

Grafton Middle School
405 Grafton Drive
Yorktown, Virginia 23692
(757) 898-0525 Fax (855) 369-2607

York County School Division

Dear YORK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,

Enclosed are some of the letters that our students produced for their Shout Out Project. They were to choose a topic they were passionate about and attempt to affect a change through petitioning the appropriate political official. Attempting to enhance their civic awareness, their choices were confined to their own reality: GMS, YORK COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD, and YORK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, depending on the issue. Research was done and their stance on the subject with possible forms of action also included in their petition.

Please read at your leisure and if you feel inclined, write short answers to the writers of the letters about the feasibility of their issue.

Thank you for your assistance/concern, 8th Grade Civics Teachers
Aaron Boughner
Mary Beth Moss

3/25/17

Brianna Frank

c/o Mrs. Moss

Grafton Middle School

405 Grafton Drive

Yorktown, VA 23692

Dear Sheila Noll,

As a student and resident in York County for only a short time, I am very surprised by the lack of streetlights. While it may be my neighborhood, Grafton Branch, that I am most concerned for I have noticed other neighborhoods lacking streetlights, as well. Being a resident of York County, I am sure you share my concerns.

If you were buying a home in the area, especially with children, would you want to purchase a home in neighborhood without streetlights? It may seem like a minor detail that could be easily overlooked but for some parents, a neighborhood without streetlights could cause them to look for houses in other nearby towns. It is a proven fact that people feel safer with streetlights, even if they don't drastically effect the crime rates in the area. But if you were a criminal, would you want to commit a crime in a well-lit neighborhood? If people don't feel safe in our neighborhood, they may want to leave it, and it would be horrible to lose some of our *amazing* neighbors.

In Grafton Branch, we need streetlights. A great reason in particular would be the dark wooded path that leads to Dare Elementary and other nearby places. It is well used path, but it would probably be used even more if we had lights to see the path. For only a few thousand dollars, we could increase safety, the residents' confidence, and property values in our neighborhood. I think that a few thousand dollars is nothing compared to the relief residents and future residents will feel with the presence of streetlights.

Sincerely,

Brianna Frank

3/26/17

Benjamin Kosin

4A Mrs. Moss

GMS

405 Grafton Drive

Yorktown, VA. 23692

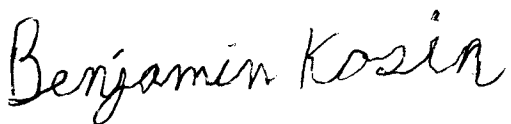
Dear Jeffrey D. Wassmer,

I am very happy about the progress of restoring the Chesapeake Bay and carrying out the state laws. Recently, Donald Trump cut funding for both the State Departments and the Environmental Protection Agency. As a result, there would be less funding for the local counties to do services to help with the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Research has shown that the bay is getting healthier every year and shows no signs of stopping. Because of the recent budget cuts, local areas might receive even less money than what they have before. This would result in the bay being returned to its polluted state again. Also, research says that if funding for the state decreases, the counties and the state would not have enough money to encourage cleaning the bay and sponsor activities like Clean the Bay Day. The lowered funding could mean disaster to the Bay's ecosystem.

I ask you support on fundraising to clean the bay. In supporting this issue, you could make up for the budget cuts that the new president ordered. Although this is a very small price to help the bay, the effects would be extraordinary. I believe that in supporting this issue that you could impact the lives of millions who come to the bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin Kosin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Benjamin Kosin

3-27-17

Dominic Kaleohano Conol
Grafton Middle School
405 Grafton Drive
Yorktown, Va. 23692

Dear York County District,

One day after school when my dad picked me up, he asked me about my friends walking across highway 17. He told me about his friend's mom who was killed crossing the high way because there was no crosswalk, about 15 years ago. He then asked me why I thought the county had not built a crosswalk for people to walk across the highway. I was very puzzled why they had not thought of this in the first place. I had not thought about crosswalks and the importance they have in our community.

In Tabb they have crosswalks everywhere, but in Grafton we only have 2-3 crosswalks. We have at least a 100 plus people walking across the highway. Why do people have to risk their life just because the county has not installed a crosswalk? It can still be very dangerous with a crosswalk, due to crazy drivers, and poorly lit areas. But maybe we can decrease those numbers.

Data has shown that 4500 people die a year from just crossing the street. More then 76,000 people have been killed walking or crossing the street in the past 15 years. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, pedestrians account for nearly 12% of all traffic fatalities. There are many crosswalks that are poorly lit. There are a few cost effective ways that York County can invest in the safety of its community members. Pedestrian crossing warning blinker signs, rectangular rapid flash beacons, in-pavement LED markers, and solar flashing LED beacons. All of these options have zero electrical cost. These signs are virtually maintenance free. These would be cost effective for our county. They would also help to reduce injuries and accidents. They would save lives and increase yielding rates.

I ask the county to support this issue we have in our community. If you decide to support this important issue you can reduce the death rate of people injured and killed by cars. It is a very small price to make a crosswalk. It would take not take too long to make one, unlike the new highway. Achieving this can also better our younger generation, by giving them some exercise by walking to school. Please consider the positive benefits the crosswalks would have on the York County residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Dominic Conol

3/29/17

Abigail Wilson

Mr. Boughner

Grafton Middle School

405 Grafton Drive

Yorktown, VA. 23692

Dear Supervisor Official,

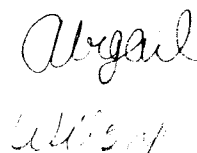
My name is Abigail Wilson and I am a 8th grade student at Grafton Middle School. I have been asked to write a letter to you about a problem in Yorktown, Virginia. As a citizen that lives in Yorktown, I feel that there is not enough public transportation here. In fact there are no public buses at all.

