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## **District 1 Update: March 2024**

There are several bills in the current General Assembly of concern.

Senate Bills 304 and 544 were brought forward by Airbnb and the Virginia Realtors Association to promote Short Term Rentals (STR) and Auxiliary (Garage) Apartments. These are essentially neighborhood hotels created out of homes within a subdivision and rented on a weekend or weekly basis. The two bills seek to eliminate local jurisdiction and take away citizen's ability to voice their position over Short Term Rentals in residential neighborhoods.

HB 304 has been delayed for the season and shifted to 2025. SB 544 was amended several times but has now been passed to the Governor for his signature. Bill 544 allows a STR "by right" within a dwelling legally occupied by the property owner as his/her primary residence.

HB 1461, which I initially missed, is also on the Governor's desk. This bill allows localities to restrict an Owner to one STR in a community.

At this time, we are waiting to see the final approved wording, or rejection of either of these bills.

The BOS recently reviewed the status of York County's current guidelines and rules for STRs and were asked to submit proposed changes to the Planning Department. I have submitted three recommendations:

1. For whole house rentals, Owner must be present onsite or in an adjacent home on the same street. I do not accept a solution where a neighbor is expected to look after the STR while the Owner resides in an entirely different city. I call this 'skin in the game'. The neighbors need have confidence that the Owner is present and managing the STR operation.
2. Density limit or cap to be applied within each subdivision. I've recommended 1% as currently being debated by City of Hampton. We are seeing far too much of our low to middle cost "affordable" housing being snapped up by investors. It's creating a crisis for younger homebuyers

being able to afford starter homes in our community. This issue will, if unchecked, accelerate the migration of youth out of our County.

3. Limit of 1 STR per Property Owner within a Locality.
  - Owning in the City of Williamsburg, with a JCC or York County address, all are within the same community and would not be permitted.

### **Waste Management**

- The BOS is currently considering changes to our trash, recycling, and leaf composting services. Costs have climbed dramatically since this was last negotiated four years ago.
- Recycling has seen the greatest change, as export of plastics to China was hit with an embargo in 2019. Nearly all plastic collected today in recycle containers must be sorted, put in a dumpster, and shipped to the landfill.
- In effect we are paying twice for the same waste. I expect the guidelines to change in the near future, calling for residents to place only metal, aluminum cans, cardboard, and paper in their recycle bins. Recycling pickups may drop to once per month pickup.
- Also note, as we are renegotiating the rates for trash and recycling, there is a senior rate available for those 70 years or older. You must contact Waste Management to request this rate. 757-890-3780

### **District 1 Specific Topics:**

#### **New Access to some Williamsburg and James City County Recreational Activities.**

As part of the negotiations for the new Regional Sports Complex, citizens of York County will have the following options available starting July 1, 2024

- Public access at Waller Mill Park to be provided at the same cost currently offered to residents of City of Williamsburg or JCC.
- Membership at JCC Indoor Recreation Center at JCC citizen rates.

## **KEY ISSUES OVERVIEW**

### **Capital Improvement Plan and Budget Discussion**

The BOS considered the County Administrator's Preliminary Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This program identifies the major improvements expected over the next six years (such as our recent Firehouse 7)

Many items in the CIP are carryover from previous years and reflect the ongoing spending necessary to complete projects begun in past years.

Several new items, such as traffic improvements for Lightfoot Rd. and York County contribution to the Williamsburg Regional Library planned Capital expenditures received debate. The projected overall increase in spending year over year is up 18%. This level of increase in a tight economy is concerning and may drive decisions to delay or reduce some planned expenditures.

The initial draft of the 2025 budget comes before the Board on March 19<sup>th</sup>. A public forum is scheduled on March 26<sup>th</sup> at Yorktown Library. Note you must pre-register if you plan to attend. See below:



**We Want to Hear from You**

Proposed FY2025 Budget

# Listening Session

Tuesday, March 26  
Yorktown Library at 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

**Pre-Register is Required Here**  
Deadline: Friday, March 22 at 5:00 pm

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**FY2025 Proposed Budget**

### York County Schools Division :

Schools are a topic I would not normally comment on, but there is a concern.

In the past 10 years, the BOS has approved 12 rezonings in District 1. This has added an incremental 2,413 homes/townhouses or apartments over the number identified by the Comprehensive Plan. Several by-right developments (Fenton Mill, Waller Mill Heights, Country Club Acres, to name a few) account for an additional 800 homes. This has or will soon result in **340** additional Elementary students requiring additional instructional capacity at Waller Mill or Magruder Elementary.

So far, the solution has been to add temporary portables. Six have been added to Magruder, six more will be added over the summer to Waller Mill. School capacity has historically been 563 at Magruder and 405 at Waller Mill. The portables will provide additional capacity for **300** students.

Within 1-2 years we will have 1,480 elementary students sitting in schools designed to hold 968 before the addition of portables. That's 510 students above the brick and mortar capacity and 300+ already in portables. Where does the addition of portables end?

There is no proposed solution for getting our elementary school children out of overcrowded classrooms and portables and into real buildings. The York County School Division (YCSD) has no funding in their Capital Improvement Plan for permanent additions to Instructional capacity at either of these two schools through 2030.

That's unacceptable in my view and I have firmly expressed that to both the School Board and senior administration at YCSD. This is a topic that will receive considerable attention in our upcoming York County budget.

The true cost of rezoning after rezoning over the past decade in this district is just beginning to show up in our budgets. Schools, police, emergency services, roads and other public services are now starting to feel the stress of those decisions.

This is why I ran under the campaign goal of NO Rezoning!

### **Marquis Crossing Development**

An application was reviewed at the Planning Commission for the proposed development of 314 apartments on a 33 acre parcel across from Water Country Parkway. At a ratio greater than 10 apartments per acre, this is a "High Density" development. The land is currently zoned Economic Opportunity, requiring a rezoning for this application to move forward.

I have reached out to the citizens living in that area, primarily those at Whittaker's Mill and to the American Battlefield Trust for their input on this proposal. It's scheduled before the Board in April. Please consider making your position known by speaking at the April hearing.

### **York 64 Trade Center – NorthPoint Mega Warehouse**

In the January 16<sup>th</sup> BOS meeting, I introduced a motion under New Business to address NorthPoint Development on Lightfoot Rd. and Rochambeau Rd.

NorthPoint, for those who have not previously read about it, is an Amazon type distribution warehouse complex, comprised of 5 buildings and 2.4 Million sq ft of floor space. This is the equivalent of 11 Lowes hardware stores in one location.

The project, if constructed, would add a staggering volume of traffic to Lightfoot Rd. At my request, VDOT has agreed to review the applicant's Traffic Impact Assessment through an independent reviewer. We are awaiting their results.

The zoning ordinance in place that allows for an Industrial Park within an Economic Opportunity zoned property has been followed correctly, however it has no size limits within the ordinance.

I am proposing immediate changes to the ordinance limiting the size of a warehouse to 1 Million sq ft or smaller and anticipate other BOS support to limit the size and scope of these warehouses without a public hearing.

Concern remains that the traffic load associated with this warehouse and distribution hub will exceed the capacity of Lightfoot Rd.

**I value your input, Become a regular recipient of this newsletter.**

I value your input and am happy to address questions or concerns on these or any other topics for the district. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

You can reach me at my email address shared above.

Click on the link above to request my monthly newsletter or copy/paste the following link:

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