



"...the ultimate losers of lowering developer's fees will be the residents of these expanding communities"

# OPINIONS

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## Don't abandon the proffer system

Dear Editor,

Cash proffers from developers may not be the best answer to support Richmond area growth needs, but the alternative proposed by Sen. John Watkins's bill (SB768) to abandon proffers in place of a much lower "impact fee" sounds like it abandons the needs of growing communities instead. In Chesterfield County, for example, it is unclear where the shortfall will come from if the current [maximum] proffer of \$15,600 per house is replaced by the proposed impact fee of only \$5,000 per house.

In what appears to be a lightly veiled attempt to support the Home Builders Association of Virginia and other interest groups to help victims of our current housing slump, the ultimate losers of lowering developer's fees will be the residents of these expanding communities. The local population should have the ability to reach out to their local elected boards when faced with overcrowding and the needs for more public infrastructure.

Will the General Assembly or special interests come to our aid when the only alternative to support growth needs will be higher taxes? Will the home builders curtail their projects, or simply continue current building practices and then leave the funding for critical support needs like schools, roads, fire and police stations, and maybe even a public park or two, up to the residents left behind? Sen. Watkins needs to fix the self-admitted bugs in his bill before subjecting his constituents to uncertain consequences.

**Dennis Papa  
Moseley**

### Simple exercise helps with shin splints

Dear Editor,

I would like to make a comment regarding the Health & Fitness article in your Feb. 13 edition. You mention several options to deal with shin splints. All of them are viable options, and as you suggest, consult a doctor if necessary. However, I would like to mention a simple strengthening and conditioning movement. A simple exercise that may help prevent shin splints is the following:

Try heel raises and heel drops. While on a step, slowly rise up on your toes and then slowly lower your heels. Repeat 10 times. Hold in the up position for 2 seconds and the down position for 2 seconds.

**Henry Leidheiser  
Certified Personal Trainer  
Richmond**

### Bull & Bear meeting is not a big deal

Dear Editor,

It appears a great deal is trying to be made out of what, in reality, is nothing.

For those who are not familiar with the legislative process that takes place every January and February at the General Assembly, it is very fast-paced. Prompt response to legislative matters is integral to having any affect on the final outcome.

Of the four bills mentioned in the [Ches-

terfield] Observer article of Feb. 13, SB768 and HB1573 were introduced on the last day for filing bills for this legislative session, Jan. 18. SB768 was first discussed in the Senate Local Government Committee on Jan. 29, 11 days after it was introduced. Senate Finance, to which Local Government referred SB768, discussed this bill for the first time on Feb. 6 with "crossover" scheduled for the following week on Feb. 12. Thus, there was limited time to discuss this particular bill, which has potentially tremendous financial impact on Chesterfield County, with the Chesterfield delegation.

During the legislative session, those who are diligent about their responsibilities and not distracted by unrelated issues are spending their time attending committee and subcommittee meetings, reading legislation that has been introduced, hopefully, and reviewing the governor's budget proposals, as well as meeting with various constituents and other interested parties. There is indeed a much greater likelihood of getting their attendance and attention if a meeting with them is planned closer to where they are already spending a great portion of their time and efforts than elsewhere.

One can be critical, if one so chooses, of this board for the location of the meeting. Notification, however, is not an issue. The board minutes clearly state the meeting was adjourned until Jan. 22 for a dinner meeting at the Bull & Bear Club with the county's legislative delegation. These minutes are posted on the county's Web site, and the board meetings are broadcast live by Comcast and rebroadcast several times after the actual meeting.

If this was such an important issue, where was the media, print and broadcast, between Jan. 9 and Jan. 22?

This board should be given credit for being responsive to legislation impacting Chesterfield County and its promptness in meeting with the Chesterfield delegation upon taking office on Jan. 9. The same parties who are "straining at gnats" and being so critical in the early stages of this board's tenure are the very same ones who failed to "see the boulders" in their own eyes in 2007.

**Bob Herndon  
Chesterfield**

### More complaints about Winterfield Road

Dear Editor,

I read with interest a letter written by Melissa Holly that was published in the Jan. 30 edition of the Chesterfield Observer. She was complaining about the changes to Winterfield Road between Westfield Road and Midlothian Turnpike, [which were] bad enough at the time she wrote her letter. Since the installation of the roundabout, things have only gotten worse.

This stretch of Winterfield Road is heavily traveled and is a necessary route to Midlothian Turnpike for residents of Salisbury and other subdivisions nearby. My husband travels this road twice daily, and I myself travel it 4-8 times weekly. The road was bad enough before any of these changes were made; it's a nightmare now. The roundabout with its many yield signs is very confusing. The roundabout and the tight curves in the northbound lane are further slowing traffic and making congestion worse. Those small, tight curves are almost impossible for larger vehicles, such as school

buses, to negotiate.

What was [the Virginia Department of Transportation] (VDOT) thinking? Why was the developer allowed to make these asinine changes to this busy stretch of road? Doesn't anyone at VDOT review the land use permits for feasibility and public safety before they are issued? These changes will obviously benefit the developer but will inconvenience and perhaps endanger travelers on Winterfield Road. I thought VDOT's job was to make bad roads better and safer, not worse. I think someone sold out the best interests of Midlothian residents to a developer with deep pockets.

**Ellen M. Eggerding  
Midlothian**

Dear Editor,

The roundabouts in Paris are beautiful and charming, as anyone who has seen them will tell you. The roundabouts on Monument Avenue allow us an opportunity to enjoy the monuments and add to the traffic safety in the area. The recently added roundabout on Winterfield Drive in Midlothian is both stupid and dangerous. When traffic is backed up to the train tracks and a train comes by on a busy morning, who will be responsible? It does not matter who paid for the roundabout, it is a terrible idea. The county officials who approved the roundabouts must not travel on this road on the way to and from work each day.

Recently, a local reporter made us aware of how many "public servants" are ridiculously overpaid in our county. I am guessing that the people who approved the roundabout on Winterfield fall into that category. They should be fired immediately for approving such a dangerous and ridiculous plan. In a county without shoulders on many of the roads and lacking sidewalks almost everywhere, adding a roundabout on a two-lane road is almost too much to believe.

I hope my neighbors will join me in boycotting the shopping center we don't need or want in an already problematic area.

**Marilyn Nelson  
Midlothian**

*Dale Totten, VDOT's Chesterfield residency engineer, provided the following response: The ultimate plan will realign Winterfield Road to the north of the roundabout beyond the railroad crossing. The new alignment will present a much better path for the northbound vehicles once through the roundabout. With regard to navigating the roundabout, drivers need to realize that the center portion of the roundabout is a truck apron intended to assist large vehicles in navigating the roundabout. Roundabouts are becoming a proven transportation option in many locations around the commonwealth. I would encourage the drivers to slow down, follow the signage and adhere to the right-of-way. For more information go to <http://www.virginiadot.org/info/faq-roundabouts.asp>*

*Letters to the editor can be e-mailed to [letters@chesterfieldobserver.com](mailto: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](http://www.chesterfieldobserver.com) and click on "letters policy."*

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(804) 545-7500

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
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