

## Opposition knocks the wind out of turbine permit request

by Reid Pierce Armstrong

HEATHSVILLE—A proposal to install a wind turbine at 375 Logan Lodge Road hit a headwind of opposition from dozens of residents in the Bluff Point area last Thursday.

The Northumberland board of supervisors eventually denied Wes Pullman's request to erect a 104-foot-tall tower and turbine.

Citing aesthetics, noise pollution, property values, a nearby landing strip, migratory birds and proximity to other houses, the neighbors made their case against the modern windmill.

Used to generate electricity, wind turbines are a source of renewable energy. Northumberland, described as one of the windiest places in eastern Virginia, decided in March after six months of public debate to allow wind turbines.

Each proposed wind turbine would be considered on a case-by-case basis, the board agreed, noting the generators might be better suited to large parcels of land than to crowded neighborhoods.

Pullman was the first resident in the county to request a wind turbine.

Despite the efforts of wind turbine representative Jim Madden to increase awareness about the alternative energy source, fear and confusion reigned at the public hearing.

"Why does this tower need to be put up?" asked Dr. Wyatt Beazley, a neighbor on Bluff Point Road, who has a windmill. "If approved, one person will benefit. Many will be adversely affected."

"If you approve this one, are you going to okay the next one and the next one and the

next one?" asked Connie Ruble, who does not live in the neighborhood but was concerned about the implications of the board's decision.

"I imagine it will be about as tall as the Kilmarnock water tower," Ruble said.

"It's like having a couple of flag poles 104 feet high," neighbor Jones Felvey added.

District 4 supervisor Pamela Russell moved to deny the request based on the objections. The board approved her motion by a 5-0 vote.

In other land use matters, the board approved a special exceptions permit for the Northumberland Woman's Club to establish a clubhouse in Lottsburg.

The board also approved a new bed and breakfast for an existing dwelling at 74 Glebe Point Lane.

## Irvington studies sewer, drainage, legal matters and office improvements

by Robb Hoff

IRVINGTON—A centralized water and sewer service initiative for the towns of Irvington and White Stone and the Tides Inn and Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury is progressing towards an engineering study to determine the scope and cost of the project.

Town administrator Jack Fitzpatrick told the Irvington council last week that four engineering firms have been interviewed for the project feasibility study.

A committee representing the four entities involved will vote soon to select a firm to undertake the study, said Fitzpatrick. The study could require four to six months to complete, he added.

### Tavern Road drainage

Fitzpatrick also reported on the progress of a joint project with the Virginia Department of Transportation to improve drainage on Tavern Road near the Chesapeake Bank entrance.

"The upshot of it is that before a successful job can be done on Tavern Road, the entrance to the bank has to be upgraded to a commercial entrance," Fitzpatrick said.

Transportation officials have recommended that a cedar tree in the vicinity be taken down so the roots would not interfere with the

asphalt, he said.

However, concerns were raised about removal of the tree.

"I really think you're going to have some reaction," said town attorney Matson C. Terry II.

Council authorized Fitzpatrick to seek VDOT input on allowing the tree to remain.

### Other action

By a 5-0 vote, council unanimously approved spending up to \$2,500 for new computer equipment for the town office and up to \$2,000 in labor to paint the exterior of the town office.

Rhonda Kerr, Anne Carpenter and council members Garry Luckham and Kathleen Pollard were appointed to a committee to address interior improvements at the office.

Council also authorized Fitzpatrick to contact the county regarding Irvington road signs posted within the county's jurisdiction. Pollard expressed interest in the town constructing its own sign posts rather than using the metal ones specified by the county.

### Legal matters

Fitzpatrick updated council on the status of a ditch drainage lawsuit filed last year against the town by Irvington resident Audrey Lowery.

