Delight Visitors in Bluemont

BY VALERIE CURY

Some visitors come to Loudoun County for the scenery. Others come for the wineries, breweries and mountain views. But on Saturday, Oct. 24, more than 1,000 rather unusual visitors arrived from North Carolina, and every one of them had an appetite.

They were carnivorous plants, and they found a welcoming home at Bear Chase Brewing Company in Bluemont during a delightfully peculiar Halloween weekend event.

COMMUNITY

Plant enthusiast and educator Kenny Coogan brought his fascinating collection of greenery that doesn't always wait patiently for its dinner. The unusual gathering brought a touch of botanical intrigue to Halloween weekend, introducing visitors to some of nature's most fascinating plants.

Forget ordinary houseplants. These botanical oddities have developed remarkable ways of attracting, trapping and digesting insects, making them some of nature's most ingenious little predators.

And despite their rather sinister reputation, they're surprisingly charming.

Coogan traveled from North Carolina with more than 1,000 plants, focusing on varieties suitable for growing indoors during the cooler months. His collection included tropical pitcher plants, sundews, butterworts and the ever-popular Venus flytraps.

Venus flytraps are the drama queens of the plant world, snapping their traps shut when unsuspecting insects trigger their sensitive hairs. Sundews take a sneakier approach, sparkling with sticky droplets that resemble morning dew but serve as an irresistible trap.

Butterworts look innocent enough, with their delicate leaves and sometimes lovely flowers. But those leaves conceal a sticky surprise for tiny insects.

And tropical pitcher plants? They dangle elegant, colorful pitchers that double as sophisticated insect traps. Some were available in hanging baskets, perfect for adding a little botanical intrigue to a sunny window.



But Coogan didn't simply bring plants to sell. He brought an opportunity to learn.

On Friday, Oct. 23, he visited Woodgrove High School to introduce students to these extraordinary plants and their unusual adaptations.

"At Woodgrove High School, I had the opportunity to teach approximately 150 students about carnivorous plant evolution, ecology, and conservation. The students were incredibly engaged throughout the presentation and asked some fantastic questions afterward," said Coogan.

The following day at Bear Chase, Coogan shared his knowledge. "Seeing so much curiosity and excitement about plants and science, from teenagers to adults, made the trip worthwhile. My hope is that both experiences inspire people to become more curious about the natural world and the importance of conserving it," he said.

For anyone worried about taking home a plant with unusual dining habits, there was reassurance. Every purchase came with a care sheet explaining how to keep the new arrival happy and healthy.

The event offered plant enthusiasts, curious families and newcomers an opportunity to discover a side of nature that is as fascinating as it is unexpected.

And perhaps the greatest surprise was discovering that some of the most interesting houseplants are the ones that catch their own dinner.

Supervisors Table Data Center Audit As Pause Faces Delays

BY SOPHIA CLIFTON

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted Oct. 6 to indefinitely table a proposal for an independent audit of data center projects moving through the county's approval process, leaving unresolved a contentious debate over grandfathering rules, public transparency and the county's oversight of the industry.

GOVERNMENT

The 7-2 vote set aside a motion by Supervisor Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) that would have authorized up to $200,000 for an independent third party to review data center applications that have not received building permits. Supervisors Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian) and TeKrony opposed tabling the measure.

The proposal followed an earlier effort to end the grandfathering provisions adopted in March 2025, which allow qualifying data center applications to proceed under the zoning rules that existed before the county tightened its standards.

After the county attorney warned that eliminating those protections could trigger costly litigation, the focus shifted toward reviewing whether projects had properly maintained their grandfathered or vested rights.

Supporters of the audit said residents deserved an independent assessment of the county's handling of those applications. Opponents argued that county staff already scrutinize the projects, an outside reviewer would have limited authority to obtain information from applicants, and the proposed expenditure would do little to address residents' concerns.

The discussion followed a September board meeting at which supervisors sought information about ending the grandfathering resolution. A proposal from TeKrony and Briskman called for staff to prepare a resolution to terminate the grandfathering provisions.

Board Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) instead moved to have the county attorney prepare a legal memorandum and direct staff to provide an inventory of the remaining administrative applications, including their locations, status, square footage and number of buildings. That motion passed 9-0.

Betsy Smith, director of the Department of Building and Development, presented the inventory Oct. 6.

Smith said 15 applications remained under review, representing 30 buildings and approximately 10.5 million square feet of data center space. Four applications involving 10 buildings and about 1.8 million square feet had lost their grandfathered status because of problems meeting the resolution's due-diligence requirements. One additional application, involving a single building of about 100,000 square feet, might be revised to comply with the required setback from existing homes.

Under the resolution, qualifying applications had to be accepted for review by Feb. 12, 2025, and meet other conditions, including being permitted by right under the previous zoning rules, maintaining a setback of more than 500 feet from existing residential structures and diligently pursuing approvals.

Smith explained that site plan review is an administrative process designed to confirm compliance with applicable regulations and prior legislative decisions.

Staff also outlined the potential financial consequences of ending grandfathering. The county estimated that litigation could cost approximately $1 million per case, with potential damages and legal fees reaching $45 to $60 million.

County Administrator Tim Hemstreet said investors would want to see a cooperative relationship between Loudoun and the data center industry, although he acknowledged that supervisors have the right to determine where new development should occur.

What matters, Hemstreet said, is whether the board approaches the issue in a "considered and measured and deliberate manner."

Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) said he opposed changing grandfathering protections after the board had already debated the issue and publicly established the rules.

"Going back and telling businesses, these are the rules, allowing the businesses to make million dollar decisions based on those rules, and then subsequent, going back and saying, 'OK, now we're changing the rules,' to me, is just unethical," Turner said.

He added: "We set the rules, businesses made decisions based on those rules. We live by the rules."

Turner said he wanted to protect residents without jeopardizing the county's finances or forcing cuts to services.

"I'm not raising taxes. And I'm not cutting services," he said.

He argued that Loudoun needed to find a middle ground that protected neighborhoods and property values while avoiding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 »



ASK DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The Cost of a "Résumé-Building" Childhood

When achievement becomes the family's sole narrative, children learn that rest must be earned and downtime is wasted. Certainly, academic ambition and discipline are valuable, but childhood is not a résumé-building contest. A twelve-year-old does not need a five-year corporate trajectory; they need to learn how to navigate disappointment, make friends, and regulate their emotions.

Unstructured play and social connection are not frivolous distractions. They are the primary vehicles through which children develop emotional intelligence (EQ), including frustration tolerance, empathy, and interpersonal problem-solving.

In my practice, I often see brilliant adolescents gain admission to prestigious universities, only to unravel upon arrival. They are academically elite but socially and emotionally unprepared. They struggle to manage roommate conflicts, recover from a poor grade, or make independent decisions without constant parental intervention. Getting into a competitive school is not the same as being ready to thrive there.

