



**Open Forum Comments
Lightfoot/Pottery Community Forum
February 23, 2012 – Warhill High School**

Ms. Dotty Trusz stated that she was representing the Senior Services Coalition, which works to promote the independence of seniors. Ms. Trusz provided statistics on the high percentage of retirees in this area. She stated that as a region we need to have a safe and livable community for seniors. She asked that planning processes and local government address the five topics she was going to mention. First, plan for and provide incentives for services that allow seniors to remain in their homes as long as possible (i.e., age-in-place). Second, encourage new housing units that use universal design concepts. Third, design new neighborhoods and improve existing neighborhoods to improve accessibility for seniors, such as easy access sidewalks and bike lanes. Fourth, implement zoning and development incentives that encourage new housing for seniors, including multifamily units, assisted living facilities, affordable housing, daycare centers, continuing care and skilled care facilities. Fifth, base any skilled care facilities on the newest research and approaches such as smaller group homes rather than the former large medical models. She asked that our common goal as a region be to plan for housing and transportation options for all, especially for seniors. Ms. Trusz stated that the Senior Services Coalition had additional information about the senior population in this area.

A citizen stated that he saw a blurred line between corporations, special interests and government – how to measure success, and how the line is divided between the two. He stated that sometimes good intentions toward our fellow citizens actually result in harm to them. With regard to public-private partnerships, he asked how our local governments are going to keep these partners from looting the taxpayers' money.

A citizen described her reasons for moving to the Historic Triangle, noting that it was because the area was beautiful, historic, and had fewer regulations than are present in other places. She stated that dialogue between people and localities is an important thing, but felt that this form of mini-regionalism is not necessary and hoped that it didn't happen, noting her concern that it would add regulations that affect property rights. She stated that policies come from associations such as American Planning Association, which in turn is a member of the Planners Network. She provided information about the statement of principles found on the Planners Network website. She expressed concern about non-elected planners having agendas such as these, and that this is Agenda 21. She stated her opposition to this comprehensive plan initiative. She asked for planners to plan without smart growth and sustainable development, which are terms from Agenda 21. She stated that she wanted smart growth, but not that kind. She asked for someone to tell her, if you read this plan, a single right or action she can take on her private property which doesn't have to go to the comprehensive plan initiative and require approval or involvement.

Mr. Richard Boyden stated that he was representing the Colonial Heritage Community Foundation, which is a nonprofit committed to providing support to those in our community that are caring for senior family members. He stated that the Foundation's primary goal is to establish one or more licensed adult day care centers. He noted the

large and increasing senior population which will change the demographics in this community and whose needs will need to be addressed. He said the need for day centers was already well established, and asked that local governments consider this community need. He also asked that local governments address needs such as aging-in-place opportunities, a full continuum of care, day centers, additional housing for seniors, assisted and continuing care facilities, and universal design. He asked that these needs be incorporated throughout the region.

A citizen stated that he would like to address some of the senior care issues. He expressed his wish that public officials stay out of this as much as possible, that it should be driven instead by the economy and market, and handled by individuals rather than through public funds or public involvement.

A citizen stated that on page seven of the Historic Triangle Collaborative's (HTC) Vision Project, it is stated that organization leaders believe public opposition to smart growth is a threat. She stated that the threat is real and it is Agenda 21 being implemented by Virginia's planning district commissions, right down to the local governing board. She stated that the environment is being used against citizens. She noted the buzzwords for Agenda 21 includes "comprehensive planning", "sustainable development", "UDAs", "visioning", "public-private partnerships", "light rail", "smart growth", "regionalism", and "benefit corporations" which are being sold to citizens as useful words to implement comprehensive planning. She read information from the internet entitled "Hide Agenda 21's UN Roots from the People." She provided information about the Republican National Committee's adoption of a resolution in opposition to Agenda 21. She stated that she had been a victim of Agenda 21 whereby she was asked to remove a deck in her yard that she pays taxes on, because it did not allow proper drainage. She expressed concern about changes proposed in the General Assembly about treating mud puddles as surface water, which would be subject to additional government regulation. She suggested that citizens look at various websites that provide more information about Agenda 21, and noted that Agenda 21 has the goal of removing private property rights. She asked that everyone involved in the regional coordination effort read a book entitled *The Metrocrats*, and noted some information from the book.

A citizen stated her concern with the HTC Vision Project and the eighty-one organizations that were contacted. She asked questions about how these organizations were selected to participate, and if small businesses were equally represented. She wondered why some organizations that were contacted chose not to participate. She expressed concern about the response rate and about the number of individuals from each organization participating in the interview process. She wondered how this could constitute consensus. She provided information about the number of occurrences of the words "collaborative", "revenue", "economics", and "grants". She expressed that this would mean higher taxes. She noted that documents indicated the commercial property was going to triple, and that agriculture would decrease, which was of concern because this is an agricultural community. She provided additional information on the number of occurrences of the words "vision", "protect the environment", "smart growth", "partnerships", "diverse", and "world". She read excerpts from the Vision Project document that caused her concern. She asked about the membership of the Regional Issues Committee and what this group does. She offered Agenda 21 brochures to interested citizens.

A citizen made a comment about the slides in the presentation regarding the percentage of employment and average weekly wage in the "accommodations and food

service” and “retail trade” sectors of the economy. He stated that he felt that James City County is not welcoming to industry. He stated that stability in the economy is best pursued through industry. He questioned the economic stability that the Pottery redevelopment and new car dealership mentioned in the presentation would provide. He stated that while the regional coordination might look good, it is another opportunity for government to grow. He asked how many people in James City County’s Planning Division and Planning Commission are elected.

