

Comments Received- E-mail August 1, 2008-September 25, 2008

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Gentlemen and Ladies:

My wife and I have been residents of James City County (Governor's Land) for six years after moving here from the northeast. We are in our early 50s and are both employed full time. We decided to move here after a tour of the area in 2000. I write to you because we are very fearful that certain aspects of the area that were important in shaping our decision to move here are very being threatened and even lost - possibly forever. We perceived this area to offer a distinctive small town or semi-rural residential opportunity within an hour's drive of airports, shopping, fine restaurants, theater, and other accoutrements found in contemporary midsize cities. We especially liked the fact that woods and wildlife were so close to us and enjoyed seeing turkeys, deer, foxes, raccoons, turtles and other animals in and around our yard. We thrilled at the undeveloped land nearby that we knew was home to more of these creatures. We enjoyed the distinctive history of the area and the quaintness that it seemed to enculture within the community. We took pride in the fact that, if we avoided Rt.60, a certain aesthetic seemed to prevail as strip malls, apartment complexes, and other eyesores of suburbia were largely absent. We also appreciated the fact that the Williamsburg area seemed to attract upper-income residents to large homesites. Many of the areas in various southern states that we considered appeared to have sporadic zoning and to encourage the development of shopping areas and lower-cost housing, even apartments, in close proximity to high-cost residential property. Coming from the north, we are more accustomed to the protection of higher-end properties from encroachment by businesses and lower-cost homes. In the last several years, each of these factors that prompted our move here has changed. The opening of Monticello Rd. and the growth of ugly strip malls, gas stations, and fast food restaurants along it was the first affront to our expectations. Next came New Town and the destruction of large amounts of forest land for inexpensive and unattractive housing and a number of chain stores that can be found in every suburb from Maine to California. Now there are new malls and housing units being built on Hwy. 199. We have heard of the saying that: "You want to close the door after you move in to be the last folks in." But this misses the point. We were attracted to a semi-rural yet expensive bedroom community that seemed removed, attitudinally and geographically from the strip malls, fast food restaurants, chain stores, and cheap apartment complexes that dominate so much of the rest of our country. We came here to escape that - and now it is following us here. We are upset. We encourage the planners to set aside large areas of woodlands and open space through public purchase. The purchase should be financed through an increase in taxes that will discourage people who cannot afford extra taxes from moving here. This is a model that has worked very well in other communities threatened by growth. I respect the rights of property owners to develop their lands for profit. Let us give them the same profit for non-development. There should be a moratorium on new road building and a tightening of zoning requirements to encourage larger homesites, less population density, and less business development. Newport News, which appears to be one large strip mall surrounded by inexpensive housing, is near enough for any who need their "fix" of fast food or cheap shoes. We do not need to have businesses offering these items in our back yards. James City County was a truly special place that held the promise of being a refuge from so many of the ills that contaminate 21st-century America. It could be a high-end bedroom community with lots of forests, wildlife, and open space. Why are we trading that special place for one that looks like any middle class suburb in the country? It makes no sense. If you persist in the destruction of the woodlands, and the vision that goes with it, you will only succeed in driving out the high end residents who can and will finance the

county through more taxes. The choice is yours - large homesites separated by woodlands and waterways in a bucolic and historic setting, or another stretch of highway full of apartments, strip malls, and filling stations. You CANNOT have it both ways! The choice is yours - and we'll be watching. We are young enough to move again if we have to.

JCC Resident yes no did not indicate

Heard about from: N/A
