

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

SHORELINE

A Journal of Natural Resources, Public Affairs and Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

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Number 3

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Rural Gentrification

Could it happen here?

By Mary Miller

Gentrification of communities has long been connected to urban neighborhoods – the term gentrification was coined in reference to the invasion of a city’s working class neighborhoods by wealthier gentry. Old urban neighborhoods were “discovered” as city populations grew and incoming professionals sought in-town housing. Now a growing body of research has documented the same sort of thing happening in rural towns and villages since the last decades of the 20th Century.

Baby boomers began retiring and looking to relocate to places where the pace was slower, the cost of living lower and where communities with natural amenities were becoming “retirement destinations.” Additionally, the footloose nature of work in the 21st Century began to allow telecommuting and e-commerce to prosper away from urban areas and permit younger workers to live and work remotely in those “unspoiled” rural communities.

The research investigates and documents what happens to the people, lifestyles, long-held traditions and elements of local culture in an area when it has been “discovered” and there is an influx of upper-income residents to a small rural community.

Local housing market changes

One of the first things to occur is pressure on the local housing market. Land becomes more valuable as larger, high value homes are constructed for wealthier retirees and other newcomers. Housing opportunities decrease for low income households. Rentals either disappear as the buildings are purchased or soar in price as demand exceeds supply. Often elderly residents find their housing costs increasing beyond their ability to pay, and they are displaced as their taxes rise to fund the public services demanded by the newcomers. The local workforce is locked out of the housing market and employees often have to commute back into town to hold their jobs. Locals find themselves in the ironic position of seeing increased housing and decreased affordability.

The local workforce is locked out of the housing market and employees often have to commute...to hold their jobs.

And finally, the affordable housing market collapses when it becomes unprofitable to construct low cost homes. Low-income families are driven away from the communities where they were born and raised. Newly constructed housing serves upper-income residents and the only entities working to meet low-income families’ housing needs are nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

Manufactured homes are often a rural affordable housing option, but these homes, single-wides especially, become less welcome as residential neighborhoods become more upscale. Zoning which discriminates against this housing type in residential districts is particularly harmful in rural areas and promotes gentrification in lower income communities. A publication from the Rutgers University Press states that exclusionary land-use controls, such as the prohibition of mobile homes, are a cause of increased housing costs. Exclusionary land-use controls are defined as “those controls which appear to interfere seriously with the availability of low and moderate income housing where it is needed.”

See “Rural Gentrification,” *Cont’d on page 2*

“Rural Gentrification,” Cont’d from p. 1

Community character starts to fade.

Gentrification in rural areas usually affects the whole community. Traditional close family ties and the support structures of nearby extended families are harder to maintain as costs for housing and services force people to leave. The rural lifestyle that fosters connections among social groups and church groups and promotes neighborhood bonds becomes frayed. Local traditions fade as the older residents leave, fishing and hunting grounds become gated developments, and treasured sites are demolished. The “disadvantaged natives are left to fend for themselves,” concluded a 2005 Department of Housing and Urban Development-sponsored report by the Housing Assistance Council.

Pressure from rural gentrification is connected more to economic circumstance than to any other single factor. Many rural residents have a lower household income than city dwellers, often have a lower education attainment rate and are generally older. All those factors make a sudden change in household expenses, especially the costs of housing, almost unable to overcome. This then leads to the dislocation and displacement which often accompanies rural gentrification – the inability to bear the rising costs of a community filling with upper income households.

Race is also an element of rural gentrification when a minority group is a major component of the local population. A report from the Brookings Institution concludes: “the issue of gentrification

has historically included a strong racial component – lower income minority (African American, Hispanic and Native American) residents are replaced by higher income white residents. As a result, an influx of higher income households inevitably will put pressure on historically minority communities.”

Even as higher income retirees and workers using new broadband technologies were migrating to rural areas with small-scale lifestyles and natural amenities, another force was at work to accelerate the process of a community’s transformation.

Elderly residents find their housing costs increasing beyond their ability to pay.

The Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture introduced the term “retirement destination” to pinpoint in-migration of retirees and analyze demographic trends in rural America. Marketing professionals soon began using that concept and the term to brand their rural developments and attract new residents – sometimes recreating the suburban lifestyle of the newcomers to replace the rural lifestyle of the original residents.

Could it happen here?

There are several markers that consistently appear when rural gentrification is happening in an area:

- An influx of higher income households into a previously rural community;
- New housing construction focused on high value homes;
- Economic pressure, especially housing costs, on lower-income households, low wage earners and the elderly creates displacement within that group;
- If there is a minority population, a steady decline is noted in that population;
- Pressure to exclude manufactured homes, particularly single-wides, in residential neighborhoods.

To return to the title question: Rural Gentrification – could it happen here?

- In 1990, the median home price in Northampton County was \$47,700; in 2000, it was \$78,700; in 2010, it was \$206,000.
- In 2000, 45 building permits were reported issued at an average cost of

\$105,900; in 2009, 14 permits were issued, average cost \$220,000.

- Of 30 homes listed for sale in Cape Charles in February, 2014, and ranging in price from \$49,900 to \$575,000, the average price was \$256,000. The county’s median household income is \$36,965.
- In 1980, the African American population of the county was 49.8%. In 2013, it was 36.7%.
- In 2014, the Board of Supervisors has proposed a change to the Zoning Ordinance that would ban single-wide manufactured homes from every residential zoning district in the county.

The Real Question.

Perhaps the real question should be: Rural Gentrification – has it already happened here?

Author’s Note. *Information resources for this article include: Zoning and Housing Costs: The Impact of Land-Use Controls on Housing Price, New Brunswick, N.J. Rutgers University Press; Design-based Regulations for Manufactured Urban Infill Housing, The University of Georgia, Athens Department of Historic Preservation; They Paved Paradise . . . Gentrification in Rural Communities, Housing Assistance Council for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Is There Such a Thing as ‘Rural’ Gentrification?, Dr. Thomas Sigler and Jonathan Nettler, Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota; Beyond Gentrification, PBS special; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS), US Census, Northampton County public records.*



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**University of Virginia
ABCRC Seminar Series**

Thursday, March 27

7 PM, Oyster

**“Coastal ecosystems and their role
in mitigating storm damage to
coastlines”**

Matthew Reidenbach
Associate Professor, Department of
Environmental Sciences, UVA

The seminar is free and open to the public.

Light refreshments will be served.

Cliff Road, Oyster

Zoning – get informed

Those who read *ShoreLine* regularly know that we've taken a strong interest in Northampton County's revision of its zoning ordinance. The edit board is unanimously agreed that the ordinance needs revision – and we're unanimously agreed that the County's conduct of that revision has been so poor that it has raised the spectre of embarrassing legal action.

What's been wrong with the process? First, the public has been effectively shut out. There has been no informed public involvement in developing the revision. The so-called public information meetings on the draft revision held in December were virtually meaningless because no presentations actually informed the public about the draft ordinance. Maps were displayed and staffers, available to answer the public's questions, were more than willing to expound upon minor details. This process tended to obfuscate the real changes. In fact, without substantive information, it was hard to know what questions to ask. As *ShoreLine* goes to press at the end of February, two more public information meetings are scheduled. It remains to be seen if they will be any more informative than the December meetings.

Second, the Board of Supervisors bypassed the Planning Commission and tried to give the comprehensive planning process to a hand-picked *ad hoc* committee chaired by Bill Parr, a local realtor. When it was pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan must be completed by the Planning Commission, the *ad hoc* charter from the Board of Supervisors was limited to the economic development part of the Comprehensive Plan. This final committee report was largely ignored and got little public attention. Nevertheless it appears to have had a lot of back channel influence on the draft revision of the zoning ordinance. The county has invested a lot of money and effort to develop a professional Planning Commission. It is irresponsible not to use that expertise for a complicated and technical zoning revision.