Shifting from Control to Guidance

For parents whose survival once depended on hypervigilance, relinquishing control feels terrifying. They worry that granting freedom will lead to failure. However, children must practice being capable. This requires age-appropriate autonomy to make choices, experience natural consequences, and navigate mistakes.

To transition from control to guidance, parents can adopt specific communication tools and coping strategies:

- **Practice "Planned Autonomy:"** Start small by giving your child complete ownership over one area of life (e.g., choosing an extracurricular activity or managing their study schedule). Allow them to experience minor setbacks so they can practice recovery.
- **Use "I-Statements" to Share Fear, Not Demands:** Instead of saying, *"You are ruining your future,"* try: *"I feel anxious because I want to ensure you are secure, and I want to understand how you are balancing your time."*
- **The "Curiosity First" Rule:** When reacting to a poor grade, pause and ask: *"What do you think went wrong, and what support do you need from us to approach it differently next time?"* This fosters accountability rather than shame.
- **Identify the Source of Your Anxiety:** When tempted to micromanage, ask yourself: *"Am I reacting to my child's current reality, or my own past survival fears?"* This prevents projecting historical unresolved problems or trauma onto the child.
- **Model Healthy Self-Care:** Children learn how to handle stress by watching their parents. Show them that rest, hobbies, and emotional expression are healthy components of a successful life.

Redefining Success

Not every child is destined for the Ivy League, nor is every child meant to be a physician, engineer, or high level executive. A child may find deep meaning and financial stability as a teacher, artist, counselor, entrepreneur, or tradesperson. Success is not a singular address, income bracket, or brand-name diploma.

Parents can honor their sacrifices without demanding perfection as repayment. Children should understand and respect their family's heritage, but they should not carry the burden of fulfilling their parents' unfinished dreams.

The goal is not to lower standards, but to broaden them. We must raise children who work hard but also value rest and balance; who respect their family but also develop their own identity; and who pursue ambitious goals secure in the knowledge that their family's love does not depend on the outcome.

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.

FINANCIAL FOCUS®, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

quality of life.

- **Create a financial plan for retirement** (91% of financially fulfilled have one). It's hard to feel in control if you don't know where you're going. A retirement plan puts a real number on what you'll need and lays out a clear path to get there, with built-in protection against life's unexpected curveballs.
- **Save intentionally for major milestones** (87% of financially fulfilled do). A home renovation, a new vehicle or a child's education don't have to feel disruptive. Setting money aside deliberately for the milestones you anticipate means you can say yes without scrambling.
- **Put an estate plan in place** (66% of financially fulfilled have). Estate plans are not just for the wealthy. A will and basic estate plan help ensure what you've worked for still reflects your wishes after you're gone.
- **Work with a financial advisor** (60% of financially fulfilled who sought any guidance have used an advisor in the past year). The internet is great, but real guidance comes from a credentialed person who knows you and your family and what you want your money to do for you.

Knowing that your money is working toward the life you want doesn't happen by accident. Feeling financially fulfilled is worth the effort and may be more achievable than you realize. 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, Member SIPC.

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

JUST LIKE NOTHING (ELSE) ON EARTH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

defeat in a surprise pre-dawn skirmish at the local Baptist Church, in the Village of Waterford—initiated by superior Confederate forces.

And this very house of worship is the center piece of today's adventure; the Church sits just across the street from where we enacted the dramatic story, and we noted, at that time, the effects of ballistic damage—and subsequent repairs—on the outer brick wall of the structure.

Time to introduce some of the memorable players in our tale: my dear friend Meredith Bean McMath penned the original script about some young ladies from Waterford who—in the midst of those days of civil strife—wrote and published a local, pro-Union newspaper; another lifelong friend, retired 'Bird-Dog' and fighter pilot Stokes Tomlin, played the father of some or all of these young ladies.

One of my favorite theatre buddies, Ellis Keitt—a Force of Nature—more than embodied (don't ask!) the arch nemesis in the story—a renegade Confederate officer with a penchant for cruelty; my beloved sidekick in the show was played by the late, truly great Craig Snyder (also appearing prominently in our earlier Waterford story)—an unforgettable friend and actor who gave life to an unforgettable character, and left us with an unforgettable human being.

And the Waterford girls who wrote and published the Waterford News? Well, I thought you'd never ask: a miss Abby Seymour played one of the young gals, and I'll always cherish our scene together—in which she would calmly wrap me around her finger, then slowly chew me to bits. Wouldn't have missed that for the world.

Her colleague (and real-life high school chum, I believe) Danica Reisberg left her mark on my memory as one standing not only for beauty, but for truth, and later turned in one of the feistiest performances I've yet seen as Shakespeare's Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing.

But that's another story. I warned you that my memory would unravel in attempting anything like a cast list of the show. I loved the Waterford News and Civil War soldier experience and I loved the people.

So, now, on a much more recent morning, standing on the Waterford Baptist Church lawn, surveying the ground where our theatre building once stood across the street, and replaying some of the moments in my head and beneath my ribcage, I sorely missed those times, those people and those shared rituals. I could understand the temptation to try to step into the past. And stay there.

But, I felt an even stronger sense of gratitude for having experienced those days and nights, with those individuals in those assemblies with today's perspectives. I felt much richer for my ability to feel, again, the optimism of working on a wonderfully creative project, in that long-ago spring, in that long-gone theatre space, in the historic Village of Waterford, Virginia—settled in the 1700's.

This is the reason for my stopping at the local Baptist Church, and surveying its grounds, and standing for an unspecified period of time in that spot, staring at nothing in particular across the street. I think my vision may have temporarily blurred.

I believe I was waiting to find someone to thank. See if you can find them, will you?

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Art with a Heart: Loudoun Cares Auction Brings Artists Together

Art and generosity will come together this November as Loudoun Cares hosts its eighth annual Art Auction, featuring original works donated by more than two dozen regional artists to support neighbors in need.

The event will take place Thursday, Nov. 19, at Fleetwood Farm Winery in Leesburg, with proceeds benefiting Loudoun Cares and its community programs.

The auction will feature a juried selection of artwork donated by artists from across the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia region. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on original pieces during a live auction, while a silent auction will offer additional artwork, unique experiences and goods and services from Loudoun businesses.

Art lovers will also have an opportunity to view the collection before the event. An opening reception is scheduled for Nov. 6 at the Loudoun County Law Library, 18 E. Market St. in Leesburg. The exhibit will remain on display through Nov. 17 during regular library hours.

The Nov. 19 fundraiser promises an evening of art, music and food, including cuisine prepared by James Beard Award-nominated Chef Tarver King, featuring dishes from Waverly Springs.

Beyond the artwork and festivities, the evening supports an organization that has spent more than two decades connecting Loudoun residents with essential resources and opportunities to help others.

