

# the monitor



THE NEWSLETTER OF CITIZENS FOR FAUQUIER COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2022

## 2021 Was a Good Year for CFFC

By Kevin Ramundo  
CFFC President

Following a year when our activities were limited by the pandemic, CFFC roared back in 2021 with numerous programs listed below that reflect our mission of preserving open space, strengthening the agricultural economy and protecting rich historical resources:

- Listing the St. James Baptist Church in Bealeton on the Virginia and U. S. Registries of Historic Places;
- Joining the state's Adopt-A-Highway program by collecting litter on a road near Remington;
- Establishing a task force to determine how to balance utility-scale solar as a source of "green energy" with open space and agricultural priorities;
- For the first time, selecting a leader of the agricultural community, Ken Smith, to receive CFFC's Kitty P. Smith Annual Conservation Award;

- Concluding our robust effort launched in 2020 to educate citizens about Warrenton's Comprehensive Plan; and,
- Sponsoring the successful Upperville Farmers Market.

As these accomplishments illustrate, our work requires a broad range of expertise including how to navigate the historic registry process; understanding the complexity of land use policy and zoning; and, the ability to thoughtfully and objectively analyze complicated topics such as Warrenton's Comprehensive Plan. It also requires the ability to identify issues that can affect our county's rural character as in the case of utility-scale solar.



St. James Baptist Church

we accomplish, CFFC decided to add to the experience and talent on the board by electing three new board members as you'll read about later in this issue (see page 2). With these additions, our already strong board will be even stronger.

As Fauquier's oldest conservation nonprofit, CFFC has been at the forefront for over 50 years of identifying and understanding the issues that pose threats to what makes our county so special. Working with county leaders and various conservation groups, CFFC has helped Fauquier County avoid the fate of neighboring counties where unique communities, rich histories, valuable farmland and beautiful open space have too often given way to excessive growth, congestion and too many look-a-like commercial and residential developments.

Thanks to all our members, contributors and other organizations for helping us protect Fauquier's future. 🇺🇸

Our success as an organization also requires us to fine-tune how we operate. In 2021 we created a better approach to determining CFFC's programming priorities, and more fully staffed our land-use committee which is now organized around the county's five magisterial districts. And since we depend on our Board of Directors for almost everything



(L-R) Ray Root and board members Amy Trotto, Kevin Ramundo, Mary Root and Jon Nuckles.

Solar facility under construction in Spotsylvania County.  
Photo Credit: Hugh Kenney, Piedmont Environmental Council

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## Board of Directors

Kevin Ramundo\*, *President*

Jonathon Nuckles\*, *Vice President*

Susan Russell\*, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Ken Alm

Harry Atherton

Chris Bonner\*

Leslie Cheek – President Emeritus

Dave Gibson

Doug Larson

Yak Lubowsky\*

Lori Keenan McGuinness

David Norden

Mary Page

Jim Rich

Mary Root

Ben Smith

Jim Stone

Amy Trotto\*

*\*Executive Committee*

## Land Use Advisor

Julie Bolthouse

## Board Advisors

Mimi Abel Smith

Julie Broaddus

Jeb Hannum

Feroline Higginson

Hope Porter

Sue Scheer

## Communications and Administrative Manager

Montana Ruffner

# Strengthening our Land Use Committee

By Ken Alm  
Director of Land Use

Land use is one of CFFC's most important responsibilities. We monitor all land use matters that come before the county's Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors including comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and changes, and special exception and special permit requests. Our work is guided by the county's development guidelines and regulations, and where necessary, we communicate our analysis and recommendations to county officials and make broader land-use recommendations. We attend many of the meetings where land-use issues are discussed and decisions are made.

As development pressures increase across the county, it became apparent in 2021 that CFFC needed to devote more resources to its land use responsibility. We also decided to put more focus on the town of Warrenton which has separate

planning and zoning functions, recently approved a high-growth comprehensive plan and is considering an expansion of its boundaries by 60 percent by annexing county land (see page 3).