(continued on page A14)



### Just Gardens blooms

Irises were in full bloom along with roses and primroses at Blanchette and Jim Joneses' garden at French Landing. The Just Gardens tour just missed an array of colors at the home, where some 420 azaleas were in full bloom two weeks ago. The Just Gardens tour, which included four houses in the Millenbeck and Ottoman area and two in Irvington, was held last Friday and Saturday to benefit The Haven Shelter. More photos appear on page A14. (Photo by Lisa Hinton Valdrighi)



### Windmills generate whirlwind of activity

Last week was a week for windmills locally. On Tuesday, Ken O'Brock of O'Brock Windmills in North Benton, Ohio, (top) replaced an eight-foot 1932 Aermotor windmill atop a 47-foot tower at the Enon Hall property of Bill and Gay Chapman on Antipoinson Creek. On Wednesday, O'Brock (left) installed a 40-foot 1920s windmill tower restored and assembled by Alan Merkel on Indian Creek. O'Brock had some help from Rick's Tree Service owner, Rick Senter, who dangled from a crane and held the tail to keep the windmill from spinning as O'Brock tightened the blade connections. Also on Wednesday, O'Brock installed an eight-foot windmill atop an existing tower at the Henry's Creek property of Dr. Wyatt Beazley (bottom).



## Household wealth affects public projects

by Reid Pierce Armstrong

HEATHSVILLE—Northumberland's pockets have grown too deep for U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development loans and grants.

The same source of funding that recently built sewer systems in Fleeton and Callao will not be available to Indian Creek Estates, a development of hundreds of houses near Kilmarnock sorely in need of a sewer system.

The county's application was denied last month because its median household income has risen to \$38,100, the highest in the Northern Neck.

Northumberland has long depended on USDA grants and loans to fund infrastructure and utility programs, among other things. Without funding assistance from the Rural Development program, county officials say these infrastructure improvements would have been impossible.

Rural Development aid is granted to counties based on the median household income, which cannot exceed the non-metropolitan area median income of

### Data shows growth in 2003

by Reid Pierce Armstrong

Regional economic indicators point to growth in Northumberland County.

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission quarterly newsletter reports the county's percentage of increase in taxable sales was the largest in the Northern Neck during 2003.

While Northumberland has the lowest overall taxable sales in the region, \$53 million last year compared to Lancaster's \$122 million, Northumberland saw an 11 percent increase from 2002.

Supervisor Joseph Self guessed that the unexpected increase came from construction material sales. At least three retail stores in Northumberland County sell construction-related materials.

New housing permit figures support Self's theory.

With almost 230 building permits issued, Northumberland had 150 percent more new homes built last year than any other county on the Northern Neck. Of those, only 20 were manufactured homes. Lancaster County, with 144, had the second greatest number of permits issued.

\$33,400.

Westmoreland County, with a median household income of \$35,700, also does not qualify for Rural Development assistance while Lancaster County, at

\$33,200, and Richmond County, at \$33,000, still meet the guidelines.

All four Northern Neck counties may soon exceed the state's non-metro income, making the

entire region, including the Middle Peninsula, ineligible for the Rural Development grants.

The same phenomenon is taking place elsewhere in Virginia as people relocate from urban areas to rural regions with waterfront property and mountain vistas, shifting the median income level higher. Assistance that was once spread to rural localities across the entire state is now being directed almost entirely to the state's southwestern counties, one of the only regions where the median household income is still below \$30,000.

By a unanimous 5-0 vote, Northumberland supervisors last week adopted a resolution urging a change in the rules. It will be sent to Sen. George Allen, Sen. John Warner and Rep. Jo Ann Davis.

The resolution states, "the median income level for determining eligibility for funding does not produce an accurate representation of income in rural areas since it does not take into account earned income, citizens (continued on page A14)

## Lancaster supervisors resume budget process

by Robb Hoff

LANCASTER—Following the approval of a \$12.9-million school budget last month that includes \$8.2 million in county funding, the Lancaster board of supervisors resumed work last week on the county's overall budget for 2004-05.

The budget draft projects more than \$21 million in local, state and federal revenues, including \$7.2 million in real estate tax revenues based on a preliminary tax rate of 39 cents per \$100.

The actual tax rate for the year will be determined in June.

The budget includes state-funded pay increases of 3 percent for constitutional offices other

than the sheriff's office, which will receive a 4.8 percent boost from the state.