"As a nonprofit, we rely on the generosity of the Loudoun community to continue serving our neighbors in need," said Ronni Allen Ward, Loudoun Cares Board Chair. "We are honored by the incredible support of so many artists, community members, and local businesses who make this event possible."

The auction is Loudoun Cares' largest annual fundraising event.

Through its ConnectLine information and referral service, the Leesburg-based nonprofit helps residents locate assistance with housing, utilities, food and other essential needs. In 2025, Loudoun Cares distributed more than $4 million in support, helping residents remain in their homes, keep their utilities connected and put food on their tables.

The organization also operates an Online Volunteer Center that connects people interested in volunteering with local nonprofits. More than 350 organizations are registered with the center, which receives approximately 80 to 100 new volunteer registrations each month. In 2025, Loudoun Cares helped fill 2,836 volunteer positions.

For the artists donating their work, the auction offers an opportunity to share their creativity while contributing to programs that make a difference in the community.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available through Loudoun Cares.

For additional information visit loudouncares.org or call 703-669-2351. Residents seeking assistance with community resources may call the ConnectLine at 703-669-4636.

DATA CENTER AUDIT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

unnecessary financial risks.

TeKrony took a different view, saying an independent audit would provide the additional scrutiny residents deserved.

"The purpose is to build community trust, with transparency, with an independent evaluation," she said. "I'm gonna say the whole vision that we have, to live, work, learn, and play. That deserves equal attention, not just data center development."

She noted that Loudoun had been developing data centers for 26 years without completing an audit focused on transparency and oversight.

"The 12 month pause gives the board time to hire an outside consultant," TeKrony said, describing the review as an opportunity to evaluate the county's processes. She stressed that the audit would not itself make formal legal determinations about vested rights.

TeKrony also pointed to the number of existing and proposed facilities, saying Loudoun had 233 data centers on the ground and 116 in the pipeline.

"We need to look out for our residents," she said. "And this is doing the due diligence that I think the public is asking for."

Briskman supported the audit and challenged suggestions that stopping new data center development would soon require the county to raise taxes or cut services.

"That is a big lie," she said of claims that the county's bond rating would falter or taxes would rise if Loudoun stopped building additional data centers.

Briskman cited county figures showing that data centers accounted for $17.3 billion of the $25 billion in assessed personal

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KAINE'S LOUDOUN VISITS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and diplomatic leaders.

For the Marshall Center, that recognition represents an opportunity not only to preserve history but to bring Marshall's extraordinary legacy to new generations.

During the visit, graduates of the Center's ethical leadership program shared lessons they had drawn from Marshall's life.

One recalled Marshall's willingness to challenge Gen. John J. Pershing during World War I, even at considerable personal risk. Another spoke of Marshall's concern for the soldiers under his command.

Kaine was especially interested in Marshall's ability to lead while also recognizing when another person needed him to serve in a supporting role.

"Sometimes being a good leader means recognizing somebody else's leadership and accepting that," Kaine said.

The tour also revealed the more personal side of the celebrated general.

Visitors learned how Catherine Marshall discovered the Leesburg property and reportedly left a $10 deposit before her husband had even seen it. She also hid the for-sale sign in the bushes, hoping to prevent another buyer from discovering the house.

Much of the home's furniture and personal belongings remain connected to the Marshalls, giving visitors an unusually intimate glimpse into their lives.

The stories included President Harry Truman's visits, Marshall's reluctance to seek recognition and his repeated willingness to interrupt retirement when his country called.

The following day, the setting was entirely different.

At Loudoun's Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Center, the conversation turned from the lessons of history to the immediate needs of people facing mental health emergencies.

The facility, operated by Connections Health Solutions, was developed to offer an alternative to situations in which people experiencing psychiatric crises wait in emergency rooms or become involved with law enforcement because appropriate treatment is unavailable.

Kaine, who helped secure $4.1 million in federal funding for the project toured the center with Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large), and healthcare providers.

Following the tour, Kaine praised both the facility and the coordinated approach to treatment.

"I'm very impressed with this facility," he said. "The county has put a lot of time into it.





The design is impressive, and it's going to be a real benefit to people who need services and their families."

He emphasized that the benefits would extend beyond patients.

"So often because we don't have the appropriate services for mental health, that burden gets put on law enforcement's shoulders," Kaine said. "It gets put on the shoulders of emergency room staff in hospitals."

The new center is designed to change that.

Its three components include behavioral health urgent care, a crisis receiving area with 16 recliners and a crisis stabilization unit with 10 beds for people requiring additional short-term treatment.

The facility is intended to operate around the clock, serving adults from throughout Northern Virginia. Officials described Oct. 22 as a soft opening, with additional services awaiting state licensing.

Providers explained that approximately half of those entering the crisis receiving program are expected to stabilize sufficiently to leave within 24 hours, with referrals and plans for continued care.

Randall, a mental health therapist by profession, described how seemingly simple interventions can make an enormous difference.

She explained that people in crisis may have stopped eating, drinking enough water or taking prescribed medication. A safe place to rest, receive treatment and reconnect with support can help them begin thinking clearly again.

"Sometimes it's just because when people get in a crisis, they don't know what to do next," Randall said.

Randall also emphasized the importance of providing treatment rather than allowing people experiencing mental health crises to become entangled in the criminal justice system. The center offers an opportunity to intervene earlier, connect people with appropriate care and reduce the burden on law enforcement.

The center's design reflects that understanding. Natural light, calming colors and welcoming spaces were deliberately incorporated into the building.

One official described the light as the "first dose of medicine."

Kaine highlighted the center's location alongside other county services, describing the emerging behavioral health campus as an important advantage for individuals and families who may need several forms of assistance.

The need for such facilities intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased demand for behavioral health services while contributing to workforce shortages.

In comments following the tour, Kaine said the problem extends across Virginia, affecting urban, suburban and rural communities.

"Mental health need increasing, the provider pool not increasing fast enough," he said, describing the challenge of expanding access to care.

Kaine, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said the experience reinforced the importance of expanding training opportunities and strengthening the behavioral health workforce.

He also discussed his bipartisan PEER Support Act, which would encourage states to reduce certain licensing barriers for qualified peer support specialists—people whose personal experiences with mental illness or substance-use recovery can help others facing similar struggles.

The legislation has not yet passed.

Kaine also expressed concern that federal Medicaid changes could make it more difficult for vulnerable individuals to maintain health coverage, potentially increasing demand for services at facilities such as Loudoun's new center.

For Kaine, expanding access to treatment means recognizing that mental health emergencies deserve the same urgency as physical illness.

"Mental health crisis is just a health crisis," he said.

The two visits illustrated very different dimensions of service.

At Dodona Manor, the challenge is preserving the legacy of a leader whose decisions shaped generations. At the crisis center, it is building a system capable of responding with skill, compassion and dignity when people need help most.

One preserves lessons from the past. The other puts the principles of service into practice today.