Third, Development Director Charles McSwain's claim of consistency with the Comp Plan notwithstanding, the draft revision is *not* consistent with the existing Comprehensive Plan approved several years ago – and the Planning Commission has neither completed the state Code-required five-year revision of the Plan nor presented recommendations to the BOS. The requirement for the development of a Comprehensive Plan *before* adopting new zoning ordinances is just plain common sense. It is, indeed, the responsibility of the County "to lay out a road map for the future" (a Comprehensive Plan) before setting the operating rules that will determine that future (the zoning ordinance).

Finally, many provisions of the draft revision are simply bad land use management. They are too numerous to enumerate here, but others have made an effort at doing so. We have enclosed an insert in this issue, "*New Zoning Affects Homeowners, Residents, Businesses,*" which came in "over-the-transom," as they say. This is an effort by concerned citizens to understand the revision and its impact on the community and its future. It has been circulating in the community for several weeks and appears to add detail to the generic letter sent to property owners by the County and published in the *Eastern*

Save the Date

CBES/Shorekeeper Annual Meeting

CBES and the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper announce plans for the joint annual meeting of the two organizations:

Tuesday, April 15 at 7:00 PM

Nandua High School Auditorium, Onley

Each organization will report to its membership about its activities and plans for the future. CBES will elect directors for the 2014-2016 term.

The meeting will introduce Jill Bieri, the new Director of the Virginia Coast Reserve, to the audience and will feature a presentation by Bruce Underwood of the NASA Wallops Flight Facility discussing NASA's activities on the Shore, its impact on the local community, economy and environment. Questions from the audience will be encouraged. The evening will close with a reception featuring homemade desserts, coffee and soft drinks. The meeting is free and open to the public!

Help Restore Riparian Buffers!

Join CBF and partners to plant native plants and trees along local waterways at:

**Camp Occohannock on the Bay
9403 Camp Lane, Belle Haven**

Thursday, March 13, 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Friday, March 14, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Saturday, March 15, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

RSVP Libby Norris:

LNorris@cbf.org or 757-719-3808.

Volunteers should bring a hat, sunscreen, bug spray (if desired), drinking water, and wear long pants and sturdy shoes that can get wet and muddy. These events are suitable for children closely supervised by adults at a 1:1 ratio.

Rain or shine!

Rain or shine!

Shore News. We have confirmed that the amendments and page numbers noted in the insert are in accord with the "*Proposed Northampton County Zoning Code*" published on the County website. We offer this insert as a guide for our readers to some of the details included in the proposed revision.



Speaking for the Trees: The Case for Forest Farming

By Jay Ford

“The forest is a peculiar organism of unlimited kindness and benevolence that makes no demands for its sustenance and extends generously the products of its life and activity; it affords protection to all beings.” – Buddhist Sutra

Our current farming system has made feeding the world possible and is undoubtedly responsible for much of the prosperity our nation enjoys. However, these industrial practices are not without consequence.

From the dangers of runoff, and the relationship between what we grow, what we consume, and our nation’s health, our current method of growing, while highly efficient, is not without fault. Despite many farmers’ conscientious environmental stewardship actions, at the heart of our agricultural system is a design that cannot measure up to the evolving societal expectations for our food system. We want our food to be cost-effective and abundant; we also want food that does not harm our environment and gives us the nutrition we need. Annual monoculture can no longer be the only model for large-scale food production, and we need to begin exploring alternatives. Forest farming addresses these emerging values we want from a food system while still feeding the world.

I would like to begin with a little thought experiment comparing what happens on an average agricultural site versus a parcel of land left to its own devices. Let’s start with an average farm on the Eastern Shore. The farm is surrounded on each side by a drainage ditch, and the elevation will slightly taper from the center point to the ditches in all directions ensuring that standing water will not be a concern. The land is designed to wick water as quickly as possible off the surface and into our waterways.