Overall expenditures for the sheriff's office are projected at \$1.7 million, primarily through state funding. However, the preliminary budget does not reflect two new deputy positions requested by Sheriff Ronnie Crockett for drug enforcement.

Board chairman Patrick G. Frere said the sheriff has indicated that 80 percent of the county's crimes, other than those directly involving drugs, are still related in some form to drug activity.

Supervisor Ernest W. Palin Jr. noted the benefit that increased drug enforcement in the county

could have.

"If he (sheriff) had more deputies assigned to drugs, he could do a better job with them," Palin said.

However, supervisor F.W. "Butch" Jenkins Jr. requested more information about whether problems with drug activity are greater this year than last, and whether the problems are sufficient to warrant two additional deputies assigned specifically for drug enforcement.

Supervisor Peter N. Geilich suggested the request for the two new positions be considered further into the budget process.

The budget also projects a 5 percent increase in pay for county

employees and a \$300-per-month county contribution toward health insurance premiums for county employees.

County administrator Bill Penell noted that health insurance costs for a single employee could increase from \$390 to \$415 per month. He added that the county contribution per non-school employee has increased by 9 percent this year.

Other increases discussed were \$20,000 more in contributions for the Lancaster Community Library in Kilmarnock, up from \$55,000, and \$16,000 more for the Northern Neck Free Health Clinic in Kilmarnock, up from

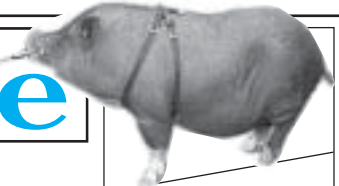
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**Painting pig to visit here: A3**





### Just Gardens tour blooms in Lancaster County

Just Gardens tour visitors last Friday walked through a winding path overlooking the Corrotoman River garden at the home of Abe and Chris Jordan. The tour benefits The Haven.



Volunteers Judy Betts (left) and Patricia Kirby relaxed at Funch Landing during a break in the stream of Just Gardens tour participants.



Pink peonies surrounded by shrubs, perennials and vines love the full sun of the East-view garden. (Photos by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi)

## Sponge crab report due consideration

NEWPORT NEWS—The Virginia Marine Resources Commission will meet Tuesday, May 25, to continue its discussion regarding the harvesting of sponge crabs.

The session begins at 9:30 a.m. at 2600 Washington Avenue in Newport News. Fisheries items, including the sponge crab discus-

sion, will be addressed at noon.

A public hearing was held at the April 27 meeting on a proposal to repeal the ban on the possession of dark colored sponge crabs and the requirement to return them immediately to the water alive. Instead, the VMRC proposed to substitute the existing regulation and ban the possession

of all sponge crabs, regardless of color or stage of development, during July and August.

By a unanimous 8-0 vote, the commission at that time referred the issue to the blue crab management advisory committee.

The committee is expected to offer its recommendations at the upcoming meeting.

## White Stone resident to participate in dedication of WWII memorial

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At the invitation of the U.S. Library of Congress, retired Capt. Robert J. Bloxom of White Stone will be a featured speaker on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., May 27 and 30 during the dedication of the National World War II Memorial.

Capt. Bloxom made 16 combat crossings of the U-boat-infested Atlantic Ocean between 1941 and 1945 as a Merchant Marine officer and served on several merchant ships bringing war supplies to the Allies in England and other European ports. In addition to serving aboard several of the famed Liberty Ships, including the John Brown, Merriman and Nordica, he also joined a convoy on the World War I-era Keystone early in the war and, later, the relatively modern Cape Horn.

"I never saw any (German) subs, but ships were sunk in the convoys I was in," Capt. Bloxom said. "In one convoy, there were two ships just ahead of us that were sunk."

If the convoy's command ship hoisted "the big black flag," that meant there were subs in the area hunting Allied ships.