NETT REJECTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

of fraudulent commercial dealing and one count of conspiracy involving allegations of bid rigging related to a $12,000 police-management consulting contract.

Both men have consistently denied wrongdoing.

Nett described the emotional and financial pressures of defending himself against felony charges and the difficult decisions faced by defendants who are offered plea agreements.

"Every day, innocent people plead guilty to crimes they did not commit in order to alleviate the financial burden of legal defense and erase the anxiety of a jury decision that could result in life-destroying verdicts," Nett said. "I feel those pressures, too. This entire ordeal has been devastating to both me and the people I love most."

The misdemeanor offense proposed in the plea agreement is connected to an earlier legal dispute involving Anderson.

On April 21, 2025, Anderson publicly accused Nett of violating Virginia's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act. Nett challenged Anderson's interpretation and subsequently filed a complaint seeking a declaratory judgment.

According to Nett, Anderson's legal analysis conflicted with interpretations provided by the executive director of the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council and the Purcellville Town Attorney.

Nett maintains that Anderson later retreated from his original position following the filing of the lawsuit.

The offer also follows separate proceedings concerning Nett's removal from Town Council.

In April, a Loudoun County jury found certain unspecified conflict-of-interest and Town policy violations but determined they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

SPANBERGER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

"With the commitments made in the original filing and supplemental testimony, Dominion and NextEra have not yet satisfied the legal standard that would allow the Commission to approve this transaction," said Allmond.

Spanberger became the first Virginia governor to formally intervene in a case before the SCC when she filed a notice of participation in August.

Her intervention allows the Governor's Office to participate directly in the regulatory proceedings, submit testimony, request information and challenge whether the proposed merger provides sufficient public benefits.

The SCC must determine whether the merger satisfies Virginia's regulatory requirements and protects the public interest. The Governor's recommendations remain proposed conditions, not approved changes to electricity rates or customer benefits.

THE BOOMERANG HOUR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

it funny when their kids announce they are awake an hour early especially when they are trying to hibernate until 6 a.m. to enjoy that looong extra 60 minutes of dreamy sleep.

Dr. Ben Reynolds, a board-certified pediatrician at South Riding Pediatrics in Virginia, tells us that this has to do with our internal body clocks, called circadian rhythm.

He explained that changing the clocks can disrupt children's sleep because our bodies depend on consistent routines. Poor sleep can affect mood, well-being, and even hormones. Babies and younger children may be especially sensitive to sudden schedule changes.

His advice for older kids involves planning ahead like adjusting bedtimes, getting exercise, and spending time in daylight for vitamin D. Dr. Reynolds also explained that falling back is generally easier than springing forward.

Wait. Sunlight, exercise, and an earlier bedtime? Honestly, was kinda hoping the RX would include snoozing in!

How about a quick game of Rock, Paper, Scissors? Rock represents permanent standard time, with earlier sunrises and sunsets. Paper represents permanent daylight-saving time, giving us darker winter mornings but more evening daylight. Scissors keep snipping between the two, just like we do now. And the sun? It pretends to keep score but really does its own thing. None of these choices gives us extra sunlight. Got all that?

Those darker winter mornings could mean hunting for that one glove that's ALWAYS missing, then needing a flashlight at the bus stop. Kinda like trick-or-treating, except there's all the tricking and none of the treating!

And now, a special appearance! Remember Ms. Kisses from my last article? I have serious questions about her beauty rest. Cows care about feeding and milking, not what our clocks say. I can imagine Ms. Kisses wondering, "Where is da food?"

Farmer Valerie Greenleaf of Sunny Knoll EcoFarm has a plan. She found a way to make the cows happy with the switch. When DST hits, she adjusts the feeding and milking by 15 minutes every few days so the change IRL is barely felt.

While Ms. Greenleaf would prefer not having to change the clocks during the year, she has found her gradual shifts in feeding and milking routine, allows her cows to be not as affected.

Sue Harrison of Brookfield Dairy Farm says her cows are very clock-oriented and know when it's time to be milked and fed and thinks Gertie, one of her lead cows, would vote for picking a time and sticking to it.

Seems Ms. Kisses has a transition plan, while Gertie wants to retire the whole time-changing business. My household could use advice from both!

In fact, Hawaii, most of Arizona, are already squared away with their own plan when they signed up for permanent standard time. Congress is still trying to figure out what to and the clock wars continue.

And now, the Rotten Tomatoes reviews are in! Critics say there's still one still very confused kid. The Mad Hatter begging for the clocks to stop boomeranging was certified fresh. Father Time just wanting them to tell the truth has an equal strong following. Ms. Kisses and her breakfast demands and Gertie campaigning for clocks to stay put makes this totally bingeable!

Overall leaving audience with one question: If grown-ups can't agree on what time, maybe it is time to ask the kids still stuck in Wonderland. You know the ones waking up early, catching school buses, and hoping the sun and clocks will one day see eye to eye.

Roll the credits!

COUNTY CLARIFIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

on the Town's website, documents that Fraser informed the Town Council of the potential library transaction in writing in July 2025.

"Discussing financial options does not, by itself, mean that I proposed or endorsed a library sale," Fraser wrote.

The County's explanation, as relayed by Bloom, identifies Hemstreet as the official who presented the library purchase as an option. Fraser's written management update documents that the proposal was communicated to the Town Council.

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ONE WOMAN'S FIGHT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the ground started shifting, and water began rising beneath her home.

Now, the home she has spent years lovingly preserving is in jeopardy, and Fallon faces the unthinkable possibility of losing not only her historic cabin, but the very roof over her head.

While Loudoun County continues construction of its multimillion-dollar fire station, Fallon is left arranging inspections, hiring experts and bearing the mounting costs of trying to save her home, all while searching for answers about what is happening beneath it.

A plumbing company inspected her well system and found that it was not the source of the flooding. Foundation specialists have also examined the property.

On Oct. 12, she filed a formal complaint with Loudoun County.

The following day, a county inspector visited the fire station construction site across the street but never set foot on Fallon's property to examine the flooding and damage to her centuries old home.

On Oct. 15, the complaint was marked completed in the county's system.

But Fallon's questions remain unanswered.

How had water suddenly begun rising through the basement of her home that had remained dry throughout all of her years there? Had the excavation changed the movement of groundwater? Is the water now contaminated? Was her foundation continuing to shift? And who would help her save her home?



And does the county even care about what happens to Fallon?

On Oct. 20, Fallon and Madeline Skinner took their concerns to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Business Meeting Public Input.

Fallon wasn't asking for anything extraordinary. She was asking for help saving her historic home, now threatened by serious damage following months of excavation and jackhammering that broke apart and removed bedrock formed millions of years ago, just across the 20 ft. road.

And she is fighting to keep it. Because if she loses her home, she will have nowhere to go.

"My blood, sweat and tears turned this property into an oasis, complete with a pond where neighborhood children regularly come to fish for bass," she said.

