

Last Word on Oakland Pointe, March 2

March 2, 2019

Oakland Pointe

Thank you, JCC Supervisors, for approving the Oakland Pointe Development, which will add 119 affordable apartments to help our lower-income workforce. While most areas say not in my neighborhood, we have to move forward and build projects like this to address the more than 8,000 hard-working families that, due to the retail or service economies, can't pay basic expenses consistently. You have shown we value the important citizens of JCC.

Kudos to Supervisor Sue Sadler for voting against the Oakland Pointe development in Norge. These low-income/no-income properties are simply not needed because Ryan Homes is building an additional 600 small homes down the road in Stonehouse Glen to fill the need for basic housing. In addition, Millpond at Stonehouse in Toano is building 170 new homes and townhomes off Barhamsville Road.

Now that the James City County Board of Supervisors has gone against the wishes of the majority of citizens in the Stonehouse District and approved this high-rise apartment complex, what's next? I would hope we in this end of the county could get our potholes from last winter filled in, buses that operate longer hours to bring people to and from work with all of this workforce housing here, maybe a real park — one with actual amenities for year-round use, not just bike trails and a pool. I hope we can get another fire station, since insurance rates for some have gone up due largely in part to the distance from the firehouse up here. I would hope we could get a couple of new schools to alleviate overcrowding at our three schools, maybe movies and activities that the county does in Grove — after all, most of the recent affordable housing has been built up here. I also hope for a new supervisor, one that is a fighter, one that believes in doing business in the sunshine, not behind closed doors. We need new and fresh ideas and inclusiveness. Time for a change.

Since there is controversy about Oakland Pointe being created, and since there is especially controversy and concern for the added traffic onto Route 60, has anyone considered the idea of putting a connecting road from the Oakland Pointe development to the Village of Candle Station? The main street at Candle Station leads directly to the intersection that already has a traffic light. Problem solved?

I moved from York County near the Hampton-Newport News city line to Williamsburg to get away from "urban sprawl." First York County built one new elementary school, then another, finally a new high school had to be built to accommodate the influx of students. When I first moved to York County, neither Victory Boulevard nor Oyster Point Road existed and Kiln Creek was just a dream in the eyes of developers. Yes, I am against urban sprawl, and that is what will happen to James City County if supervisors keep rezoning agricultural land and allowing more apartment complexes. They should look at what has happened in York County.

Those old cobblestones

As an historical note, cobblestones and bricks were imported to this country during colonial times because it was used for ballast that the trading trips backhaul so they could sail rough water and be stable. That's why many of the New England sailing traders' homes were built of brick during the colonial times. It's also why many of the port cities had cobblestone streets, because the ballast was simply disposed of when the ships got here.

Looking for ...

Please publish the contact information for VITA and AARP tax help. Thank you. Editor's note: You can get Volunteer Income Tax Assistance — VITA — at 306 S. Henry St., 1:30-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. Call 757-259-4072 to make an appointment for AARP tax help at either Williamsburg Regional Library downtown or at James City Library on Croaker Road.

Does anyone know someone who can remove lots of wallpaper off the many walls of my home without hurting the surface? Thanks!

In the Jan. 2 Last Word, there was a recommendation for Hampton Roads gastroenterologist, Dr. Gessner. I would like to get in touch with whoever made that recommendation. Please reply in the Last Word.

Does anyone know of a shredding event happening in the near future?

CW salaries

I think it's disgraceful that, during a year when Colonial Williamsburg laid off 71 employees and outsourced 262 others, Mr. Reiss got a \$100,000 bonus and a raise on top of his already sizable salary. The excuse that his compensation is in line with other nonprofit cultural organizations that do not also operate commercial lines, as CW does, is poor at best. Mr. Reiss himself acknowledged publicly that the hotels have not made a profit since they opened and that fact hasn't changed since he became president and CEO. CW's problems are much older than Mr. Reiss' presidency, but he is clearly not the kind of leader the foundation needs. The board should find a new leader who is right for this organization. Colonial Williamsburg is too important for this community, and this nation, not to.

Road worries

I know this question has been asked before, but why can't the Virginia Department of Transportation synchronize the red lights on Monticello Avenue? They would cut traffic down by about 25 percent. I know it can be done because every time my wife and I go shopping in Newport News at Costco, on the way back to Williamsburg, there are 19 red lights and I have gone through 17 green lights from Costco all the way home, and it really moves the traffic right along. Please do something about it.

The potholes in the Monticello Post Office parking lot have again returned. They are everywhere. Please repair the lot correctly this time so they don't return in a couple of months. Thank you.

Better neighbors

After working hard all my life, saving and getting ahead, I would like to think I earned the money to live in a better neighborhood. Living next door to neighbors who might not be able to afford to keep their property up to the standards of the neighborhood could become a bad situation for all.

Too much litter

A couple of weeks ago, our Rotary Club did their quarterly task of picking up trash on Route 199 in their designated zone. However, we saw some trash immediately in the following week. What is wrong with people who throw trash along the highway? VDOT is also always in need of more volunteer clubs in joining to pick up trash. Is your club or organization willing to do this? VDOT helps to provide safety vests and trash bags. Call VDOT.