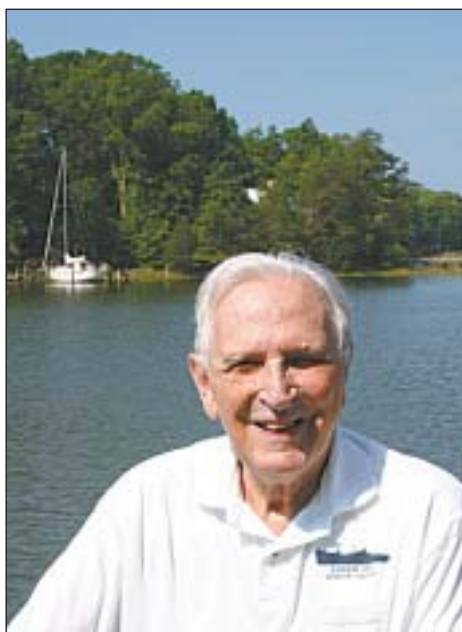
Later in the war, Capt. Bloxom and his shipmates found themselves in an Italian port during a German Luftwaffe air raid.

"When the air raid sirens sounded, the most dangerous those Italian stevedores would (drop everything and) leave in a hurry," he joked.

While bringing supplies to Europe's largest port, Antwerp, Belgium, merchant seamen were the first to be attacked by one of Nazi Germany's latest wonder weapons, he said.

"The first German jet fighter (a Messerschmitt 262) dropped a bomb on a ship and sunk it just a pier up from us," Capt. Bloxom said.

As part of the WWII Memorial's dedication, Capt. Bloxom and a panel of two other World War II vets will speak May 26 at 5 p.m. and May 30 at 4 p.m. at the Library of Congress Veterans History Project Pavilion on the National Mall. Joining him at the podium will be a veteran of



Retired Capt. Robert J. Bloxom relaxes at his home on a cove of Carter's Creek. (Photo by Reid Pierce Armstrong)

the Office of Strategic Services and an officer who served with the U.S. Coast Guard.

After recently publishing the maritime memoirs of his Merchant Marine years, entitled *The Sailor*, Capt. Bloxom sent a copy of his book to the Library of Congress. He was contacted by archivist Nancy Mitchell and invited to speak and represent the Merchant Marine veterans during the dedication activities.

The Smithsonian Institute has offered to cover Capt. Bloxom's lodging and expenses during the three days of festivities.

Born in 1920, Capt. Bloxom was raised in Collingswood, N.J. As a youth, he had an interest in the sea and with his father, Alford, built a sailboat. As a teen, Capt. Bloxom was active in scouting and earned Eagle in the Boy Scouts and Quartermaster in the Sea Scouts.

In 1939, he left home for the Merchant Marine's Pennsylvania School Ship to hone his seamanship skills before receiving a license as a third mate.

After the war, Capt. Bloxom became an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard and was stationed in Milwaukee, Wis., between 1951 and 1960. Later he was promoted to captain of the Coast Guard cutter Dallas for several years before retiring in 1972.

He and his wife, Jinney, have been married 61 years. They have three children, nine grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

The couple is active in community and charity events, including White Stone United Methodist Church. Capt. Bloxom is a third-degree Mason and a member of the National Audubon Society.

An avid woodworker, Capt. Bloxom built custom-designed toys for disadvantaged young children at Christmas for over 10 years. He's also enjoyed model railroading and hobby rockery. The Bloxoms also enjoy square dancing.

For a schedule of the Library of Congress Veterans Memorial Project Pavilion events, visit [www.loc.gov/folklife/vets](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets).

### ▼ Lancaster budget process . . . . (continued from page A1)

\$38,050. The board recommended an increase from \$50 to \$100 per meeting for appointees to the board of zoning appeals, the planning commission and the wetlands board.

Other items discussed by the supervisors were maintenance contracts for waste removal (\$350,210), a wood waste processing contract (\$200,000), and the county's 45-percent match of the budgeted \$400,000 required by the Comprehensive Services Act for youths with special needs.

#### Decreases

Frere noted that the general government category has been reduced by \$104,973, which Pennell said was due to the completion of a countywide reassessment of property budgeted at \$135,000 for the current fiscal year.

Another potential decrease could come in the school budget. Pennell said the school division is now projected to receive more state funding than anticipated. He estimated the schools would require an estimated \$100,000 less in local funds due to the state windfall.