"The only 'shift change' I ever want to see out here are the deer and foxes coming out of the wildlife corridor I created, not my cabin's foundation shifting because of negligent construction across the street."

Now, Fallon is noticing troubling changes inside her home almost daily, including a newly installed window that no longer opens. What began with water rising through her basement floor has become an ongoing struggle to understand the damage appearing in a home that had shown none of these problems before construction began across the road.

A home that has survived nearly two and a half centuries is now facing the greatest challenge in its long history.

And Fallon, one homeowner seeking answers from Loudoun County, is fighting to make sure its story does not end here.

Is anyone listening?

PERRY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

million annually in meals-tax revenue and separately charges the utility funds more than $1 million for administrative and other services.

As existing debt is paid down, a debt-service analysis projects that Purcellville could free up approximately $538,000 annually beginning in 2030, increasing to more than $1 million in 2034 and approximately $1.27 million annually beginning in 2035. Those funds could become available for other Town priorities, depending on future budget decisions.

The repayment schedules reflect years of debt restructuring and refinancing.

Purcellville's longstanding utility debt originated during former Mayor Bob Lazaro's administration, when the Town undertook a major wastewater treatment plant expansion in anticipation of future growth.

At the time, the existing plant was operating at approximately 40% capacity.

A separate, state-mandated $6 million upgrade was funded through grants. The larger wastewater expansion, however, was not required by regulators.

During Lazaro's eight years in office, the Town accumulated approximately $61 million in debt, roughly half associated with wastewater.

Financing arrangements included balloon payments that deferred substantial repayment obligations and prepayment penalties that made early repayment or refinancing more costly.

Former Mayor Kwasi Fraser inherited those commitments. During his administration, the Town refinanced and restructured debt, eliminated prepayment penalties, extended repayment schedules and reduced total outstanding debt by more than $9 million.

Purcellville's preliminary FY2026 financial results also require context.

The Town's Aug. 10 Fourth Quarter Budget Status Report projected a $1.862 million General Fund deficit, a $179,000 Water Fund deficit and a $598,000 Wastewater Fund deficit for the fiscal year ending June 30.

The figures were preliminary. Finance staff reported that additional revenues remained to be recorded, year-end adjustments were continuing and the annual audit had not been completed.

The original FY2026 budget anticipated a $1.495 million General Fund operating surplus before transfers.

It also provided for approximately $2.94 million in meals-tax transfers to the utility funds, supporting water and sewer costs without relying entirely on utility rates.

Those transfers are recorded as General Fund expenditures and utility-fund revenues. They also reduce General Fund resources available for other purposes.

After accounting for the transfers, the original budget anticipated using approximately $1.445 million in General Fund reserves.

By June 30, General Fund expenditures totaled approximately $17.22 million, with another $167,000 encumbered, against a revised budget of $18.43 million.

Including encumbrances, approximately $1.05 million remained unspent.

General Fund expenditures increased by approximately $157,000, or about 1%, compared with FY2025.

The preliminary report also showed approximately $9.6 million in General Fund reserves, representing roughly 70% of annual expenditures and well above the Town's 30% reserve policy minimum.

Both utility funds were originally budgeted to finish FY2026 with surpluses.

The Water Fund began with a projected $48,000 surplus. During the year, approximately $227,000 in additional expenditures were approved, including water-system filters and restoration of the Water Superintendent position. Its preliminary year-end result was a $179,000 deficit.

The Wastewater Fund began with a projected $122,000 surplus. Approximately $720,000 in additional expenditures were subsequently approved, including replacement of coarse screens at the treatment plant and improvements to its fire-suppression system. Its preliminary result was a $598,000 deficit.

In both funds, the additional approved expenditures equaled the difference between the original projected surplus and the preliminary deficit.

Purcellville's financial record also includes significant infrastructure improvements and outside funding.

During Fraser's administration, the Town secured funding and authorized water-system projects including a new tank increasing potable-water storage capacity by more than 29%, improvements to Hirst Reservoir and the first phase of replacing approximately 5,000 linear feet of aging water transmission main.

Some projects were completed after Fraser left office, but their funding and authorization began during his administration.

Purcellville also received approximately $10.58 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding.

More recently, the Town was awarded nearly $7 million in outside funding for PFAS treatment, offsetting a substantial portion of the project's cost.

Such funding matters when evaluating future infrastructure costs. A proposed project's estimated price does not necessarily equal the amount the Town will ultimately borrow.

Against that financial history, SB 648 requires another review.

The legislation directs Purcellville to commission an independent study examining debt, infrastructure, utilities and other significant financial liabilities, and recommending a fiscally appropriate plan.

It requires the Town to adopt a plan consistent with the study's findings and permits recommendations for changes to the Town Charter.

On Oct. 1, the Town issued Request for Proposals TM-2026-12. It specifies that the study must be conducted by a public institution of higher education with at least 15,000 students, in consultation with a chief administrative officer from a locality in Virginia Planning District 8 with at least 500,000 residents.

Proposals are due Nov. 4, one day after Purcellville's election. The final report must be completed by July 1, 2027. The study's cost has not yet been established.

The study will therefore be conducted against an existing record of independent audits, professional financial advice, capital planning, debt restructuring and established repayment schedules.

Perry promised that SB 648 would "finally" provide residents with an independent accounting and a plan to address the Town's financial challenges.

But Purcellville's finances have been independently audited, its debt restructured, its repayment schedules established and its infrastructure needs evaluated for years.

SB 648 mandates another study. It does not erase the financial work already done, nor does it establish that such work was absent, or deficient.

THE CHICKENS HAVE COME, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

received my day in court. My name became the subject of another round of headlines, insinuations, and public condemnation.

You may describe the law as an administrative safeguard. I experienced its consequences as punishment before trial.

What public purpose required this extraordinary intervention when I was already on leave? What urgent danger justified singling out Purcellville while leaving the rest of the Commonwealth outside that suspension provision?

Those questions deserve answers grounded in evidence.

I regard what happened to me as a political lynching: the public destruction of a man's standing while the proceedings that should determine his guilt remain unfinished. I use that expression to describe the machinery of humiliation—the reduction of a person to an accusation, the dismissal of his service, and the invitation to the public to treat suspicion as a verdict.

I served Purcellville as its mayor for four terms. The people who repeatedly entrusted me with that responsibility knew a public servant with a record, a family, and a name.

An indictment did not erase that humanity. Your legislation helped create a climate in which others could behave as though it had.

Now Senator Lucas faces criminal charges, which remain allegations to be tested in court.

Governor Spanberger has responded by affirming that people are "presumed innocent until proven guilty" and that Senator Lucas and her family deserve an opportunity to present their defense.

I agree.

I agreed when the accused person was me.

Does the Senate agree with that principle consistently, or only when the accused sits among you?

Senator Lucas supported the legislation directed at Purcellville. Now this chamber must confront the distinction between the treatment it authorized for people outside its walls and the treatment it considers appropriate for one of its own.