Relocated animals

Regarding the comment about llamas and alpacas: Animals have the right to live in their own habitat. In this case, the Andes' high mountains and its cold weather. You compare the issue with dogs from other places. Just because they were brought to America, it doesn't make it right. Back in those days, people weren't as knowledgeable as today. In today's world, more people research and learn if their animals will adapt to a new environment. You mentioned the Huskies. Why do you think God gave them that thick fur? To keep warm, not to be taken to Florida. Regarding the wool: Let the Andean peasants do the work while providing them with an income to feed their families. You can always import it. Animals can't express how they feel, but you bet they'd go back to where they belong if given a choice. Wouldn't you?

Democratic socialism

My fellow seniors who are concerned about the evils of Democratic socialism should consider not accepting Social Security and tearing up their Medicare cards. If you don't, you are a hypocrite for supporting benefits for yourself but not wanting to extend them to your children and grandchildren. A few idealists propose some ideas in Congress and suddenly the sky is falling. Are you afraid of losing your checks or of ideas? Let me guess.

To the Last Word contributor who described Denmark and Germany as examples of Social Democracy: Denmark's Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel both vehemently reject the idea that their nations are Democratic Socialist. Rasmussen has cited in detail how Denmark's prosperity is the result of changing from a socialist to a market-driven economy, and Merkel has made similar citations. Their social services are based on thriving industries bringing in billions of foreign currency. Corporate and personal taxes were lowered with that transition (although personal income taxes are still high compared to the U.S.) Corporate taxes in those nations are low enough to allow R&D, marketing, distribution and incentives. Rasmussen and Merkel each make more than \$250K/year, but, surprisingly, have more perks than the U.S. president. The prime minister and chancellor are each doing much better than their predecessors under more socialistic economies.

Over in Richmond

If Northam, Fairfax and Herring were Republicans, the coverage would be endless until they resigned. But they're Democrats, who have now been hoisted on their own petard, and now all

we hear is “forgiveness,” “ancient history” and “moving on.” More proof that if liberals didn’t have a double standard, they’d have no standard at all.

A great event

I’ve attended the Wine Tour fundraiser for Avalon Center every year, and it’s always a great event. Very classy and fun. Just wanted to let others know, since it’s for a great cause. This year it’s “Wines of the World,” and will be held at the Williamsburg Community Building on March 9. You can buy tickets on their website, avaloncenter.org/wine-tour. Thank you.

Needing more

Jussie Smollett wanted more: more recognition (has that now) and more money. News flash for Mr. Smollett: We all want more; if not for ourselves, for our children. The difference is, most of us don’t use hate in pursuit of these desires. Most of us don’t throw someone’s political philosophy or an entire city or a race under the bus. When we are ill, we need a doctor. When we are in trouble, we need first responders. When we want to formally educate our children, we need teachers. When our country is threatened, we need the military. I have never needed an overpaid and an overindulged entertainment “celebrity,” professional athlete or professional politician.

Free college

Once again, for those wanting a “free” college education, who exactly is going to pay for it? Those of us who have chosen not to have children are already paying for other’s children to go to public school through our taxes. The cost of higher education should be borne by those wanting it. Also, just maybe the salaries and substantial benefits of college professors should be reduced.

College degrees are not the new high school diploma. Since 2000, the college population has doubled from 10 million to 20 million, which explains part of the reason college costs continue to increase. Decrease enrollment and watch rates drop. The Bureau of Labor Statistics in a report titled “Employment Projections: 2012-2022 Summary” states that approximately 11 million (new and vacated) positions will require college degrees. Current graduation rate projections for the same period anticipate a pool of over 18 million people with post-secondary education competing for those 11 million positions. Consider that an estimated 44 percent of college grads are working in positions that do not require degrees. What we need are people to work in the skilled trades and many more individuals with degrees in the hard sciences, math and engineering.

Border wall

If the president’s Mexico wall was such a screaming emergency, why didn’t he focus on it during the two years that he owned both houses of Congress, rather than creating a tax break for the rich and lining his pockets?

Mueller investigation

So the Mueller investigation cost \$25 million in its first 16 months? Kenneth Starr’s investigation cost \$40 million and resulted in Bill Clinton being found not guilty. Thus far, Mueller has netted 199 criminal charges, 37 indictments or guilty pleas and 4 prison sentences. Kenneth Starr issued a massive and prurient report that absolved Clinton from everything except lying about sex.

Mueller is dissecting a monumental mass of criminal and espionage activity that at its very least undermined confidence in American democracy. Finally, with Trump's close advisor Paul Manafort's plea agreement, the Justice Department has acquired between \$25 million and \$42 million for the treasury. What did Starr leave us? Ann Coulter and Brett Kavanaugh.

To the caller who stated that the Mueller investigation has cost the U.S. taxpayers over \$26 million: That part is true. However, once you apply the amounts forfeited by Manafort who has been convicted and has had bank accounts and other assets totaling almost \$40 million seized, the investigation hasn't cost the taxpayer a dime.

