

Monitor

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HEADS UP!

Changes in the Accessory Dwelling Ordinance Could Open the Floodgates of Uncontrolled Residential Development

At the end of 2005, the Board of Supervisors changed the county zoning ordinance to allow family accessory dwelling units of up to 1,400 square feet, limited to five occupants and with the stipulation that the unit must be occupied by a family member for a minimum of five years.

This was a fair and reasonable proposition, and CFFC was solidly in favor of it. However, a resident of Cedar Run District was not satisfied with the wording of the ordinance, and in early 2006 filed an application requesting three significant changes:

That the size of the accessory unit be raised from 1,400 to 1,600 square feet.

That there be no limit on the number of people who could occupy the house.

That a family member would only be required to occupy the unit for two years.

In September of 2006 the Planning Commission voted to deny these changes, based on their reasoning that the existing ordinance was sufficient to meet the need for accessory family buildings. The matter then passed on to the supervisors, who made their own proposal which would remove the word "family" from the ordinance. This proposed change of wording would allow an accessory dwelling with almost any single-family house, and the accessory unit could be put on the market as a rental unit from the time it was completed.

In December the Board held a public hearing on the proposed changes at which several CFFC members spoke to voice their opposition to the change which eliminated the requirement that the units be occupied by family members. In view of the strong opposition which was voiced at the meeting, the Board tabled the text amendments until their work session on January 11, and no final decision to accept the changes originally proposed by the Cedar Run resident or to create a new ordinance is likely until the regular board meeting in February.

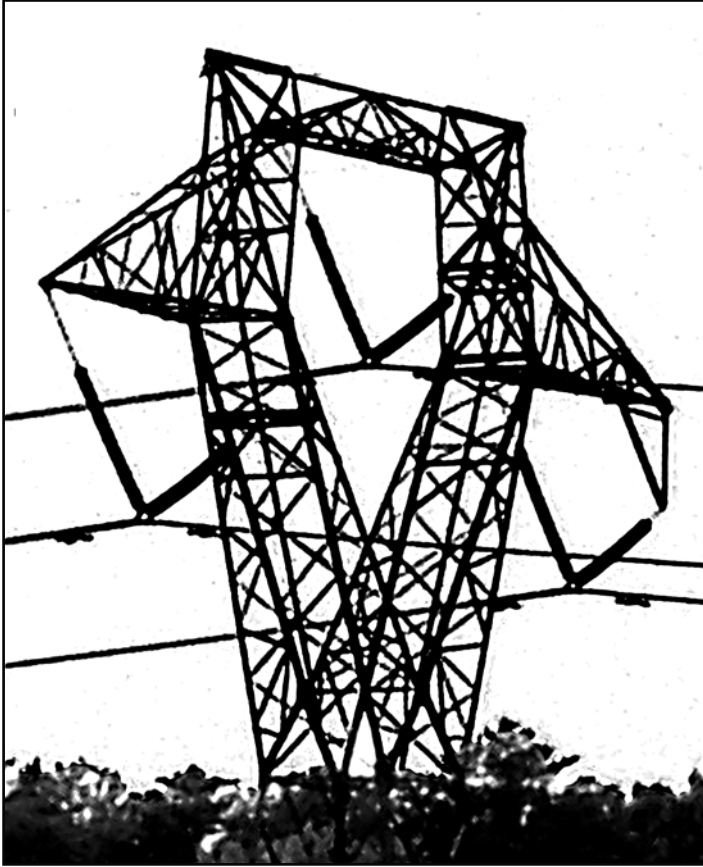
CFFC supports the existing ordinance as it was originally written in 2005, and strongly opposes allowing accessory units to be constructed which can immediately be turned into rental properties.

Allowing accessory units to be built under these conditions would be a back-door way of dramatically upzoning the residential area of Fauquier County.

What Can You Do To Stop This From Happening?

This issue will probably be brought up for a decision at the February meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Check our website <www.citizensforfauquier.org> for updates, and meanwhile contact your supervisor to make your opposition known. Call 540/347-8648 or email <bos@fauquiercounty.gov>

Our Mission: To preserve the natural, historic and agricultural resources of Fauquier County and to protect the county's unique quality of life through education and leadership.



Power Line Alert! Loudoun County Out, Fauquier In... The Crosshairs

Dominion Virginia Power has issued a new map of the proposed route for the 500 kilovolt power line it wants to construct to bring power from Southern Pennsylvania to Arcola in Loudoun County, moving the most likely corridor out of Loudoun County and into Fauquier.

The power line would entail clear-cutting a 150-200 foot right of way through some of the most scenic and historic countryside in the United States, down which would march a column of five-storey steel towers. A tidal wave of opposition is rising in an attempt to block Dominion Virginia's plans, but this is going to be a long and bitter fight and your support is urgently needed.

For full, up-to-date information and to learn what you can do to join the fight, go to the Piedmont Environmental Council's website [www.pecva](http://www.pecva.org) and follow the links to the power line information.