Now let’s consider what’s in the field. Corn and Soybeans are safe bets for many farms around here. These annual crops provide little cover for falling rain. Most rain hits the ground like a bullet leading to run off of topsoil into the very efficient drainage ditches coupled with whatever fertilizers and pesticides the farmer used. Even if farmers embrace all current Best Management Practices, they will continue to put nutrients, albeit lesser amounts, into the environment. Additionally, they will deplete the soil of essential nutrients, necessitating expensive soil amending. Our current agricultural design requires a constant input of energy from offsite to keep the land productive.

Now, let’s consider a field left alone without human intervention. Within a few years, an untouched clear cut field will have markedly higher organic content and available nutrients in the topsoil. The drainage ditches will slowly fill and the field will develop a natural topography all its own. Despite those changes, there will not be standing water as the soil’s water retention capacity increases significantly and thirsty shrubs and trees have appeared. The bacterial and fungal life of the soil is now thriving, allowing for varied and complex life to take hold. In a short time, a young forest stands, teeming with life where just a short time before there was little more than exposed soil. Most land here on the Shore, if left to its own devices, will become a forest.



Jay Ford is the founder, with his wife Tatum, of Shine and Rise Farm in Painter, Virginia, a chemical-free, permaculture farm raising happy animals, plants and people. Jay is also the Executive Director and “keeper” for Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper organization, working to safeguard and improve the waters of Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

An annual monoculture crop is a story with one possible ending. Whether the field is attacked by pests, or produces higher yields than average, at the end of the season the crop will die, the field will be barren for some time and the cycle of life will begin anew. This process results in a soil that is stunted or kept in a perpetual state of adolescence. Soil will of its own accord mature and carry more life, but we currently reset that process a couple of times a year on most farms.

A forest is like a choose-your-own adventure book. There are many possible futures for a forest and the inhabitants within. The soil is constantly improving allowing for different types of life to thrive when one plant may come under attack. The diversity of species means that no single pest is left unchecked and no food source is so abundant as to lead to population explosions. A mature soil can make many different choices leading to a more stable system overall.

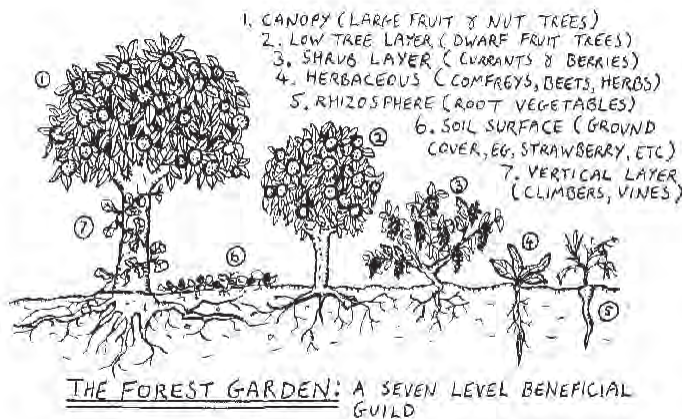
Our farms have been “improved” by man and yet are unquestionably losing carrying capacity, while a forest without the slightest bit of assistance creates a varied and complex ecosystem capable of supporting more and more life over the course of its development. We often think of nature as chaotic or unordered but millions of years of trial and error in the laboratory we call Earth has actually produced vastly superior efficiencies and redundancies to those we have thus far dreamed up. Our task

See **“Forest Farming,”** Cont’d on page 5

“Forest Farming,” *Cont'd from p. 4*

should be applying these natural designs to an agricultural system that can provide the food we need.

So what gives a forest such a leg up on an agricultural field? The major difference is the human “improvements” which could be more accurately labeled “disruptions.” If you are tilling, you are resetting the bacterial and fungal life necessary for more complex life to take hold. Even if you are practicing no-till but only growing annuals you have designed a system that by its very nature will start fresh each year. A perennial agricultural system does not need to grow from seed each year, as a woody structure is already in place; so the plants can continue growing as soon as the temperatures are right.