Will you advocate her suspension before trial? Will you support withholding her salary while the charges remain unresolved? Will Senator Perry propose an equivalent measure and ask her colleagues to embrace its consequences?

If your answer is that the offices are different and SB 648 does not govern senators, explain why those differences justify the disparity.

I understand that a town manager and a state senator occupy different positions. The moral question survives that distinction: Why did an unresolved accusation justify extraordinary legislative intervention against me, while an unresolved accusation against your colleague calls forth such emphatic declarations of restraint?

The narrow reach of your law makes that question more urgent.

If suspension upon indictment was an essential protection for public confidence, why did you confine that protection to a population bracket and a planning district? If individualized judgment matters now, why did you enact a mandatory rule then?

I seek an explanation. I also seek accountability.

Senator Perry should explain publicly why existing administrative leave was insufficient and why Purcellville required this exceptional treatment. The senators who supported the measure should explain the principle behind their votes and whether they would accept its equivalent for themselves. The Governor should reconcile her defense of Senator Lucas's presumption of innocence with her approval of legislation that deepened the consequences of my unresolved charges.

And this chamber should revisit the law, address the unequal treatment it created, and support a fair accounting of the financial harm its implementation caused.

I will defend Senator Lucas's right to due process because a principle has value when we honor it for everyone.

I expect you to defend mine with the same clarity.

The chickens have come home to roost in the form of a question you can no longer dismiss:

Will you live by the standard you imposed—or acknowledge that the standard was wrong?

Respectfully,
Kwasi A. Fraser
Former Four-Term Mayor
of Purcellville, Virginia
www.KwasiFraser.com

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SWEET DREAMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Mulch, generously mounded around the base of a rose bush and up the lower stems, helps protect it from freezing temperatures. Potted roses need extra protection, too, whether placed in a sheltered location or insulated with mulch.

But there's one important catch. When spring arrives, that heavy winter blanket must come off.

Powers described visiting a garden where hundreds of roses were struggling because their protective mulch had never been removed. Even in the heat of summer, the plants were still wearing their winter coats—and nobody wants to wear a winter coat in July.

Throughout the presentation, Powers answered questions about everything from soil testing and troublesome cane borers to the fascinating history of a delicate white rose called Niphetos.

The historic rose, whose name means "fallen snow," was identified as a variety associated with the journey of America's Unknown Soldier from France. Once difficult to find in the United States because of its sensitivity to cold, it has been reintroduced to gardens with the help of dedicated rose enthusiasts.

With proper winter protection, Powers explained, even tender roses can return to bloom year after year.

There were door prizes, gardening tips and plenty of questions, but perhaps the most reassuring message was that preparing roses for winter doesn't have to be complicated.

A little water before bedtime, a tidy garden, a protective blanket of mulch and some patience until spring can make all the difference.

And isn't that one of the loveliest things about gardening?

While winter settles over Loudoun County, beneath the soil and mulch, another season is quietly waiting.

We can dream of June mornings, warm sunshine, fragrant blossoms and roses spilling over garden fences.

For now, sweet dreams, roses. We'll see you in the spring.

From Roses to Holiday Wreaths

As the roses settle in for winter, Abernethy & Spencer is turning its attention to another seasonal tradition: holiday wreath-making.

Led by the garden center's own Desi Lee, the hands-on workshops invite participants to create beautiful, one-of-a-kind holiday wreaths using locally sourced greenery and festive accents. Each participant will design a wreath on a 14-inch ring and take home a handmade creation ready to brighten a front door or home.

Workshops are scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 28, at 11 a.m.; Sunday, Nov. 29, at 2 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 5, at 2 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 6, at 11 a.m.

The fun doesn't end with the holidays. The garden center plans to offer workshops throughout the winter and beyond, giving gardeners and creative spirits plenty of reasons to return.

Abernethy & Spencer Greenhouse and Garden Center is located at 18035 Lincoln Road in Purcellville. For workshop information and registration, visit shop.abernethyspencer.com/subdept/58/workshops or call 540-338-9118.

ROBIN LINN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

leading large organizations has reinforced his belief that progress depends on listening, collaboration and a willingness to tackle difficult decisions.

The scale of Hamilton may be far removed from Hollywood, but Linn believes many of the same principles apply: respect the people doing the work, understand the challenges and keep sight of the larger purpose.

He isn't proposing to reinvent Hamilton. He wants to help preserve its small-town character while ensuring it remains a welcoming, financially sound and connected community for generations to come.

For someone who spent much of his career helping bring imaginary worlds to life, Linn has found something particularly meaningful in the real one just outside his front door.

And this time, the setting isn't Hollywood.

It's Hamilton.

DATA CENTER AUDIT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

property value in tax year 2025, or about 69%. She also said the county budgeted $879 million in data center revenue for fiscal 2027.

Those revenues largely came from existing facilities and permitted properties, she said, rather than from new construction. Briskman argued that the county could continue collecting substantial revenue for years even without approving additional facilities.

"Don't be threatened, community, by the misinformation that your tax rates will go up immediately if we stop building new data centers," Briskman said.

She argued that the industry was consuming land needed for other priorities.

"They are gobbling up all of our developable land and constraining our ability to build affordable housing and diversify our economy," she said.

Supervisor Matt Letourneau (R-Dulles) said the debate over eliminating grandfathering had already been settled by the county attorney's legal analysis.

"Without getting into the attorney-client memo, it's the fact that we can't do that. It's not gonna hold up, so it's not gonna happen anyway," he said.

Letourneau also criticized the audit proposal as an unnecessary challenge to county staff.

"I don't understand how we build community trust by the board passing motions saying we don't trust the staff, and their process and determinations of what is vested and what is grandfathered or not," he said.

He argued that county employees and attorneys who regularly interpret the zoning ordinance were better equipped to review applications than an outside consultant unfamiliar with the county's procedures.

"Why would a consultant that we hire understand our zoning ordinance better than we do?" Letourneau asked.

He questioned what the board would do if the audit reached a different conclusion from county staff, particularly if that disagreement led supervisors to reconsider an application's grandfathered status.

"We should be more transparent. I'm willing to work with anybody on ways that we can do that, but the answer is not to go out and spend $200,000 to second guess the work that staff has already done," Letourneau said.

Supervisor Kristen Umstattd (D-Leesburg) also opposed the measure.

"It's not gonna solve the public's concerns about air pollution or electricity bills," Umstattd said. "It just seems to do nothing more than we already do with our current staff."

Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin) likewise questioned the proposal, saying the county should heed the advice of its attorney rather than pursue actions that could expose taxpayers to expensive litigation.

He called the motion "a complete slap in the face of our staff," adding that it risked treating the employees who review applications as though they were not doing their jobs adequately.

Kershner also defended the industry's contributions to Loudoun.

