

OPINION

Letters To The Editor

Update: Ebony (Dollar General) rezoning appeal

To the Editor:

Underway is a lawsuit appealing the actions of the Brunswick County Board of Supervisors regarding the controversial 3-2 approval of the rezoning of a property in the heart of historic Ebony for an invasive and overbearing 9100 sq. ft. Dollar General box store with traffic generation that is calculated to be an increase of 578 trips per day. This is in a location that is already known for traffic safety issues yet VDOT chose to bypass the need for a Traffic Study. This is also in the middle of a rural residential community with nearby church and cemetery setting. Furthermore, it is in close proximity to local stores, other Dollar General stores, and full service stores (Food Lion, Ace Hardware, and Drug Co.).

A petition to Appeal was filed by Plaintiffs, Anne Edwards Hartley and Prospect Cemetery Association, on Feb. 28, 2020. The County responded with a "Demurrer" initiating a motion that the case be dismissed. The Plaintiffs filed a Response in Opposition to Demurrer at the end of May stating why the case should not be dismissed. A court hearing for the Demurrer was set for the beginning of August.

On August 3, 2020 there was a hearing in Brunswick County Circuit Court regarding this matter in front of the Honorable Carson Saunders on the motion put forth by the County to dismiss the case. Hearing from both sides, he acknowledged there is a lot to consider and would respond with a decision in writing as soon as possible.

Approximately 8 weeks later, we received a letter from Judge Saunders dated September 24, 2020, that gave us 3 weeks to file an Amended Petition to include in the body of the complaint document all of the detail evidence of our complaint that had been filed in a separate document in response to Demurrer.

Furthermore, the letter stated that if we did not file the said Amended Petition within the allotted time frame, that he would sustain the County's Demurrer. We filed the Amended Petition on October 14, within the specified time frame.

The County has already Sands Anderson, the County Attorney firm, more than \$40,000 working on this case to defend the action of the Board of Supervisors – a rezoning vote that should have never passed based on Land Use Management laws and governing tools. This includes hundreds of thousands of dollars the County has spent on creating and maintaining a Comprehensive Plan that encompasses the Vision for the County's evolution and serves as the framework for land use aligned with the Vision. In fact, the rezoning application and accommodation for a Dollar General on said property should have been rejected by the Planning Department from the beginning.

If this rezoning decision is not overturned, the result will completely destroy the integrity of this rural residential and agricultural neighborhood and history that has been preserved by landowners – and bring irrevocable harm to multiple generations of families and all those who call Ebony "home". It will also destroy the tourism appeal along this designated Virginia Scenic Byway and commitment the area is known for. It will bring health and safety issues, erode quality of life, and completely disregard the sacred and serene setting for Prospect cemetery and church. These impacts are exactly what zoning and land use management enacted by Virginia statute and further by county zoning regulations are intended to prevent. The Board of Supervisors is accountable for proper enforcement.

If you are interested in learning more about the details of this case, the grassroots opposition, or more about land use governance in Brunswick County, visit KeepEbonyCountry.org and follow Keep Ebony Country on Facebook.

All support is greatly appreciated. Stay tuned!

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Edwards Hartley, Plaintiff
On Behalf of Keep Ebony Country
and All In Opposition

Brunswick STEW
by Mark Evans



A salute to our Uniform Helpers

Good evening, Brunswick County.

I am grateful to share a story tonight of goodness, brotherly and sisterly concern, unity and trusted authority.

You may notice a contrast between this story, which is true, and other images that have been flickering across your TV screens in the past several months.

It started in the Food Lion parking lot in Lawrenceville two weeks ago.

It was a rainy afternoon.

A steady drizzle had covered the cars in the parking lot with those little streaks that well-waxed cars get when small drizzle droplets gather together and accept the pull of gravity down the hydrophobic surfaces of vehicles and make continuous vertical drip-lines.

I had just exited the store with a cart with non-carriogenic foods, and was taking my empty cart back to the store when I noticed a small gathering of umbrellas and people between several parked cars.

As I got closer, one of the umbrella holders, whom I knew, turned and explained that the driver of the white car had accidentally stepped on the gas instead of the brake and had pushed another shopper's cart into an open car door. The impact had bumped that shopper to the pavement half under the open car door.

The shopper on the ground was conscious and talking. She indicated that she had some hurt areas. Some of her groceries had spilled to the ground including some beverage cans. One of the cans had bursted open and was leaking.

Someone had already grabbed a coat from their car and had made a pillow. Someone else had grabbed a jacket and had put it over the injured individual's shoulders. Others positioned umbrellas. Two employees of Food Lion ran (I mean, ran really fast) out to help, bringing a large trash bag. Some of us helped them get it over the very wet woman on the ground.