As a result, five members of our board (Chris Bonner, Lori Keenan McGuinness, Mary Root, Jim Stone, and Amy Trotto) will join me on our Land Use Committee and focus primarily on specific county magisterial districts and the town of Warrenton. Our team will also include Jeb Hannum, a conservationist who lives in the Marshall District, and Julie Bolthouse, Deputy Director of Land Use at the Piedmont Environmental Council.

I'd like to thank my fellow board members and Jeb and Julie for joining CFFC's Land Use Committee. 🇺🇸

# Welcoming Our New Board Members

By Amy Trotto

The success of Citizens for Fauquier County depends directly on the quality of our all-volunteer Board of Directors. Their commitment, skills and experience allow us to deliver on our mission of preserving Fauquier's future.

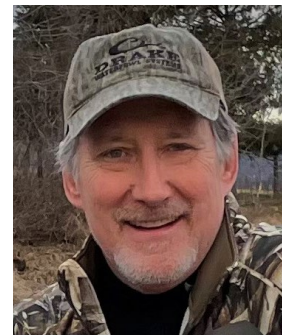
In mid-2021 CFFC began considering how it could best add to the board's capabilities and diversity, and replace members whose terms had or would soon expire. We agreed that the board would be strengthened with more younger members, and increased representation from the agricultural community and the southern part of the county. The board identified 24 prospects including three who best met the criteria we established. All three accepted our invitation to join the board and were elected at our January meeting.

Dave Gibson, who lives on the outskirts of Warrenton, brings forty years of domestic and international experience in commercial sustainability projects, land use, and environmental, social and governance practices with organizations including the International Finance Corporation/World Bank, USAID, and Chemonics International. His expertise includes regenerative agriculture, landscape restoration, forestry, aquaculture and livestock supply chains, and renewable energy. He is proficient in geographical information systems, serves on Fauquier County's Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory

Committee, and helped CFFC analyze Warrenton's recently adopted comprehensive plan.

Lori Keenan McGuinness, a 20-year Rectortown resident, has decades of private sector experience as an attorney specializing in regulatory law, and as a non-profit executive and officer. Lori has been a member of the Goose Creek

Association Board since 2007 and has served as its Fauquier County Chairperson since 2014. She was a founding member of Friends of Rectortown, which supported the creation of the Rectortown Historic District, and is Vice Chair of the Virginia