I think there should be more public transportation because some people can't afford cars or have a car that is broken down. I also think we should most definitely have public transportation because there are barely any sidewalks or crosswalks. So how are people going to cross the street without thinking they are going to get hit.

As a resident at Grafton Station for the past 5 years. I have faced many challenges as a 13 year old who walks to assist my family on running errands. I know what your thinking. "Why is a 13 year old girl walking to the laundry matt and walking to the store"? My mother works very hard to put clothes on me and my brothers back, put food on the table, pay bills, getting our needs and wants, and so on. It is very difficult for to do all of that while she is working three jobs. So she needs someone like me to help her out with that stuff. So please make it easy on me and try to at least get some public transportation.

Sincerely,

Abigail Wilson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abigail Wilson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Scott Kassel and Dylan Raney
C/O Mr. Boughner
Grafton Middle School
405 Grafton Drive
Yorktown, Va. 23692

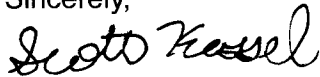
Dear Board of Supervisors,

As teenagers, we are just developing our roles in the York County community. For this to happen effectively, we would need transportation, like sidewalks. Sadly, York County seems to lack many sidewalks for us to get to other places in the County. We would have to resort to more dangerous methods such as walking along the street.

Today, almost eight percent of deaths by traffic crash in the U.S. occur because pedestrians walk on the road instead of on sidewalks. Sidewalks would help pedestrians stay away from the road and therefore be less prone to an accident. They would also give a sense of community if we could walk safely to where we need to go. Every day, we see people walking along Route 17 only a few feet away from cars, just to walk from a bus stop to a store. We don't think this should be an issue for local residents.

We ask that you consider taking action on this issue, and give it more of your attention. In an interview with Susan Kassel, the Chief of Development Services in York County, she stated that the lack of sidewalks "is a public safety and quality of life issue that is a high priority for the County to consider." We realize that this is not necessarily an inexpensive request, but we ask that you consider adding sidewalks for pedestrians and possibly bikers. The residents will be safer and thankful.

Sincerely,



Scott Kassel
Dylan Raney

Need more activities in Yorktown

Mason Davis and Austin Carter

Mr. Boughner

3/29/17

2A

The Board of Supervisors of York County,

In York county, there are many tourist activities in places like historical Yorktown. One of the problems is that York county has no activities for the locals, besides fishing. However, more than half of the people in York county don't like fishing. If you want to do something fun other than fishing, you have to go all the way to Newport News and Hampton. I really think we need more than a movie theater and a bowling alley to keep the people in York County happy and satisfied.

I have a couple of ideas about some things everyone would like and they are affordable for the people in York County. I think a go cart track and a putt putt course would be great for the people of York County. Who doesn't like go carting or putt putt? These would be easy things to build here because of the amount of land space we have. I think a great spot for these attractions would be off Route 17. The reason why I think that is a good spot for entertainment is because everyone uses that route in York County, I mean who doesn't? I think a lot of people in our community will agree with me about the lack of activities and that we need more close by. York County would be a fun place to live with these additional attractions.

I think if we build these attractions then a lot of the local people would be happier. I've asked my friends of what they think and they think it is a great idea and they think that York County needs these types of attractions too. I hope I have convinced you that we must build this attraction, thank for your time.

Sincerely,

Mason Davis and Austin Carter

Austin Carter

Mason Davis

March 27, 2017

Kyler Taliferro and Stepheney Odom – Thomas

GMS

117 Spoon Ct

Yorktown, VA 23693

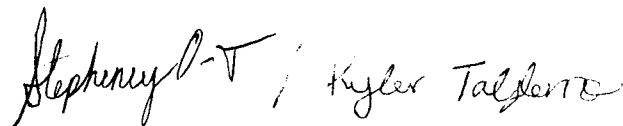
Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am 8th grade student that attends Grafton Middle School. I maintain an all A average and currently have a 4.0 GPA. I am a member of The Fifes and Drums of Yorktown and I am perpetually involved in community service. Recently, I have become concerned about my fellow pees in York County schools and the choices they make. Some of which are illegal and as a student, I want to make sure that these problems vanish.

York County contains the safest neighborhoods and local markets but when it comes to schools, we could do much better. Two out of four of the schools in the county have constant issues with fighting, weed, smoking, sexual touching, etc. At least once a year we get bomb threats, lock downs, or fights. We, the youth, are the most endangered when it comes to drugs in our schools. We make idiotic decisions that cause us to get in trouble or suspended. I think as a county, we could do a lot better by bringing in more authority. Such as a police officer that could patrol within the school walls. Kids don't listen to the teachers or staff, but I guarantee they would act straight if there was a policeman. This could help eliminate any problem and would keep our lives out of jeopardy. I personally think that this will help or county and our state.

In conclusion, our schools might be big and nice on the outside but we have huge problems going on inside. It may seem inconvenient at time because we don't constantly encounter these acts, but I do believe if we add more authority the issues will disintegrate. I ask for your support on getting police officer for all York County public schools that will help make our environment safer.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stepheney Odom-Thomas / Kyler Taliferro".

Stepheney Odom-Thomas/Kyler Taliferro