"You were generous to them and the state was generous to them," Pennell said. "It seems to me there needs to be some leveling out to take place."

#### Budget schedule

The board set three preliminary meetings leading to an adoption of the budget by June 24.

A work session will be held May 25 at 4 p.m. at the courthouse. Organizations and constitutional officers can address the board about funding requests at this meeting.

On June 2, the board will meet at 5 p.m. in the county administrator's office for a work session.

On June 15 at 7 p.m., the board will hold a public hearing on the budget in the General District courtroom.

#### Capital improvements

Although Pennell noted that capital improvement figures have

not been included in the preliminary budget, one proposed improvement project came under fire during the work session: the replacement of the school bus garage, estimated to cost up to \$915,000.

An engineering study for the project was previously recommended by the supervisors. However, Jenkins said any new construction for the garage, originally proposed for \$360,000, would likely be too costly.

"There is no way we can afford a new bus garage, and going back to have the gentleman to redo the figures isn't going to get us anywhere," Jenkins said, adding that he supported a study for rehabilitation of the existing garage in Lively.

Geilich cited concerns about requests approved by the school board that seem to have estimates that are too high.

"I just want them to come to us asking for something reasonable," Geilich said. "Not asking for the moon and hoping to get a few stars."

Frere suggested that two service bays instead of three could be sufficient to service the schools' 31-bus fleet. He also noted that he was inclined to support use of the existing garage if service of county vehicles other than those of the school division was not included in plans for a new garage.

Jenkins also questioned whether or not mechanics would prefer to work from the floor

rather than use the service lifts planned to raise buses from the floor.

However, the deterioration of the existing garage was pointed out by Palin. "They need to do something with the present situation," he said.

Frere recommended a feasibility study to rehabilitate the existing garage. Pennell suggested hiring a firm separate from the one to be selected by the school board to consider a replacement garage.

"If you've got two firms competing against each other, we're likely to get better numbers," Pennell said.

In other capital improvement matters, the board approved a payment of \$32,900 to Church View Septic Service for replacement of a failed drainfield at Lancaster Primary School and an additional \$20,902 for approximately 100 emergency septic pumpouts at the school before the drainfield was replaced.

#### IDA loan

The board authorized Pennell to initiate a \$10-million bond issue for a Norfolk private school through the Lancaster County Industrial Development Authority, which can authorize up to \$10 million in loans per year without liability to the county.

Pennell noted that the county could realize \$12,500 in revenues from one-eighth of one-percent that the county would receive on the annual unpaid principal of the loan.

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## Hearing set on waiver to bay act

LANCASTER—The board of supervisors will conduct a public hearing May 27 on a request for a waiver to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act resource protection area setback requirements.

The hearing will address a request from Andrew K. and Sarah B. Spongberg to place a stone walkway on property off of Saint Andrews Lane near Weems. The walkway would be constructed within 21 feet of tidal wetlands along Church Prong.

The board meets at 7 p.m. in the basement courtroom of the county courthouse at 8311 Mary Ball Road in Lancaster.

### ▼ Irvington . . . .

(continued from page A1)

"There's no change in the situation with the ditch, which remains in the hands of our attorneys," Fitzpatrick said.

The suit was amended in January and seeks a \$750,000 judgment in addition to an injunction that would undo the trespass on her property alleged by Lowery when the town in December of 2001 authorized the pipe installation and covered a drainage ditch that crosses her property.

In another legal matter, council met in a closed session to discuss a pending court proceeding on a division of land in which the town has an eighth interest. The parcels are on Chesapeake Drive across from the Irvington Commons.

The interest in the parcels was originally conveyed to the town by Virginia Thomas.

No action was taken following the closed session, reported Fitzpatrick.

### ▼ Wealth . . . .

(continued from page A1)

living at or below the poverty level or citizens living on public assistance."

The board recommends that the USDA review and revise the eligibility requirements for Rural Development and Community Facilities Grants to utilize per capita income as a more accurate reflection of income levels in rural areas.

According to 2000 US Census data, per capita income is \$22,917 in Northumberland, \$24,663 in Lancaster, \$19,473 in Westmoreland and \$16,675 in Richmond County.

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