

OPINION

Letters To The Editor

Ebony rezoning/Dollar General appeal update

To the Editor:

On Monday, May 3, 2021, we had the second Demurrer hearing for the Ebony/Dollar General rezoning Appeal. For those who don't know, the Demurrer phase is when the County attempts to have the case dismissed and not move forward to trial. The first Demurrer hearing was in August 2020.

After hearing from both sides, the Judge once again said it would take him some time to reread and digest all of the case documentation presented by both sides and would render his decision in writing as soon as possible. Our side seeks to prove that the County evaded Virginia statutes and local ordinances when they approved the rezoning. Based on the documents and communications we've gathered to date, the case has solid evidentiary support.

For those who may not have heard, the Brunswick County Board of Supervisors approved 3-2 to rezone property from A1-Agriculture to B-1 Business on Jan. 29, 2020 to allow a Dollar General to be built across the road from Ebony General in the heart of the original historic Ebony community. Ebony was founded in 1882 and has served as the heart of a historic community with many multi-generational families here in southern Virginia. An appeal was filed on Feb. 28, 2020, and this has been in the court system ever since.

Bottom line: we are fighting to preserve the historic Ebony community. Allowing the rezoning to be sustained with the construction of a Dollar General will destroy this uniquely preserved rural community that is loved and cherished by visitors as well as by those who call it home.

Though petitioned by neighboring property owners (Anne Hartley, and also the Prospect Cemetery Association), the Appeal case represents all those who opposed the rezoning that falls into 3 distinct groups:

Local community of nearby property owners, including those who live in the community where multi-generational families will be detrimentally impacted.

An extended community who wants to see the historic Ebony community and its heritage continue to be preserved.

Opposition to the unchecked and aggressive proliferation of Dollar General stores that are destroying rural America where Dollar General is the leaders of the pack with its destructive and aggressive business expansion model to plant a Dollar General within 10 miles or less of each other all over the country with a focus on rural America. Local government land use and zoning management enforcement is the only way to keep it in check.

If you fall into 1 of these groups, here are 2 essential ways you can continue to support the cause:

Send a Letter to the Editor. Email it to Sylvia Allen at sylviamorganallen@gmail.com. It should be received by Friday at 5 p.m. for the following week's paper. For the Lake Gaston paper, send direct from the website: <https://www.lakegastongazette-observer.com/>

Donate to the legal fund. We have been able to get this far because of community donations, and this funding source continues to be important to continue the fight. Make checks payable to "Keep Ebony Country Fund" and mail to Keep Ebony Country, c/o Kay Whitehead, PO Box 36, Ebony, VA 23845.

For more information about the background, appeal case, and donations, please visit <https://keepebonycountry.org/>. And stay connected via the Facebook page: Keep Ebony Country

Thanks for your continued interest and support.

Anne and Al Hartley
Ebony, Virginia

Dollar General does not belong in Ebony

To the Editor:

Ebony, Virginia, is a special place. We have been visiting Ebony and Lake Gaston since 1981, and are always happy to see that Ebony has retained its unique rural charm. Ebony remains a bucolic community with a post office, two local, community based businesses, a historic church and cemetery, neighboring residences, and farmland. Agricultural zoning has protected this community for many years and should protect it from the aggressive Dollar General developers. Generic Dollar stores are invading rural America creating eyesores, negatively

impacting the local businesses, and permanently changing the feel and sense of rural life.

Dollar General does not belong in Ebony, Virginia. Dollar General stores have already been built in close proximity. We need to celebrate this rural community and allow Ebony to remain a breath of fresh air in the greater Lake Gaston area. Let's hope the rezoning appeal prevails.

Nancy and Rob Verboon
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Plan to attend budget hearing May 13

To the Editor:

There will be a budget hearing held in the auditorium of Brunswick High School, Lawrenceville, Virginia on May 13, 2021 at 6 p.m. by the Board of Supervisors to discuss the County Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The budget for the next fiscal year is being proposed to increase the real estate tax rate from 53 cents to 86 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value for an annual increase of 62.3%. Personal property taxes would increase by 20 cents from \$3.65 to \$3.85 per 100 dollars of assessed value for an

annual increase of 5.48%.

The increase in taxes is to provide financing for capital project funding, deficit funding of operations and funding for financing new school construction.

This is a sizable increase in taxes for the next fiscal year and this meeting is your opportunity to express your response to this huge tax increase.