We all were waiting for the helpers.

And, at that moment, Cedric Macklin arrived. One of Brunswick County's best "helpers."

As he came and asked questions and quickly accessed the situation, there was a noticeable release of tension in the small crowd.

He knew what to do.

And within another minute, three other firemen and/or rescue squad members arrived. They weren't in uniform and they came in their private vehicles but there was something in their eyes and demeanor that said, "We're here to help and we know what we're doing."

Seeing that I was in the way and having visually checked the teeth of those involved, I knew it was time to get out of the way.

As I looked back, I smiled.

"Brunswick County is prepared for trouble and disasters," I thought.

We are prepared, but our team of "helpers" includes not just our trained emergency response personnel but every Brunswickian who has a hand to lift with, a coat to share, or a prayer in their heart.

And we have a great storehouse of food and toilet paper and firewood and clothing. It is in the accumulative closets, and wood sheds of all the people who are willing to share with others.

We are prepared for anything when we are prepared to love our neighbors as ourselves.

I haven't heard anything about the woman in the parking lot that day.

With you, I pray that she was OK.

And with you, I pray for our Uniformed Helpers.



FROM THE DESK OF
SENATOR FRANK RUFF

Come On Man

In slang, this phrase is used to convey the speaker's frustration or annoyance with someone else. The term has been used repeatedly by former Vice President Joe Biden. He uses it with the rare reporter or voter that is able to catch him away from his handlers. Biden frequently uses the term when asked to explain his current position on issues today and how they differed eight months ago when he was fighting for the Democrat nomination. He used the phrase when asked about his position on our Second Amendment rights. Likewise, when asked if he supported fracking to get natural gas, he got testy and assured the listener that he did.

People that have watched him over the years should not be surprised that he uses such a technique to get past anyone who questions his political beliefs. He has a history of using flowery speeches to get attention while not being beholden to any particular political philosophy. Years ago, in his first race for the presidency, he was caught using the exact wording of a British politician about his humble background. The end result was that he had to drop out of the race in disgrace.

More recently, he seems to have forgotten that in this age of recording devices all around us he does not have the freedom to say to one group one thing and then turn around to a different group and say something else. In the example of the Second Amendment conversation, he "forgot" that there was a tape of him chumming up to that famous gun confiscator Beto O'Rourke and bragging that he would put him in charge of rounding up your guns. In the case of fracking, during the Democratic debates, to gain the support of Alexandria Ortego-Cortes (AOC), he came out strongly against fracking for natural gas. Today, however, when campaigning in

Pennsylvania, Ohio, and elsewhere, he swears he never said that. He even challenged President Trump to prove it. Of course, it took but a few minutes for anyone to pull up his quote opposing it. His second line of defense was to say he only opposed fracking on federal property not private property, but he never made that distinction at the time, only now to cover himself.

The former Vice President believes his past long legislative service in Washington can just as easily be explained away. Last year, when debating Bernie Sanders, he tried to deny that he had pushed unsuccessfully to cut or freeze Social Security payments. The records prove he did. In the debate last week, an effort was made to claim that President Trump is a racist. In response, the president named off a list of things that he has done to counter past racism. In that list he included his success with prison reform. Trump questioned Biden's commitment to do something rather than simply talking about it. He pointed out that when Biden was in the Senate, he was the one that wrote and sponsored the "Criminal Reform Act". This one bill was one of the main reasons for the high percentage of minorities in our prison. Biden then tried to blunt that reality by suggesting that it was the states' fault for following his law.

Joe Biden is not the only politician to believe he can tell one group one thing and another something entirely different. I guess there is simply too much glamour associated with making big promises, such as promises of free everything while pretending to cut taxes. His record is quite different! In 1983, he voted to tax one-half of Social Security. In 1993, he voted to raise the tax to 85%. Now the Democrat platform is to tax 401Ks and IRAs.

Consider U.S. Senator Mark Warner who has served for twelve years. He only this year (an election year) discovered that we have a problem with how we provide healthcare to our veterans, and that we lack broadband internet in rural communities.

Or you can look at congressional candidates who are receiving millions of dollars from Speaker Pelosi to make up stories about their opposition. Some politicians will say and do whatever they believe is necessary to convince you to vote for them. Come on man, treat the voters with honesty and respect.

We love to hear from you! You can reach us at Sen. Ruff@verizon.net, 434-374-5129, or P. O. Box 332, Clarksville, VA 23927.

Remember to vote on Election Day - Nov. 3, 2020.

Letters to the Editor

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