"We have world class schools, world class firehouses and emergency services, world class libraries, world class parks and recs, world class law enforcement," he said, attributing much of the county's ability to fund those services to commercial revenue, including data centers.

He said he was satisfied that county staff could determine whether applications qualified for grandfathering and warned that revisiting those determinations could create further legal problems.

Supervisor Sylvia Glass (D-Broad Run) proposed adding the Telos data center application to the audit. Staff said they would need to research its approval date to determine whether it met the proposed criteria.

Glass said she did not view the audit as a sign that supervisors distrusted county employees.

"I don't see a reason why it wouldn't be beneficial to have eyes from somewhere else, to add into the conversation," she said.

The board also discussed whether the audit would cover only applications still grandfathered or a wider set of projects without building permits. TeKrony agreed to amend the motion to include applications listed in the first two tables of the staff report's second attachment.

Randall raised another concern: developers would not be legally required to cooperate with an independent reviewer.

Staff confirmed that the county could not compel applicants to speak with an auditor or provide additional information.

Randall questioned the value of paying for a review if the applicants themselves could decline to participate.

"To spend $200,000 right now, to have somebody else look at the books when they don't even have to— when the people that they're asking to give the information don't even have to give the information— it's not a logical thing to do," Randall said.

The board then voted 7-2 to table TeKrony's audit motion indefinitely, with Briskman and TeKrony opposed.

In an additional development, Randall twice postponed consideration of a proposed temporary pause of certain data center and substation applications, first delaying the vote until Oct. 20 and then again until Nov. 17.

In an Oct. 20 statement, Briskman criticized the latest postponement and called for a public explanation.

"This is one of the most consequential land-use decisions facing Loudoun County, and our residents deserve transparency about why this vote is being delayed. Decisions of this importance should not be made behind closed doors," said Briskman.

"The County Attorney has already conducted a legal review, and the Board has twice voted overwhelmingly to advance this pause. What changed? If questions or concerns have arisen, they should be asked and deliberated in the public domain," she said.

OPINION: WHO CARES? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the end of their cul-de-sacs.

I have two companion theories: First, Loudouners east and west make so much money that they aren't disturbed by the County's outrageous spending and taxes. Second, given our sky-high home prices, many residents can make so much money when they sell their Loudoun house, they can move back to Buffalo or wherever and buy a nice house that requires only a small mortgage and enjoy a lower cost of living.

Western Loudoun

Board Chair Phyllis Randall once mused that about eighty percent of the complaints she gets are from Western Loudoun, which has less than twenty percent of the County's population. Well, Western Loudoun comprises almost eighty percent of the county's land area, and an even greater percentage of undeveloped land.

There are exceptions, but I believe that most of us in the West see it as our permanent home. We have invested more than money in our homes and land. There is also a rural attitude of helping neighbors, from Middleburg to Lovettsville, and from Leesburg to Round Hill.

Organizations and Activism

Be thankful that there are many groups that fight to protect the lands we love: Save Rural Loudoun, Loudoun's Future, the Preservation and Conservation Coalition, the Friends of the Blue Ridge and more. These groups bring energy; they let members share the work, and many include experts such as electrical engineers and hydrologists.

Almost thirty percent of Loudoun's population has a post-graduate degree, and I bet that percentage is even higher in Western Loudoun, especially among members of conservation organizations.

Individuals Make a Difference

Whether they represent a group or act on their own, people are important. Are they aware of what's going on in the county? Do they follow local politics? Are they passionate about life here?

I now present a transcript of one individual's recent remarks to the Board of Supervisors:

"Good evening. I'm Emily Houston of the Rural Roads Committee.

"Two years ago, the Rural Roads Bill became law. This bipartisan legislation was championed by Loudoun's state elected leadership: Senator Perry and Delegates Reid and Higgins. As author of the bill, I would like to clarify the true intentions of this legislation:

"The goal is to use state funds to improve unpaved roads and give VDOT the flexibility needed to use methods other than paving, and in ways that significantly lessen the need for ongoing maintenance and in a more cost-efficient manner. It is no longer just a binary choice: leave the roads as they are or pave them. Now there is a third option.

"So what does it mean to improve without using asphalt?

"The bill is explicit: It says 'improved materials, drainage upgrades, or enhanced design of the highway profile. Other techniques shall be considered improvements if they increase safety, reduce maintenance costs, or enhance the historic qualities of the highway or highway segment.'

"In 2022, VDOT undertook an improvement project on Old Waterford Road that serves as a model for what the Rural Roads Bill intends. The road had been severely neglected for years, and one section had fallen into complete disrepair.

Eroded drainage ditches were reconstructed, and the roadbed was reshaped with a proper crown. The surface was compacted, resulting in a hard crust. This work was done by our local maintenance crew, using standard quality aggregate.

"One third of all the miles of roads in the US are unpaved. There is a vast body of knowledge about how to properly manage them. An unpaved road can be brought into the 21st century. The Rural Roads Bill gave us the directive to do this, and the work on Old Waterford Road shows that it can be done."

Charlie and Emily Houston live on a small horse farm south of Waterford. Charlie is proud of his wife.

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OPINION: THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE(S),
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Instead, both political parties routinely avoid the hard choices. Leaders hesitate to tell voters the truth, because voters punish anyone who admits that real progress takes time.

The result is a government that kicks the can down the road while debt grows and risks compound. Real progress is steady, deliberate, and often thankless. Yet patience is the quality we need most and is the one we exercise least.

It Won't Happen Here or To Me

The most reckless mindset of all is denial. Too many Americans believe catastrophe is something that happens somewhere else, to someone else.

We were warned about evolving terrorist tactics long before they struck. We were warned about mass shootings before they became routine. We were warned about cyber threats, climate risks, and financial instability. Each time, the warnings were debated, delayed, or dismissed—until consequences arrived.

This denial extends beyond national security. It touches poverty, inequality, and even the stability of our institutions. Millions of Americans assume their jobs, homes, and safety nets are permanent … until the day they aren't. Believing "it won't happen here or to me" makes us complacent, unprepared, and vulnerable.

A Call to Action

America cannot afford short memories, impatience, or denial. These mindsets weaken our ability to confront threats both foreign and domestic, and make us vulnerable to adversaries who think long-term and act with discipline.

What we need is not panic, but a cultural reset.

We need leaders who stop chasing soundbites and quick wins and start leveling with the public about long-term solutions. But leadership alone won't fix this. Citizens have a role to play as well. We must resist denial, remember hard lessons, and demand honesty and accountability from those in power.

That means rewarding courage instead of spin. Endurance over instant gratification. Long-term vision over short-term gain.

Strength is not built in a single election cycle. It's built when a nation accepts sacrifice, faces reality, and tackles hard problems head-on. It's built when we stop scrolling past crises and start insisting on solutions, even when those solutions take years.