Better Brunswick Government
Charles E. Wiley
President

grams provide free services to any that hold their hand out. Clearly there are those who physically or mentally are unable to care for themselves and need help. As a moral society, we have a responsibility to assist those. However, we no longer make much effort to divide those who cannot from those who will not do for themselves.

In the mid-nineties, Virginia led the nation with legislation that limited welfare thus reducing the tax burden on those working to provide for their families. It was an example that the federal government followed during the Clinton administration. Gradually, at both the federal and state levels, government has removed the restrictions of who gets various benefits.

Some in our society abuse the system. Some will accept a job, work the number of weeks required, then slack off enough in hopes of losing the job. This will be followed by months of unemployment benefits until they reach their maximum unemployment benefits before the cycle begins again.

Pandemic

The Covid pandemic has only made matters worse. Employers need employees to get their businesses opened back up to full capacity. Despite that, the federal government is paying former workers hundreds of dollars a week in addition to state unemployment benefits. Some are receiving more for not working than they would receive after taxes for working. This is a disaster for all. The money to do that is a debt that our children and grandchildren will be forced to pay far into the future. Meantime, businesses are unable to find

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Brunswick STEW
by Mark Evans



Leaving for Guam

Dear Brunswick County,

After 37 wonderful years of living in the capital of nice folks and calm life, it's time for Cindy and me to leave for a while.

Many of you know that, last year, Cindy and I accepted a call from the Lord to serve as missionaries to Japan for 18 months. We organized our affairs, sold the Dental office building, took care of debts and obligations and reported for duty on September 6, 2020.

But, last fall, Covid was still compromising travel so we were asked to sit tight and wait until Japan opened for international travel. In the meantime, we learned how to have Zoom meetings, Facebook Messenger chats, and manage a Facebook business account. We have been studying Japanese night and day. We also took classes on how to use Instagram and a Japanese messaging platform called 'Line' to share the Good Word of God.

We did all that so we could talk with younger and older Japanese religious volunteers.

We attended training meetings that were held from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. our time. We had almost daily contact with dozens of delightful 18-15 year olds who had dedicated 2 years of their lives to teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to strangers and friends.

Cindy has been working as a Mission nurse and fielding 7-10 calls a week from volunteers with bug bites, headaches, stomach aches, skinned knees, seizures, and blurry vision. Her basic mom skills have been useful over and over again.

I have been assigned to be a dental advisor for hundreds of Church volunteers in all of Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Guam and Micronesia. That assignment has been exciting and has been a great learning experience.

We have met with dozens of wonderful older couples who are serving the Lord full time. And we have made many, many new young friends that we now love like we do our own children.

We have been doing that for 9 months, and all the while we have been praying for the opportunity to be in Japan.

Well, our prayers have been partially answered. God, through a living prophet, has asked us to move to Guam, and help Church congregations there and to continue our labors with preaching the Gospel in Japan and in our medical assignments.

Of course, we said yes.

We leave on May 18th and we'll be gone for about a year.

Did you know that Guam is an US territory and that the island is less than half the size of Brunswick County?

Did you know that the population of Brunswick County is 31 people per square mile but Guam is 786 people per square mile?

Did you know that Guam sits on top of the highest mountain in the world? (The mountain is measured from the bottom the sea.)

Did you know that the 85% of the economy of Guam is based on the 3 US military bases, and on tourism?

Well, I didn't either.

When time permits, I will try to continue writing this column.

If any of you know of any other Brunswickians living on Guam (Guamanians), please let me know. We can get together and have a party.

Oh, and even though Guam does not have a Walmart, it does have the world's biggest K-Mart. Hurrah!

So, it's goodbye but not forever.

Stay safe, pray daily, study the scriptures, live clean lives, love your family, God, and your neighbors.

I know that God hears and answers prayers and that Jesus Christ, His Son, will come again.

Sayonara.



FROM THE DESK OF
SENATOR FRANK RUFF

Corrosion of the Work Ethic

As acid corrodes aluminum, once it starts it gets worse faster and faster. We are watching this happen before our eyes. The headline in the Danville Bee stated the current situation perfectly. Southside's sign of the times: Help wanted but very few takers.

When the Jamestown Settlement was first established, settlers decided that all would work to grow the crops for survival. In turn, they would be shared. To their surprise, too many shirked work. The result was not enough labor in the fields which led to a winter in which only 60 of those 500 survived. The next year, they established themselves as a capitalist society. Each would be rewarded based on how much they participated in growing the crops needed. Little work resulted in little food.

Over the last several decades, America has forgotten that important lesson. Multiple government pro-

Our Mission: to be a written and visual record of what makes our community special

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