The second major difference has to do with the sun. All farmers are essentially in the business of harvesting solar energy, and perennials have a very big leg up. When spring rolls around and your little seedlings are sprouting, a tree is already standing tall and will have a full canopy collecting massive amounts of solar energy before annual plants are even remotely ready. Additionally, long after the annuals have died back in the fall, trees' leaves remain green and are still collecting free energy from the sun. Over the course of a year, an apple tree can bring as much as 3 to 4 months of additional solar energy into an ecosystem as compared to corn. This goes a long way to explain why a forest system can build life and soil without human inputs, while an annual farm is doomed to need continually-imported nutrients to keep the system balanced.

In addition to gathering the sun's rays longer than annuals, a perennial system has another advantage in surface area. A field of soy is relatively uniform in height which ensures that one acre of soy gets one acre of sun. An acre of a food forest has varied heights with canopy trees, mid-size trees, shrubs, bushes, grasses, and vines. An acre with these varied heights has more surface area in the same space allowing additional free energy to be captured.

The last major advantage a forest has over a field of annuals has to do with the land down under. Perennial plants have another massive advantage in that their root systems plunge far deeper into the earth, mining trace minerals and water not available to annual plants. These deeper root systems also help provide resiliency in the face of extreme cold and drought that would leave an annual crop decimated.

A forest ecosystem clearly can support a larger amount of life but pine cones make for terrible eating. What foods can we grow here on the Shore that can approximate the various levels

of a forest and give us the maximum yields? As I mentioned above, forests are a choose-your-own adventure book, so the possible combinations are endless, but for our region I do have some recommendations. Chinese Chestnuts, Apples, Asian Pears, Raspberries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Grapes, Asparagus, Rhubarb, Horseradish, Pecans, Hazelnut, Figs, Pomegranates, and many more give us a wonderful place to start. These plants can be easily incorporated into a multi-level forest farm that mimics the success and resiliency of natural systems.

How do we take these lessons and apply them to large scale agriculture? We are just beginning the process of redesigning our farms, and we will undoubtedly find many different models



applicable to different regions. However, it is important to spend a brief moment on the financial side of things as so many derive their living from farming.

An acre planted with the above mentioned crops would conservatively yield over \$3,000 gross revenue at peak production as opposed to an acre of Soybeans that might yield \$800 in a good year. These numbers are of course rough estimates, but it is important to note that a perennial poly-culture can be price-competitive in addition to addressing nutritional and environmental concerns.

Finally, as most of us know, an important part of many large scale farming operations are the subsidy and insurance payments from the government. The recently passed farm bill moves from direct payments to farmers in favor of the more politically palatable insurance payments. These payments are awarded overwhelmingly to annual producers, meaning that each year, with adjustments for inflation, the government will make the same payment. A perennial agricultural system cuts subsidies substantially as the payments do not need to be repeated year after year. Additionally, given that the potential of a perennial food forest compounds over time, the government investment would actually create value.

The reality is that a new design for how we grow our food is not something we can simply flip the switch on. Research and development, market research, and economies of scale are all needed for wide adoption but the case for perennials is compelling. Here on the Eastern Shore, given our sensitive waterways, the benefits of a perennial agricultural system are even more immediate. We are positioned to serve as a leader in an emerging sector of farming; we need only start to planting trees.



Wind/Solar tax rates lower than other industries

ShoreLine Staff Report

A comparison of tax rates in the two Eastern Shore counties shows some major differences in specific tax rates, but overall the differences may even out. The real estate and mobile home tax rates per \$100 of assessed value are about 27% higher in Northampton than Accomack. But Northampton appears to have a lower rate on tangible personal property and on business property like farm machinery, heavy construction and other tools and machinery that are used in the county’s major occupation sectors. (There is no online explanation as to why Chincoteague has a lower tax rate for both real estate and personal property than the same classes of property in the rest of Accomack county.)