Ms. Tammy Rosario of the James City County Planning Division provided information in response to the citizen’s question, explaining that staff planners are paid employees and Planning Commissioners are citizen volunteers appointed by the Board of Supervisors. She also provided information in response to other citizen questions regarding the Planning Commissions and Planning Divisions of the localities.

The citizen previously speaking continued his remarks, expressing concern that the Planning Division employees and Planning Commissioners are not elected. He questioned how many additional staff hours would go toward the regional coordination effort. He expressed concern that the regional coordination would be extended to Newport News, New Kent County, and other neighboring localities. He expressed that the regional coordination might further restrict private property rights, such as restricting the development of controversial uses such as the existing Hooters restaurant. He stated that the questions at the forum were insulting, as they were engineered to generate pre-engineered answers that would lead to a false impression of what the citizens wanted. He suggested an alternative set of questions, such as questions that would open up themselves up to negative responses.

Mr. Keith Sadler of Toano concurred with the remarks of the previous speaker regarding the questions asked at the forum, and that they were not trying to address the citizens’ concerns. He asked how he could know that it was actually citizens who had written the answers on the post-it notes. He thought any discussion of high speed rail in James City County or Williamsburg was absurd, citing the high cost to taxpayers. He stated that this was related to environmental issues and that the theory was to decrease the carbon footprint. Mr. Sadler provided information about carbon dioxide, and questioned the cost of high speed rail in relation to any benefit of carbon dioxide reduction. He suggested that citizens look up Agenda 21 terms such as “smart growth” and “sustainable development”, and encouraged citizens to look at the work of Fred Singer, Michael Kaufman, and Charles Battig. Mr. Sadler read information pertaining to the process of voting on a policy, and contrasted it to the forum’s process, which he felt was resulting in a manipulated consensus by the localities of the people in attendance. He noted information in the HTC’s Vision Project document. He asserted that this regional effort is an attempt to use federal grant monies from Williamsburg, James City, and York County to implement a smart growth agenda. He suggested that the localities’ thoughts in pursuing this process were that it made sense to combine the resources of three localities and the suggestions of three localities to get better buy-in for what they want to pass through. Mr. Sadler provided information from page six of the HTC Vision Project document, and asked who the document was referring to as being too partisan.

Mr. Dick Swanenburg of Chickahominy Haven spoke, providing information on four incidents he felt illustrated examples of James City County Planning Division’s lack of competence and integrity, and why he did not have faith in them or their planning processes. First was a covert plan to ban boating on the Chickahominy River. He stated that the Division’s plan was to go behind the backs of citizens and get the

delegate at the time to introduce the legislation to get the river declared a scenic river and then the five-person scenic river board would ban boating on the Chickahominy River. Second, he stated that he had looked into the watershed studies and found at least fourteen questions of highly unethical and illegal matters. He asserted that the only reason that some members of James City County staff were not indicted for criminal offenses was the reluctance of the Commonwealth's Attorney to jeopardize his own paycheck or to be exposed to the publicity. Mr. Swanenburg cited as an example of illegality that the contractor preparing the plan was told by the County that they could go anywhere they wanted and disregard private property rights, and that this resulted in some of the contractors peering in bedroom windows. Third, he stated that the planners came up with an unwarranted and unscientific proposal to reduce property rights by increasing buffers from 100 to 200 feet on waterfront property. Mr. Swanenburg stated that had that proposal passed, the legal challenges would probably have bankrupted the County. Fourth, he stated that there had been illegal dredging at the boat ramp on Brickyard Road, that it was improperly done, and that they had no permits. He expressed his opposition to planning for an Agenda 21 dream world.

Ms. Sue Sadler of Toano read information from a booklet entitled "Sustainable Development or Sustainable Freedom?" This information pertained to the model comprehensive planning legislation prepared by the American Planning Association. She stated that she was looking for planning that was done without the implementations she had mentioned. She mentioned that she had a copy of Agenda 21 and offered to make it available to any interested parties. She stated that she felt the localities' efforts and the HTC Vision Project document could not be separated because everything in the document was what had been talked about at the forum. She noted that it says "United Nations" on the front of the Agenda 21 document, and that we don't need the UN to tell us what to do. This should instead be determined at the locality level.

A citizen stated that he moved to James City County to have the ability to use his property in a variety of ways such as planting and cutting trees, planting a garden, and raising chickens.

A citizen stated his growing concern with Agenda 21 and what is happening with this regional coordination and collaboration process. He stated he had read the HTC Vision Project document, and said that the words "individual rights" and "property rights" do not appear. He said they do not appear because they are in direct opposition to this regional coordination effort. He asserted that this effort will add another level of government whose bureaucrats the citizens will have to answer to every day, and that the bureaucrats will have already made the decisions for the citizens, such as the type of car to drive, where to live, light bulbs to use, whether you can grow a garden, etc. He read information from the HTC Vision document regarding smart growth. He sees a tight relationship between Agenda 21 and the documents he has read, and this is a reason for concern. He asked why sprawl was seen as environmentally harmful, and wondered if independence was being replaced with collaboration or consensus. He felt that a regional government is not needed, would be less discernible and less accountable to voters, and preferred that the collaboration not proceed.