

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.



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)

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.

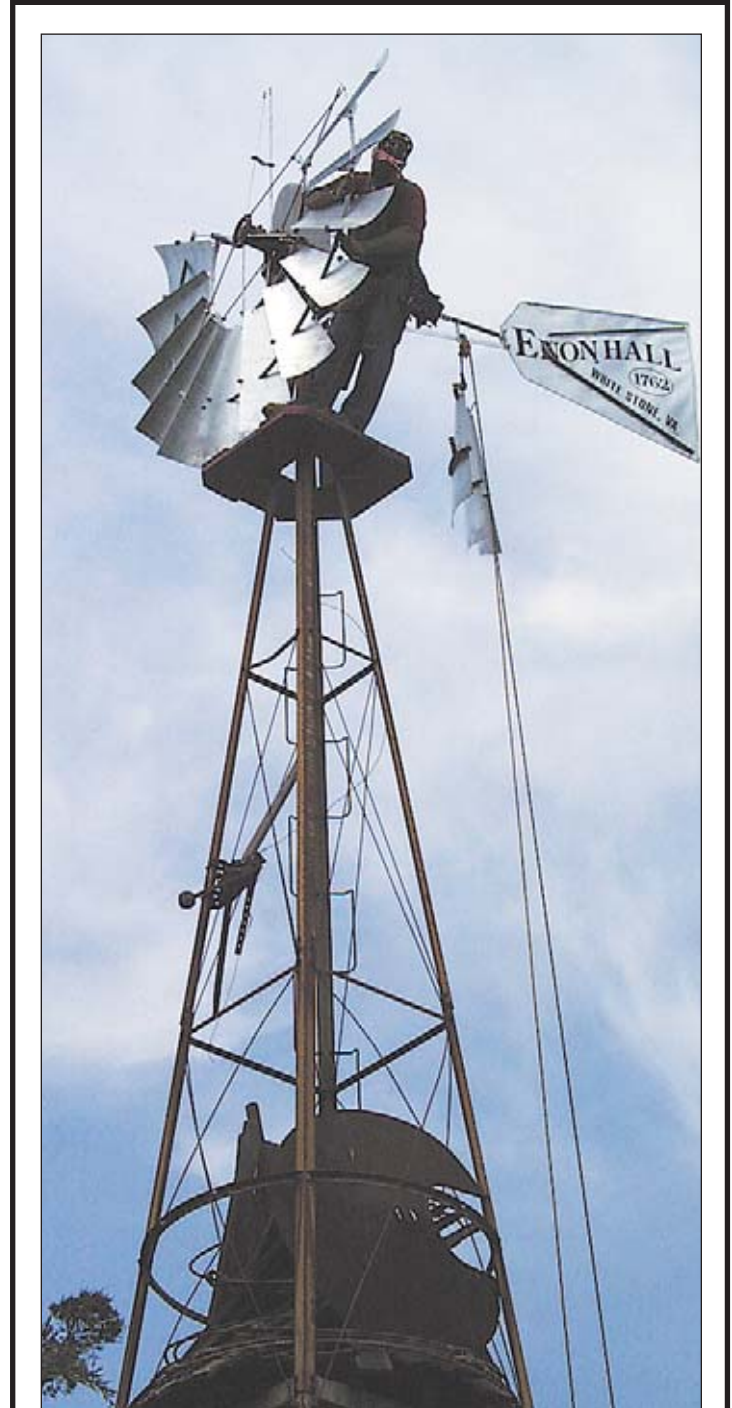
Rhonda Kerr, Anne Carpenter and council members Garry Luckham and Kathleen Pollard were appointed to a committee to address interior improvements at the office.

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

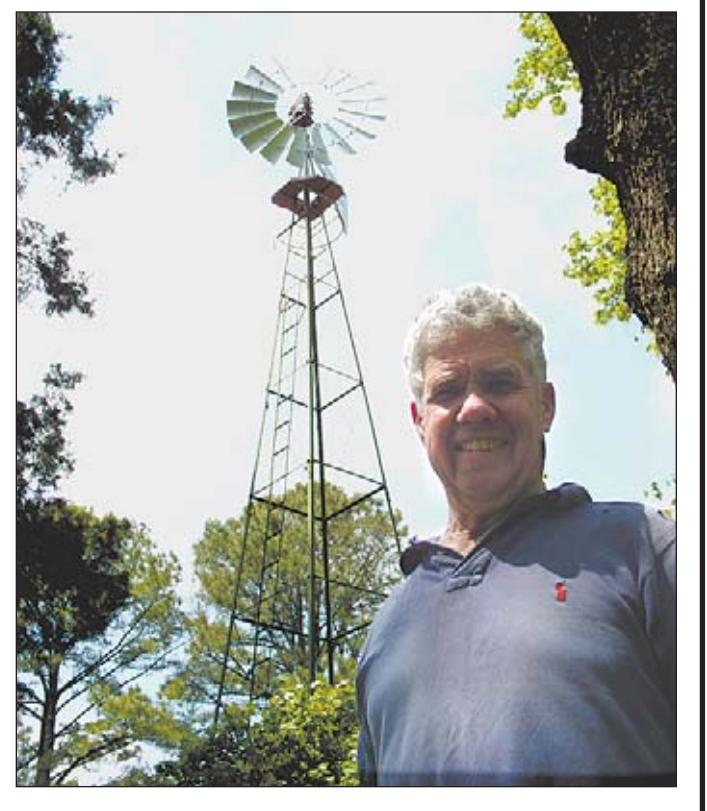
Fitzpatrick updated council on the status of a ditch drainage lawsuit filed last year against the town by Irvington resident Audrey Lowery.

(continued on page A14)



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 Antipoison 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 Pennell 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

(continued on page A14)

Inside

■ Celebrate in Lively: Firemen's Festival to feature parade, other events this weekend A9

■ Turtle turmoil: Pound netters back at work with wary lookout for sea turtles B1

Painting pig to visit here: A3

Business	B6-7	Directory	C10-11	Schools	B8-9
Calendar	A2	Obituaries	B3	Sports	A10-13
Churches	B2-4	Opinion	A4-5	Upcoming ..	A2-3, 6+
Classified	C1-12	Police report	B1	Wildlife notes ..	A13