2013 Tax Rates per \$100 Assessed Value

	NCo	ACo	Chinco
Real Estate	0.6728	0.53	0.47
Mobile Homes	0.6728	0.53 ¹	0.47 ¹
Tangible Personal Prop	3.85	3.72 ²	3.63 ²
Machinery & Tools	2.00		
Farm Machinery & Equip	1.43		
Heavy Construction Equip	2.86		
Solar Installation	0.49	0.53 ¹	0.47 ¹
Wind Generation	0.49		

¹ According to the Accomack County website, this is the “Tax rate for mobile homes and certain renewable energy equipment.”

² According to the Accomack website, this is the “Tax Rate for all other taxable personal property.”

Solar/Wind Equipment – who controls tax revenues?

In both Accomack and Northampton Counties, the top prize for the lowest tax rates goes to wind, solar and certain renewable energy equipment.

Localities across the country are trying to figure out how to tax industrial wind turbines and solar farms. Counties and towns usually fix the tax rates and/or methods of assessing both real and personal property. But states are beginning to legislate methods and rates for alternative energy equipment, thereby taking taxing authority away from the communities that have permitted the structures.

Frequently the tax revenues that at first seemed to provide a reasonable return to localities are now complicated by changing Federal and state directives concerning depreciation schedules, whether the installations are real property or not, or whether to permit localities to tax the equipment at all. Communities are often stunned to discover that the wind farms they thought would contribute hundreds of thousands of tax dollars every year have, as a result of mandated accelerated depreciation schedules, dwindled to 30% of their original value in as little as five years thereby drastically reducing expected tax revenues.

To avoid these pitfalls, some areas have chosen to tax the “nameplate capacity,” or output capacity of each wind installation. For instance, a Northampton wind farm application to the

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) stated the total energy output at 50 megawatts – the turbines initial combined value is estimated by energy industry sources as approximately \$87.5 million. If the county taxed the “nameplate capacity,” it would tax the 50 megawatts output instead of the \$87.5 million initial value.

But even if the energy output itself is taxed, depreciation is usually still considered as part of the taxing equation. At least one state has legislated a mandatory assessed value figure per turbine, no matter what size – localities are then left with no assessment flexibility. Yet another locality imposes a “facility fee” instead of a tax on each turbine or solar array. But even these best efforts can be complicated by state and Federal actions determining the allowable taxing methods, mandatory depreciation schedules or the elimination of local taxes on renewable energy equipment.

According to the Northampton County Commissioner of Revenue’s office, platforms and other components fixed to the ground would be taxed as real property, while equipment attached to those platforms or poles are taxed as tangible personal property.

Tools/Equipment for jobs – higher tax rates.

In the meantime, both Accomack and Northampton counties have established the lowest of their tax rates on wind and solar equipment. Other machinery, tools and equipment used by local industries such as agriculture, aquaculture, manufacturing, health care, home and equipment repair and professional services are taxed at from two to six times higher than alternative energy equipment.

However, solar and wind energy equipment, according to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Congressional Research Office, would provide none of the jobs such as those supported by the other taxable classes of business personal property. Aside from the initial, temporary construction jobs, which usually require skilled personnel trained by the equipment manufacturers, few other on-site jobs exist in the wind and solar industry. In fact, according to BLS on-line publications about careers in the wind/solar energy fields, “Wind turbine service technicians may work at several different sites and travel among the sites to perform maintenance as needed,” and “Solar plants can even be run remotely.” The bottom line for both Eastern Shore counties is that taxes on the tools and equipment actually used in jobs in the community are taxed at much higher rates than equipment which would produce few, if any, local jobs.

ShoreLine Comment. *We recognize that sometimes new technologies require subsidies in order to become established and available to the general public, but local subsidies through lower tax rates that undercut local businesses that are the backbone of the local economy should be very carefully considered by the political leadership. Why should local land and business owners have to subsidize speculative projects that are already getting substantial subsidies from other sources?*



Wind Turbine “Bait and Switch”?

The status of DEQ and FAA applications for wind turbines in Northampton County are still listed as “work in progress” on the agency websites. Six turbine sites on seaside farms near Eastville are listed on the most recent updates.

