

Mall redevelopment plan has too much concrete

Dear Editor,
 Thanks for the coverage on Cloverleaf [Mall]. Now that it looks like we are going to get more retail space, not that there is a dearth of retail space, why not do something unique? If, as the supervisors indicate, they want "...a significant gateway to the county," why not something different and environmentally sound?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why have such large expanses of parking? Why not "stacked" parking, either two-story garages or under office parking? That would allow more "green space" - a welcoming sight coming into the county on Midlothian Turnpike. We already have lots of asphalt across Midlothian from Cloverleaf, and down the road a bit at three "decaying" malls as well as Chesterfield Towne Center and other miscellaneous shopping locations. If not well-planned and used, we will have a stretch of Midlothian Turnpike that could be dubbed "asphalt alley."

A recent study indicated that the average nighttime temperatures in Phoenix, Ariz. have increased over the past 20 years due to the amount of cement and asphalt retaining daytime heat and releasing it during the evening hours. While we don't have the heat that Phoenix does, the water runoff is tremendous in the huge expanses of asphalt parking lots. In many parts of Europe today, "green roofs" are mandatory in new buildings. Doing something different, as well as

environmentally sound, would truly be a significant and welcoming gateway to the county.

Allan Trosclair
 Midlothian

Sowder thanks voters

Dear Editor,

I wish to thank all the voters and citizens for their confidence in me and for their support on Tues., Nov 7. We all have the same goal - to make Midlothian and Chesterfield County an even better place to live, work, shop, raise our families and educate our children. Additionally, we want Midlothian and Chesterfield to be a great place for our children and grandchildren to call home when they become adults.

You have my pledge that I will do my best to work toward attainment of our goal. Together, we can make it happen.

Don Sowder
 Midlothian Supervisor

Letters to the editor can be e-mailed to letters@chesterfieldobserver.com, mailed to P.O. Box 1616, Midlothian, VA 23113, or faxed to 744-3269. Letters should include the writer's phone number and home address, but neither will be printed. All letters may be edited for clarity or space. For complete guidelines, visit www.chesterfieldobserver.com and click on "letters policy."

Observations from the big green chair

By Terri Beirne
 FORMER INTERIM MIDLOTHIAN SUPERVISOR

I was sworn in to temporarily serve the Midlothian District on the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors on July 31 and attended my last board meeting on Nov. 8. I saw my responsibilities during that short time as threefold: assisting the county in making land use decisions through zoning cases, helping citizens in the Midlothian District navigate through often complicated county laws and procedures, and learning as much as possible about activities in Chesterfield, so that I could properly represent the county to people and groups both within and outside of it.

Friends suggest this was a unique opportunity for me to stick my toe into the waters of public service. While the experience didn't rule out the possibility that I would run for office, it certainly gave me a greater appreciation for the commitment of time and energy necessary to do the job well. It also gave me a unique perspective and, from that, I'd like to share a few observations:



Beirne

The responsibility to represent the interests of the 65,000 people in Midlothian District in a county with a \$1.1 billion (that's "billion" with a "b" and countless zeros) budget is overwhelming in a wake-you-up-in-the-middle-of-the-night sort of way. Since taking the seat, I've had personal contact with probably a couple hundred people in the district and discussed specific issues with a few dozen of them. Trying to imagine how all 64,999 of my neighbors might make every decision was impossible. Taking useful advice from other board members, I just did what I thought was right using my experience and the information at hand.

The work of the five members of the planning commission is underappreciated by the public. The commissioners spend a tremendous amount of time unpacking complicated development plans and imposing reasonable conditions upon developers in exchange for their right to develop Chesterfield in a useful and attractive manner. By the time such decisions get to the Board of Supervisors, the commission has heard from the public and resolved most of the controversy. The board

is merely fine tuning the results of significant negotiations between the commission, county planning staff and developers.

Being a supervisor can take as much or as little time as you have to give it. Beyond attending regularly scheduled board meetings and briefings with county staff, I received invitations to attend an average of 10 events per week, both within and beyond the Midlothian District lines, before and after 5 p.m. All were supporting or celebrating a group doing valuable work for some sector in the county. If I didn't have a busy law practice and a little girl at home, I easily could have made this a full-time pursuit.

Citizens complained to me not because they couldn't get answers from the county, but because they didn't like the answers they got. Flowing from that, I sincerely believe that the Chesterfield County staff is knowledgeable, professional and responsive. Recognizing that they may have been particularly helpful to me because I was on the board, I also made some inquiries anonymously. Those too were addressed thoroughly and efficiently.

You can't believe everything you read in the daily newspaper. I was in the unique position of seeing something in print and being able to ask the county attorney or administrator what was really happening. I realized that while the county's actions may appear newsworthy, they were usually well-reasoned and based on limits placed on counties by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Many people asked whether decisions are really made in smoke-filled back rooms. However, I found there to be no behind-the-scenes dealings between board members. Virginia's Freedom of Information Act laws prevent more than two board members from discussing public business outside the public arena and, as far as I could see, those laws are carefully followed. While there are numerous one-on-one wireless phone conversations between board members leading up to meetings, issues are usually decided on the spot in the public eye.