Health insurance

I continue to be amazed by Americans who are fine with other Americans dying for lack of health insurance. Canadians state that their national health insurance is the first thing for which they would fight. Our relatives lived there and were amazed at the low costs and the quick access. I know I and other family members have had to wait months for appointments in this country. As for the UK, I have personal experience there. Succinctly put: lower costs, care for all and better outcomes. No system is perfect, but national insurance covers everyone at a lower cost. And no one goes bankrupt.

I have had an encounter with the National Health Care System of England and was quite impressed. Once on a trip to London, my sister-in-law had to have her appendix removed. Ten hours after being admitted to the hospital, it was out. They kept her for five days to make sure it was safe for her to travel, but after the second day she was allowed out of the hospital for longer times each day as she recovered to allow her to visit the sights. At the end of her stay, there was no bill as it was explained her stay was an emergency and therefore she was covered by the NHS. Talking with Brits, I have found many of them complain about the wait for non-emergency surgery and the difficulty in finding a primary doctor they like. For emergency care, the NHS seems to work quite well for most people.

A big smile

I'm glad my dentist's office is keeping up with current events. When I went in for my cleaning, they asked if I wanted a "Happy Filling."

Inconvenient move

I see where Dollar General will relocate out of the James York Plaza area because they said it would better serve their customers. Well, it won't better serve me because I'm not going to drive down the road when I go back and forth between Dollar Tree and Dollar General. So, to drive out of the shopping center, down the road just to go in and look around and buy stuff is not convenient to me. So corporate headquarters needed to ask the customers what they liked.

Recommended

Several lady friends went to Rick's Cheese Steak Shop (603 Prince George St., 757- 221-9566) to celebrate a friend's 97th birthday. The food was delicious and we had a wonderful time. Highly recommend — you won't leave hungry!

It's a must to visit Ladybug Consignment for women, the quality of clothes is outstanding along with the friendliness of staff and beautiful shop. Everything high end. I have visited many shops in my day and this is far superior to any consignment I have ever seen. Thanks.

Drivers' license

I just had my driver's license renewed last year and I was not asked for a marriage license. I think this is so interesting. I wasn't asked for a birth certificate or anything. I just went in with the license and the money and paid it and went on my way. So this real interesting to me, that so many people are having to go through this and I didn't.

Well done!

The splendid trash pickup crew on Feb. 26, assigned to Sir Thomas Lunsford Drive are to be commended for their superior work in that after mechanically emptying our blue trash bucket, they stopped their vehicle, dismounted and stepped forward to pick up a single 2-inch scrap that escaped and landed in the street. Most people would have driven on, but this gracious team took time to not only pick up the scrap but also took time to respond to my greeting with a smile, pleasant greeting and wave. Thanks, guys!

I want to express my thanks to Riverside Doctors' Hospital in Williamsburg. The nurses, the staff, the doctors were absolutely wonderful. Thank you.

I would like to shout out a Bravo to the Jolly Pond Road Convenience Center. The center is very well managed. The employees are courteous, know their jobs and do not try to gouge the users of the center. Most amazing, for a disposal operation, the entire center is very neat and not left to deteriorate into a dump. Congratulations!

Up in Washington

So, the best that Democrats can offer to the American people as a witness against President Trump is Michael Cohen, a self-professed liar and money-motivated immoral low life. This so called "man" in his testimony kept stating that even though he knew that what he was supposedly ordered to do by President Trump was wrong, he did it anyway because of his greed for a big paycheck. Just how dumb do Democrats think the American people are that they would give any credence to what Michael Cohen has to say?

For Ivanka Trump, who has never wanted for anything in her life, to criticize freshman congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez about her having to scrape for tips, is kind of, shall we say, stupid?

After his first meeting with Chairman Kim, President Trump said that there was an agreement to denuclearize. Now the president says, "Now that they have stopped test launches, that is enough." It looks like the goal posts were not only moved, but totally removed. Also, didn't the president realize that they may have paused testing because they achieved reliability and would resume when they were ready for the next stage?

Trump flew 8,000 miles to try and charm a mass murderer out of his nuclear weapons and got nothing in return.

GOP Congressman Gaetz' threats to Michael Cohen should get him hauled before the Oversight Committee for witness tampering and if convicted by the committee referred to the federal courts in Washington, D.C., to stand trial.

Illegal immigrants represent about 3 percent of the population and the Cato Institute determined that they commit proportionally fewer crimes than native-born Americans. Perhaps they commit 2.5 percent of crimes. Why does our president highlight every crime by an illegal alien and stay mum on the other 97.5 percent?

Viva Last Word

My wife and I have been, for the last several months, bemoaning the fact that Direct TV, without warning, had cutoff Channel 2, the North Carolina PBS provider. That channel had for years been a source of enjoyment, entertainment and information for us. While reading the Last Word this past week, there was a posting that the channel, again without any notification from Direct TV, was back on the air. Hooray, for the Last Word or we would not have been aware of the restoration. Thanks again for keeping the public informed.