Originally touted as a “Virginia Victory” by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the headline read, “*Virginia Lands Nation’s First Offshore Wind Turbine Test Facility.*” Poseiden Atlantic, Ecofys and Fugro were all names associated with the project as promoters guided county Supervisors in the crafting of what the industry called “an unprecedented wind ordinance that accommodates the size and height...” of the first US turbine test facility of its kind.

But time passes, and things change. Conclusions that the 750 foot structures would interfere with flight patterns and radar installations reduced the proposed turbine height to less than 600 feet. Some property owners objected to their properties being part of applications without their knowledge, and proposed sites were changed. The required Virginia Letter of Intent was filed, and then expired almost two years ago. And most recently a report released by PJM Interconnection, which operates the power grid that serves the Delmarva Peninsula, indicates that the applicants have changed direction again and are proposing “an energy only wind powered generating facility” in the county – in other words, a land-based, run-of-the-mill wind farm. Using megawatt output data provided in the PJM report, up to 18 turbines could be sited along the trunk line between Weirwood and Bayview. If this change of merchandise was a retail advertising gimmick, it might be called “bait and switch.”

Two years ago, the county became a willing partner in this project, responding to the promise of jobs and revenue. But “wind generation” has the lowest tax rate in the county – 1/3 the rate of farm equipment. And according to industry sources, small wind farms are generally run remotely, with trained service people coming into the area when maintenance is required. Inter-

VIMS

Public Seminar Series
 Wednesday, Mar. 5, 2013
 7:30 PM
 Virginia Institute of Marine Science
 Wachapreague, Virginia

“Foraging Ecology of Sea Ducks on the Seaside & Bayside of the Eastern Shore”

P.G. Ross
 Acting Director & Senior Marine Scientist
 Eastern Shore Laboratory
 Virginia Institute of Marine Science
 College of William and Mary

The seminar is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

estingly, the proposed new Zoning Code has removed all noise restrictions on industrial wind turbines even though in the two years since the county adopted the wind ordinance, national and international research has documented that of all the effects of wind turbines on local residents, it’s the unremitting low frequency noise that results in the most serious health consequences.

Work on a new noise ordinance is being considered, but localities all over the state have been struggling since 2009 to draft language that will satisfy the courts. In the meantime, the proposed zoning changes will leave Northampton County with noise-generating uses and no protection for neighboring residents.

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SHORELINE

Community Calendar - March 2014

Note: Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.

CBES and Other Activities		Northampton County		Accomack County	
Mar 5	VIMS Public Seminar 7:30 PM, Wachapreague	Mar 3	Board of Zoning Appeals 1 PM, Conference Room	Mar 5	Board of Zoning Appeals 10 AM, Sup. Chambers
Mar 11	CBES Exec. Committee 5 PM, CBES Office	Mar 4	Planning Commission 7 PM, Sup. Chambers	Mar 12	Planning Commission 7 PM, BOS Chambers
Mar 11	Northampton County Public Hearing on Zoning 7 PM, Northampton HS	Mar 11	Board of Supervisors 7 PM, Sup. Chambers	Mar 18	School Board 7 PM, BOS Chambers
Mar 13	Shorekeeper Meeting 1 PM, ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa	Mar 19	Wetlands Board TBA, Conference Room	Mar 19	Board of Supervisors 6 PM, BOS Chambers
Mar 18	ES Groundwater Committee 10 AM, Accomac	Mar 25	School Board 5:30 PM, Sup. Chambers	Mar 20	Wetlands Board 10 AM, Sup. Chambers
Mar 18	CBES Board Meeting 7 PM, Painter	Mar 25	BOS Work Session 7 PM, Sup. Chambers		
Mar 20	UVA Seminar Series 7 PM, Oyster				

www.cbes.org

New Zoning Affects Homeowners, Residents, Businesses

Northampton County is proposing a new Zoning Code---the 125 page document, plus maps, contains changes in land use and development, increased residential densities and decreased setbacks, and adds commercial and other uses in residential neighborhoods with no notice or Public Hearing

