

Opinion

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THE FARMVILLE HERALD

YOUR VIEWS I

The schools tell the tale

Dear Editor,

Much has been written lately about the desire for new businesses and growth in Prince Edward County. But aren't we ignoring the "elephant in the room?" What discerning person would move their family, business, employees, or future to a town with such an underserved public education system? Not so long ago the thinking in Prince Edward County regarding public education was not to fund it at all. Not at all. The damage

to this county and its residents can not be overestimated, and it continues. The question now is, has Prince Edward County changed? When we look at the schools that are offered to its citizens, what do we see? Are they a reflection of a county with potential, resources and two colleges? Or are they a reflection that continues to show a pitiful lack of effort for all the children of Prince Edward County?

I am a strong believer in team efforts. Parents, school personnel,

county supervisors, churches, college students, faculty and businesses could be an unbeatable team to reframe Prince Edward schools. Maybe this is the county to try experimental, demonstration schools? Collaborate with private schools and colleges in the area. Hiring and rewarding the best staff available, upholding high standards for behavior and school performance in all areas are just two necessary steps. These cannot happen without a real invest-

ment of county resources, school personnel and parents who want, not just better, but the best for their children.

There is no better place for our efforts to improve the future. The quality of an area's public schools genuinely reflects the value that is placed on its children. Is Prince Edward truly ready to step forward yet?

Suzanne Crouse
Prince Edward

What happens in Buckingham affects everyone

Dear Editor,

We have yet to get protections in Virginia from the ravages of new modern industrial gold mining. Your voices are needed to move Buckingham County Supervisors to adopt available safeguards! There is overwhelming documentation that this industry, with its dire track record around the world, would be devastating for any community.

Buckingham supervisors have created a committee to review the state-funded study on the impacts of gold mining on Virginia and explore local solutions. Supervisors Bryant

and Miles, and myself now serve on this committee. The next public meeting of the County committee on industrial gold mining is Monday, February 13, 4:30 p.m. in the Administration Building, Hwy. 60.

Your input is welcome and needed. This impacts your water, air, land, and your local economy.

The state study has been out since December 1. It unequivocally concluded Virginia does not have sufficient regulations in place to protect our public health from the industry. And unfortunately there are no solutions at the state level in sight. It's up to us

to protect ourselves locally, which we know we can do. And we have to assert the right to protect ourselves.

Ben Price and Joe Lerch have been invited to speak at the meeting on 2/13 about two different and complementary solutions that could be adopted. Ben Price, of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) will speak about the benefits of the proposed rights-based freedom from toxic trespass of metallic mining ordinance. Joe Lerch, from the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) will speak about the state-granted local authority to create a land-use ordi-

nance to prohibit metallic mining.

You are welcome to attend all committee meetings. And then speak up in the public comment period at the Supervisors meeting at 6 p.m. Sign up is 5:30-5:55 p.m. Speaking to your supervisor directly is a good idea as well.

What happens in Buckingham affects all other counties, especially those downstream. Ask your Supervisor to pass both ordinances - we need all the protections we can get!

Heidi Dhivya Berthoud
Buckingham

Should a government body block public comment?

Dear Editor,

I stand behind my letter to the editor published in *The Farmville Herald* on Jan. 25. In my letter I stated that the Buckingham County Electoral Board had never before voted to disallow public comment at an Electoral Board meeting until their meeting on Jan. 17. That statement was challenged in your paper by another reader. I stand by my statement.

You can verify my statement by checking the Electoral Board min-

utes for past years. Electoral Board minutes that are not on-line are on file for inspection at the Registrar's office. If no public comment is mentioned in the Electoral Board minutes, that means that there was no citizen at the meeting who chose to make a public comment. In the past, any member of the public who attended an Electoral Board meeting was always allowed to speak. If a past Electoral Board had voted to disallow public comment, (which it

didn't), that vote would have been recorded in the minutes.

Past minutes show that a vote to disallow public comment never happened until the current Electoral Board did so at their meeting on Jan. 17.

In addition, I can attest to my statement because I was present at all Buckingham Electoral Board meetings from 1991-2019. Members of past Electoral Boards can also confirm my statement. Furthermore,

I checked the Buckingham Electoral Board minutes of meetings back to 1975. None of the minutes showed that the Electoral Board ever voted to block public comment until the current Electoral Board did on Jan. 17.

Should a public governmental body doing public business block public comment at a public meeting?

Margaret Thomas
Buckingham

The citizens need to speak up

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to a recent letter to the editor in *The Farmville Herald* regarding the appeal for civility and respect by those in attendance at Buckingham County Electoral Board meetings. Let me be clear: I am all for civility and respect, but I want to set the record straight on a few points.

I was in attendance at the Jan. 17 Electoral Board meeting. The room was packed. No one was disrespectful. They were upset, but they did not get out of control. People were

upset because the two minute time limit for public comment had been waived at the Jan. 4 meeting to allow speakers to make accusations of fraud in the November election, including the naming of individuals. However, at the Jan. 17 meeting, when many people came prepared to refute these allegations, public comment was not on the agenda.

When a motion was made to revise the agenda to include public comment, the motion was voted down by a partisan vote. And let me be very clear: I am well aware that public

comment at an Electoral Board meeting is not guaranteed. But again, no one got out of hand. A sheriff's deputy was present, but he never had to intervene.

I urge everyone to go to the YouTube video of the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors meeting on Jan. 9 and observe the great civility and respect shown to the supervisors; time stop 44:30.

We are better than this. We can disagree on goals, tactics and timing. We do not need to engage in intimidation, harassment and vitriol.

We can be passionate but not disrespectful in our comments. If you want to preserve a fair and functioning electoral system in this county, the citizens of Buckingham County must speak up.

And I think that is exactly what we are doing. Citizens are lining up to attend Electoral Board meetings in unprecedented numbers and speaking up regarding their concerns. That is the epitome of good democracy.

Maggie Snoddy
Buckingham

Some people miss the point

Dear Editor,

The letters re: the Buckingham county electoral board miss the point. While disruption by unhappy voters may disturb the meeting, the reason they are upset has not been addressed. The county had the same efficient non-partisan registrar for 28 years regardless of which party was in the governor's seat.

The current registrar has done such a good job in her short tenure that she is supported by all of the Board of Supervisors and the many county residents who came

to the meeting in support of non-partisan free and fair elections. For a new GOP board to thwart this process will not help the county vote. The registrar needs training and experience. We need to keep our registrar because she is doing a good job.

Though it is the job of the election board to hire this position, it is certainly the right of the electorate to let them know we support the current registrar.

M. Lenz
New Canton

To submit a letter to the editor please email Editor@FarmvilleHerald.com



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