

Roads create more growth and congestion

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for printing "Republicans, Democrats still disagree on roads" [Dec. 20]. It was a real eye-opener for this reader.

I've been waiting to hear someone ask this simple question: In what way will Chesterfield really be better when each and every square inch of the county is covered by tract housing? Delegate Lee Ware gets right to the point when he declares - to my relief - that he and his colleagues will try "to ensure that we don't just build more roads for more developments that only lead to more traffic, and hence, more congestion."

That's just what I've been hoping to hear. It's time we all realized that growth, per se, isn't necessarily good. Some of it is quite awful, in fact. Quality of life is what matters. Do people really believe we can pave our way out of traffic problems forever? Are people really that offended - or tempted - by the sight of our few remaining horse farms?

All we have to do is look at places that came late to "smart growth" principles, like so much of northern Virginia. The results: endless traffic snarls, overcrowded schools, higher taxes and a lower quality of life. Thankfully, there are now some faint rumblings of "smart growth" principles being heard around here. I just hope they get in gear while so much of Chesterfield remains what all of it once was - beautiful.

Richard Lanier
Midlothian

Another call for a moratorium

Dear Editor,

Recently in your paper [Nov. 29] a reader was calling for a building moratorium in Chesterfield County.

I couldn't agree more. Every year, usually starting in mid-July, the county is calling for voluntary water restraint. Some years, they have become mandatory. Yet, at least 10,000 more homes are approved. I took a trip to the Swift Creek Reservoir in summer. You could walk almost [halfway] into the lake, and with the increased development, it is only a matter of time until this water resource will be fouled with the runoff of fertilizer, animal excrements, etc. Just look at the [Chesapeake] Bay.

The James River only flows at a trickle at that time of year [and] wells have caved in, so my friends from the neighboring county have told me. Lake Chesdin, with its motorboat traffic and its unavoidable oil trails, is certainly not much of a help.

Besides, there is also a town east of Chesterfield that demands its share of this resource. Next time I am being asked to conserve, I will consider this.

As for the proffer question, there should be none. If a developer is intending to build 4,000 homes as proposed around the Watkins Centre, the first item on the developer's agenda should be the construction of at least two schools before the construction of such a great amount of homes can proceed. Why should the taxpayers of this county subsidize the developers?

As for Route 60, a second elevated tier of road is needed once the 4,000 homes are constructed. Widening is no longer an option as there is no room to do so. I sincerely hope there will be some drinking water available.

George Dorsch
Midlothian

The county attorney has said that an extended building moratorium would be illegal by Virginia law. Editor

County leadership needs more accountability

Dear Editor,

I would like to pose the following questions to our county "leadership":

1. Do you really think citizens are so naive as to acknowledge almost a 100 percent increase in duplicating Cosby High School is allegedly due to increases in building costs and code requirements?

2. Why was Clover Hill [High School] built only to last 34 years and not permit upgrades? The school I went to is over 50 years old, [and was] built like a rock, permitting technological upgrades. Seems like a gross lack of vision when planning, especially to allow for growth.

I feel for the student at Clover Hill who experiences hot/cold differences in the classroom temperatures. Has anyone bothered to check the air handling system?

3. In a retrospective review of architectural drawings, was there sufficient visionary planning of Cosby to warrant even duplicating it? Who determines this? And whoever does, do they have the credentials to be credible?

4. Moving on to Lane Ramsey and the breakdown of his salary: What criteria are used to award him a full or partial annual bonus?

5. Is there a periodic review of Ramsey's personal car usage to warrant his mileage allowance?

6. When I returned to my native Virginia and settled in Chesterfield, I was told and continue to read of responsible growth in the county to preserve its natural beauty. As I look at all the strip malls that have cropped up from the entrance of Brandermill to Woodlake, I am hard pressed to ascertain where the natural beauty was preserved.

Reflecting back over the past 15 years, the outcomes of growth smack of a good ol' boy mentality, indiscriminate spending and limited accountability for their actions. The end result is continued traffic congestion, school overcrowding, redundant building of unsightly strip malls and a gross paucity of forward thinking. Bottom line, residents need to demand more accountability from the leadership of Chesterfield.

Sandra S. Mitchell
Chesterfield

Christmas Mother says "Thank you"

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Christmas Mother Committee, I would like to thank Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Petersburg and greater Richmond area citizens, businesses, civic organizations, local governments, schools and churches for their generous gifts of new clothing, new toys, new books, food and monetary donations. I also wish to thank the many volunteers who gave countless hours of their time by helping at the Christmas Center and the 584 groups and individuals who sponsored a family.

This year, 1,693 families, foster children and elderly [persons] were helped. The community gave 65,000 pounds of non-perishable food and provided \$15,000 in gift certificates for perishable items. By the end of December, \$154,696.75 was donated. Thank you for making the music of giving and sharing such a vital part of your holiday season. I wish you much happiness in 2007.

Sharon K. Robertson
2006 Chesterfield-Colonial Heights
Christmas Mother

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