1—If you live in a **Town** (you may never have received a notice of these changes):

- Town-edge Districts eliminated (removed)
- Agricultural Districts (adjacent)- reduced setbacks for poultry houses-manure storage, industrial uses, and rezoning permitted to commercial and multi-family units (p. 10, 11, 38)

2—If you live in a **Village, Hamlet or Residential District**:

- no notice to next door neighbors about new Commercial/Recreational/Institutional Uses (pp. 14, 16, 22, 28-34)
- increased density—up to 4 units per acre (pp. 15, 17, 29)
- no single-wide homes, even for relative or caretaker use (pp. 15, 17, 19)
- reduced setbacks for poultry houses, manure storage on farm fields (p. 11, 43)
- 199' towers in residential areas (p. 14, 16, 28)

3—If you live in a **rural subdivision**: (* subdivisions may have Covenants and Restrictions in place)

- rezoned to 4 new Residential Districts---lots of 1 to 5 acres—Commercial, Recreational, Institutional Uses permitted* --no notice to adjacent property owners (pp. 30-34)
- setbacks on adjacent farm fields reduced for poultry houses, manure storage (p. 11, 43)
- odor controls on poultry houses eliminated (removed)
- rezoning permitted for waste sites and commercial development on farmland (no legal noise ordinance) (p. 10)
- 199' towers in residential areas (pp. 30-34)

4—If you live in an **Agricultural District**:

- reduced setbacks for poultry houses, manure storage and non-farm uses (p. 11, 43)
- rezoning permitted for waste sites, commercial and dense residential development (p. 38)

5—If you need **affordable housing**:

- Affordable Housing Density Bonus eliminated--increased density now by right (pp 15,17)
- single-wide homes prohibited in residential neighborhoods (pp. 14-36)
- Mobile Home Park Overlay District eliminated (removed)
- no county low-cost housing proffer policy in place for rezonings (p. 38)

6—If you're in the **Aquaculture** business:

- Oyster Waterfront Commercial District eliminated (*removed*)
- Willis Wharf Waterfront Commercial District: more than 20 non-water dependent uses added by-right (restaurant, inn, vacation rental, etc)----no public notice (*p. 18*)
- Waterfront Hamlet designation protection for Bayford, Cherrystone Landing and Red Bank eliminated (*removed—see map*)
- residential waterfront lot widths reduced to 60' in some Districts—more septic fields, impervious surfaces, and boat traffic over shellfish beds (*pp. 15, 17*)
- Planned Unit Developments rezoning could increase waterfront density—developer sets lot sizes, building types (*p. 38*)
- shoreline setbacks reduced for poultry houses and waste storage (*p. 43*)
- Bay Act protection on Seaside eliminated (*removed*)
- workforce housing impacted by fewer affordable housing options

7—If you're concerned about **resource protection** and preservation:

- Planned Unit Developments, anywhere land is available, increased residential density and septic fields, more impervious surface runoff-- no PUD Ordinance in place (*p. 38*)
- reduced setbacks from shorelines and wetlands (for poultry houses, manure storage, non-farm uses) (*p. 43*)

8—If you value the county's **rural character**, landscape, towns and villages:

- new Industrial, Institutional, Commercial and Recreational uses permitted in AG District, all with reduced setbacks (*p. 10*) and rezoning permitted to PUDs (*p. 38*)
- new Commercial and Recreational uses permitted in residential neighborhoods (*pp. 14, 16, 22, 28-34*)
- no noise level limits in the performance standards

All documents on line at:

<http://www.co.northampton.va.us/departments/planning.html>

Only one Public Hearing has been scheduled—one chance for public comment on these changes

Northampton County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Joint Public Hearing

Tuesday March 11, 2014 * 7PM * Northampton High School * Eastville

YOUR ONLY CHANCE TO COMMENT ON THESE CHANGES

Send written comments for the public record to:

Board of Supervisors Northampton County PO Box 66 Eastville, VA 23347
email: info@co.northampton.va.us **OR** llemond@co.northampton.va.us