America's adversaries understand this. They have patience. They understand our political terms, They are willing to wait us out, confident we'll forget, grow restless, and retreat into denial. Adversaries are betting on our weakness.

So the question is no longer whether America faces serious challenges: WE DO. The real question is whether we still have the stamina to meet them. Are we willing to remember? To wait? To confront hard truths before they become disasters?

The bad actors are patient. They're watching.

The only question left is whether we have the grit to be patient, too.

Ken Falke is a 21-year veteran of the US Navy Special Operations Explosive Ordnance Disposal community. Falke is a serial entrepreneur and the chairman and founder of Boulder Crest Foundation, an organization focused on the teachings of posttraumatic growth. He is also the author of "Struggle Well: Thriving in the Aftermath of Trauma" and "Lead Well: 10 Steps to Successful and Sustainable Leadership.

OPINION: PURCELLVILLE'S WATER AND SEWER,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

meals tax, to support utility capital projects.

Growth is another side to Purcellville's water discussion that should not be overlooked.

The Jacobs analysis evaluated the town's water resources based on assumptions about population, development and demand. A water system adequate for the town's existing population can face very different demands if substantial development outside the town is added to it.

Will Purcellville's infrastructure determine its growth—or will growth determine the future of its infrastructure?

The Valley Commerce Center brings that question into sharp focus. Loudoun County has approved nearly one million square feet of industrial development on approximately 117 acres outside Purcellville.

The development does not have access to Purcellville's utility infrastructure and will rely on private water and on-site wastewater treatment. The project is approved for 45,000 gallons per day—a limitation that affects development intensity and uses.

Water availability helps determine what can be built and how intensively land can be developed.

Chuck Kuhn proposed annexing the 117-acre property into Purcellville for approximately 1.275 million square feet of business park and industrial development. Town staff estimated water demand of up to 255,000 gallons per day.

During the annexation discussions, the applicant also proposed adding the Bles Well and the on-site VCC-D well.

High-producing wells, however, are not free water. They must be treated, connected, distributed and maintained. Development of this magnitude also brings additional wastewater, infrastructure, public safety and other service costs.

During the County rezoning process, some Planning Commissioners and Supervisors expressed hope that Purcellville would reconsider and ultimately annex the property after the County approved the project.

That makes the candidates' records on Valley Commerce Center particularly relevant.

Mayor Chris Bertaut opposed continuing the Valley Commerce Center annexation process and voted to deny the application. He has stated that he will not support future annexation of the property.

As vice mayor in 2024, Erin Rayner voted with the former Council majority to continue the annexation process and private negotiations. When the new Council majority moved to end the annexation on Jan. 8, 2025, Rayner voted against ending it. Rayner also did not publicly oppose the project before the County approved its rezoning.

Those votes matter because the County's approval did not erase the fundamental question for Purcellville: What happens if Valley Commerce Center comes back seeking annexation?

Annexation is not simply moving a line on a map. It is the mechanism that would bring Valley Commerce Center into Purcellville and give the property access to Town water and sewer. Access to those utilities changes what becomes possible.

The County-approved project is currently constrained by its private water and wastewater systems.

The applicant also sought the full range of industrial uses available under the Town's zoning ordinance, including uses requiring special exceptions.

If Valley Commerce Center is annexed, Purcellville cannot simply skip over intervening properties to reach it. Those properties would have to come into the Town as well, pushing Purcellville's boundaries farther outward.

Valley Commerce Center is not the only property whose owners have expressed interest in annexation. Representatives and owners of some of these properties have contributed to Erin Rayner's campaign.

At some point, the question stops being whether Purcellville should annex one development and becomes whether Purcellville is prepared to keep expanding outward.

Annexation would make more intensive development possible, bringing additional traffic and demands on Town services and infrastructure, with costs that would ultimately fall on residents already paying high utility bills.

Once that door is opened, where does it stop?

Purcellville is surrounded by development pressure. Its small-town character has survived because the Town has remained relatively compact and generations of residents have fought to preserve its scale and identity.

But small towns rarely change all at once. They change one decision at a time: one annexation, one extension of utilities, one large development and then another.

Large-scale growth comes with permanent costs. More development means greater demands on water and sewer, roads, public safety, personnel and other Town services.

The issue is whether Purcellville should expand its boundaries and use infrastructure its residents have spent decades paying for to make substantially greater development possible.

Purcellville's water debate is about much more than old pipes. It is about who the Town's water system will serve, where Purcellville's boundaries should end and what kind of community Purcellville intends to remain.

Pipes can be replaced, tanks can be built and treatment plants can be improved. But once Purcellville loses its small-town character, no amount of new revenue can buy it back.

NETT REJECTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

did not warrant removing Nett from elected office. Despite the jury's decision, Olsen sought to set aside the verdict and have Nett removed from Town Council.

Circuit Court Judge Randy Bellows rejected Olsen's request, leaving the jury's decision intact.

Now, under the proposed plea agreement, Olsen is again seeking Nett's departure from elected office—this time as a condition for dismissing eight felony charges against Nett and Town Manager Kwasi Fraser.

Nett, a former member of the U.S. Secret Service and former CIA contract intelligence officer who served in Afghanistan, invoked his years of federal service in explaining why he would not accept the agreement.

"I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic," Nett said.

"If necessary, I'll give my life on the streets of Virginia, or in a Virginia prison, before I plead guilty to a crime I did not commit and thus provide legal and political cover to individuals who, themselves, I believe, are guilty of federal civil rights violations," Nett said.

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Just Sold - Lovettsville



SOLD - Morrisonville



Lovettsville - SOLD



Purcellville - SOLD

For more than 30 years, On the Market Properties has built its business on a client-centered approach, putting relationships before transactions. It's been quite a summer, with record-breaking sales in Lovettsville and strong sales throughout Purcellville and Leesburg. Whether you're thinking about selling today or planning for next year, we'd love the opportunity to meet with you. Thanks to the trust and support of our clients, we've been able to give back to the Loudoun County Humane Society and the Gingersnap Girls Equine Education Foundation. Because homes aren't just for people, we are proud to support these organizations as they help animals in need. They are always grateful for donations, volunteers, and especially foster homes. Learn more at **www.humaneloudoun.org** and **www.gingersnapgirls.org**.



www.gingersnapgirls.org



www.humaneloudoun.org

On The Market Properties

KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE MARKET



On the Market Properties brings a people-first approach shaped by nearly **30 years of experience**. Sam leads each client relationship with clarity and steady guidance, helping clients feel informed, supported, and never rushed. Partnering with her brother, **Curt**, whose knack for country real estate and laser focus on every detail, complements Sam's leadership, guiding clients through every step. Their experience spans **in-town historic homes, large farms, vineyards, distinctive community residences, condos, and townhomes**, supported by their **personal team—including stager, personal organizer, contractors, lenders, title professionals, and movers**. They welcome your whole family, including dogs, horses, and cats!



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