Beyond the obvious environmental concerns, there are some very serious problems with Dominion's proposal:

- *This new power line may not be needed*
- *Piecemeal approval of power lines sets bad energy policy*
- *This short-circuits federal laws and policies*
- *It short-circuits important state laws and policies*
- *It is at war with local planning and decision making*
- *It would deface one of the most protected and scenic landscapes in America*
- *Virginia's interests have not been properly taken into account*
- *Designating a federal corridor in Virginia could derail state energy policy*
- *National Environmental Policy Act review has thus far been evaded*
- *Undoing open-space and conservation easements would undermine tax policies*

For full information on these problems, go to www.pecva.org/landuse/energy/powerlines/tenproblems.php



D.C Goes Green...What About Fauquier?

The Washington Post ran a front page article on November 16 about instituting green design standards for all commercial development. Within two years, all new public projects, including schools, would meet green standards. By 2012, even private commercial development (over 50,000 square feet) and affordable housing will have to meet green guidelines.

What is a green building? It is one which is energy efficient, which minimizes its impact on the site and natural resources. It minimizes its use of water and recaptures rainwater for additional uses. It uses large amounts of natural daylight and natural ventilation where possible, as well as recycled construction materials and nontoxic interior materials such as flooring, carpeting, paints and sealants. All this contributes to superior indoor air quality and high levels of acoustic, thermal and visual comfort—in a building which is healthy and productive, cost effective and sustainable.

The costs of implementing green design are currently estimated to add less than 5% to the front-end construction costs of a green building. The savings in energy and maintenance costs are generally paid back in 5 to 10 years; after that the savings reduce the life-cycle costs directly. In today's world, increasing energy efficiency translates more and more directly to cost savings. CFFC has recently initiated an effort to bring *green or high performance design* to Fauquier County, specifi-

cally to our schools. The Kettle Run school site on Route 602 is a perfect opportunity to begin to explore green design technology. It is bisected by Kettle Run and extensive wetlands and in fact hosts a rare Blue Heron rookery. It would be the perfect site for a school which would sit lightly on the land and reflect the unique natural resources of the campus. Green or high performance school design has been shown to increase student and teacher performance, decrease absenteeism, and increase test scores dramatically.

Unfortunately the School Board has elected not to investigate green design for the elementary school which is now in the design phase and which will be built beside the Kettle Run High School. The cost to assess the plans for potential green design would be a fraction of one percent of the cost of the new school. However, the School Board wants the Board of Supervisors to "support" green design in all public buildings before they will consider it.

The school system – read county taxpayers - has paid \$6.5 million to remediate the failed air handling system at Liberty High School. We think it's time to take a different, more forward-looking approach to school design. Rather than building as fast as we can, as cheaply as we can, let's consider our resources, both natural and human, and build with a view toward the future of our children's world. Green design is good for our children, it's good for our community, and it's good for our pocketbooks.

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Bad Changes Proposed: Central Sewer for Agricultural Areas

Supervisor Ray Graham of Cedar Run District has put forward an amendment to the Fauquier County Zoning Ordinance to allow sewer systems in the agriculturally zoned areas of the County. This proposal would be a major change to Fauquier County's policies as they pertain to central sewer systems.

About eight years ago two rezonings were approved, Raymond Farm on Rt. 605 and Rt. 29 and Warrenton Chase near Frytown. Both of these rezonings allowed the construction of central sewer systems to be built on the property. Shortly thereafter the Board of Supervisors, realizing the dangers of allowing this kind of development, made changes to our Zoning Ordinance. Today the Zoning Ordinance only allows central sewer systems in the Service Districts, and they are to be operated by the Fauquier Water and Sanitation Authority. The proposed changes would allow central systems outside the Service District which could be privately owned and operated.

Supervisor Graham is also proposing an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to create a rural Health Remediation District east of Rt. 17 near its intersection with Ritchie Road. The District includes 15 parcels and over 650 acres. It does include at least one parcel with a failing septic system.

Both of these amendments are advertised for a public hearing before the Planning Commission on January 25, 2007. The same night a hearing will be held for a rezoning on land in the District: Kastle Green is requesting rezoning of 70 acres of agriculturally zoned land to residential zoning for 19 lots.

The proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance and to the Comprehensive Plan are cloaked in language as health remediation, but what these changes will do is open up large areas of agriculturally zoned land to be rezoned for residential uses.

Fauquier County has been fortunate to have in place wise, conservative policies which protect the health and welfare of its citizens by allowing only centrally located sewer systems in its Service Districts. Neighboring counties have a history of allowing these package sewer systems, which have a very high failure rate, and the cost to repair them runs in the millions of dollars. Hopefully, Fauquier County does not want to go down a path so sure to bring failure.

**Attend the meeting on January 25 and voice your opposition to these ill-conceived proposals.
Warren Green Building in Warrenton, 7:00 pm**