I appreciate my three month "internship" on the Board of Supervisors as a once in a lifetime experience. I'll never forget the first time I sat, like Lily Tomlin's little Edith Ann, in the huge green leather chair at a board meeting. The first order of business was to recognize clowns from the "Fruit Loop Troop" during National Clown Month in August.

Thanks for the unique opportunity to serve the Midlothian District.

Recent selected real estate sales in Chesterfield County

Subdivision Name	Property Address	BRM	BATH	1/2BATH	SQ FT	SOLD	ASSESSED
PHYSIC HILL	14341 RANGER RD						
				*	\$50,000	\$33,000	
PLEASANT DALE	3213 POINSETTA CT	3	2	0	1,492	\$219,950	\$163,700
PLEASANT RIDGE	102 REAMS CT	3	2	0	1,458	\$181,000	\$133,600
POCONO	641 LEMOINE LN	3	2	0	1,326	\$175,000	\$127,200
POCOSHOCK HILLS	2201 IVES LN	3	2	1	1,836	\$205,000	\$145,600
POCOSHOCK SUBD	1505 RAYBURN RD	3	1	0	960	\$105,000	\$97,200
POWDERHAM	13311 POWDERHAM LN	4	2	1	2,256	\$307,000	\$249,200
PRESTWOULD FARMS	1603 S ESTHER CT	4	2	1	1,800	\$210,000	\$158,700
PROP. NOT IN A DEVELOPMENT							
	12209 BEAVERWOOD DR	4	3	1	2,414	\$353,300	\$229,200
	11745 CHESTER RD	7	4	0	4,284	\$500,000	\$259,400
	15740 COSBY RD	3	2	0	2,008	\$504,000	\$238,600
	14608 GENITO RD	2	1	1	1,140	\$175,000	\$107,900
	5401 MEADOWAY RD	4	3	1	2,310	\$567,500	\$247,200
	7201 OTTERDALE RD	4	2	1	1,568	\$600,000	\$338,100
	7550 OTTERDALE RD				*	\$4,635,000	\$0
	14331 RIVER RD	4	2	1	3,012	\$419,950	\$342,400
	6101 WOODPECKER RD	3	3	1	3,596	\$695,000	\$405,900

Subdivision Name	Property Address	BRM	BATH	1/2BATH	SQ FT	SOLD	ASSESSED
PROVIDENCE	1300 PROVIDENCE RIDGE TN	3	2	1	2,074	\$303,810	\$227,800
PROVIDENCE COURT	7906 CLOVERTREE CT	3	2	1	1,159	\$124,000	\$89,000
PROVIDENCE CREEK	2330 PROVIDENCE CREEK RD	3	2	1	1,908	\$201,500	\$163,300
PROVIDENCE FARMS	6711 ELK RD	4	2	1	1,876	\$166,060	\$144,600
QUAIL HOLLOW	10720 TRAILWOOD DR	3	1	1	1,536	\$160,000	\$132,400
QUAIL OAKS	3007 GAFFNEY RD	3	1	0	1,040	\$143,350	\$102,500
QUALLA FARMS	5314 RIDGERUN TR	4	2	0	1,756	\$132,000	\$117,200
QUEENSMILL	13118 BOGGS CR	3	2	0	1,796	\$223,000	\$223,000
RADTKE VALLEY FARMS	15103 WOODS EDGE RD				**	\$45,000	\$36,900
RAYON PARK	3028 CONGRESS RD	3	1	0	1,236	\$120,000	\$83,000
REAMS RUN	10000 REAMS RD	3	1	0	1,024	\$90,000	\$98,100
REDINGTON	705 REDINGTON CT	3	2	0	1,912	\$238,000	\$169,100
REEDS BLUFF	11909 REEDS BLUFF LN	4	3	1	3,086	\$499,500	\$412,400
REEDS HILL	2941 MISTY RIDGE CT	4	3	1	2,842	\$580,000	\$421,800
RESERVOIR (THE)	14628 SAILBOAT CR	3	3	0	2,327	\$326,210	\$242,300

see REAL ESTATE, page 11

County leaf burning rules in effect until Dec. 15

The Chesterfield County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services is reminding residents about county leaf burning rules. The burning of leaves is allowed in designated areas of the county on Nov. 15-Dec. 15 from 8 a.m. on Mondays until noon on Fridays.

A map of designated leaf burning areas is available online by visiting www.chesterfield.gov/PublicSafety/Fire and then clicking on the link for "open burning/leaf burning."

The burning of limbs, tree trunks, logs or stumps is considered property maintenance or land clearing and is not allowed under the

conditions of leaf burning. The burning of tree and garden trimmings requires a 30-day permit and is not allowed under the conditions of leaf burning. Campfires and warming fires are allowed if the fuel is clean wood, with no trash, construction debris, oil, tires, etc. Bonfires require written permits from the Department of Fire and EMS' Fire and Life Safety Division.

For more information, or to inquire about a burning permit, contact the Fire Marshal's Office at 748-1426 or firemarshal@chesterfield.gov.