Dave Gibson



Lori Keenan McGuinness

# Why is Warrenton Planning to Expand by 60 Percent?

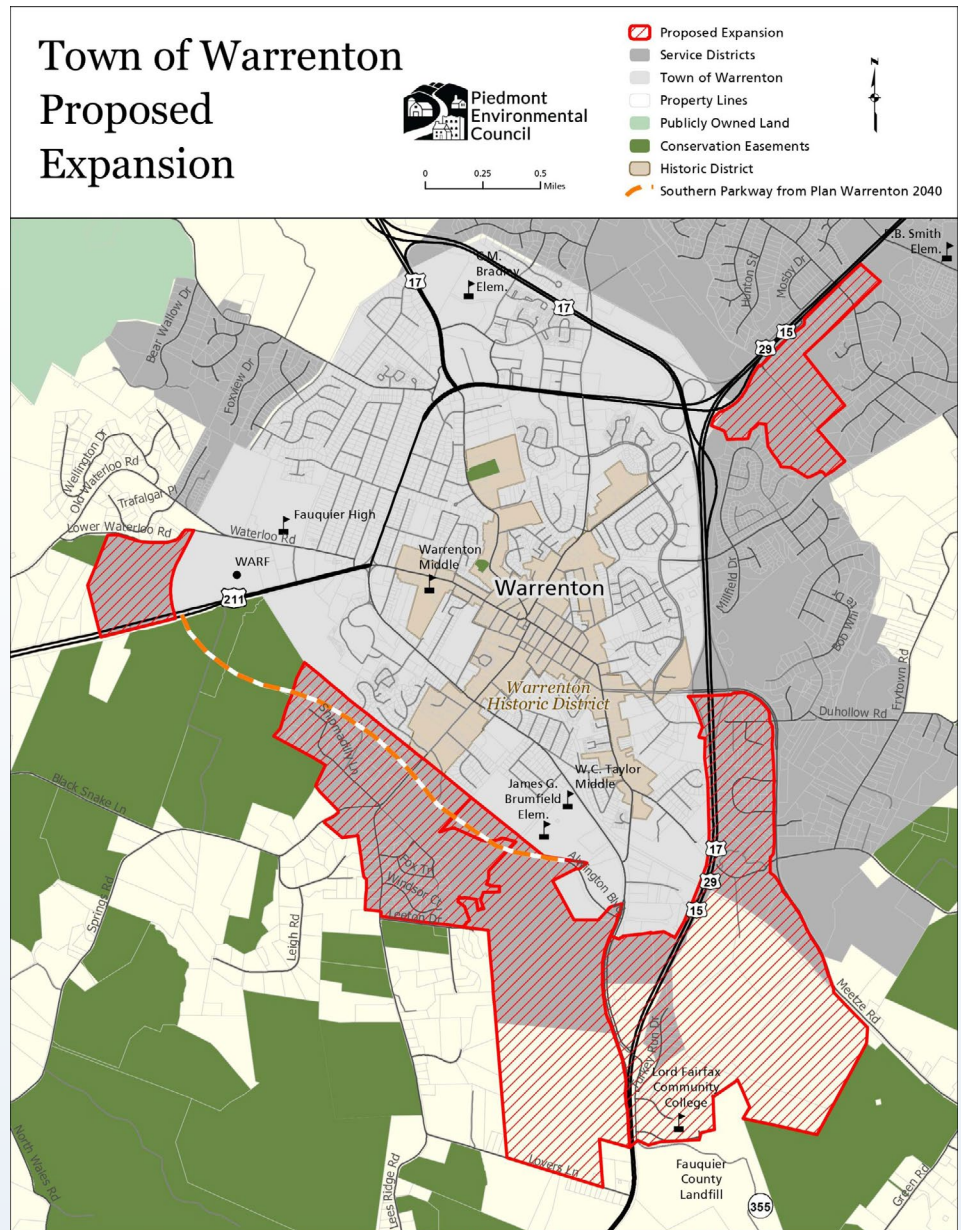
By Christopher Bonner

The Town of Warrenton is planning to annex 1,750 acres from Fauquier County, a move that would expand the town's boundaries by 60 percent. The plan could dramatically transform this historic town by possibly opening the door to suburban sprawl, higher taxes, and new roads slicing through peaceful neighborhoods. About 33% of the acreage planned for annexation is currently zoned agriculture, and another 61% is zoned low-density residential where there is currently no public water and sewer.

Citizens for Fauquier County reached out to town officials on January 20<sup>th</sup> and requested a meeting to better understand the plan and the rationale for such a large increase in the town's land area. As of the time this issue of the Monitor went to press on February 7<sup>th</sup>, we had not received a response.

As part of our outreach to the town, CFFC asked about the connection between its annexation plan and the strongly pro-growth comprehensive plan the town recently adopted, and if experts were used to study the costs and benefits for town and county citizens. We also asked about the town's willingness to work collaboratively with the county on annexation and to hold public hearings. Our understanding is that the Town Council has been discussing annexation behind closed doors for at least a year.

CFFC has not yet taken an actual position on the annexation proposal, but we are very concerned about the unprecedented scale of the plan and a lack of public involvement so far in the process. We have formed a working group to study the issue, and as a first step, we reached out to the town since understanding



the plan is fundamental to our responsibility to educate the public accurately and objectively on matters that affect them. And we hope to offer our own recommendations and to avoid

a situation where a plan is rushed through without adequate review and where citizens don't have an opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard. 🇺🇸

## New CFFC Members in 2021

Roger and Susan Amato  
 Carrie E. Berlin  
 Thomas and Charlotte deButts  
 Carina Elgin  
 David and Elaina Evans  
 Michael Fine  
 Mary F. Finlay

James and Lisa Gable  
 Christine Greenland  
 Eric Hilgartner  
 Vickie and Miguel Innis  
 Mr. and Mrs. William Jarnigan  
 Benjamin Kanoy  
 Jane Deb Kates

Dr. Sally Lahm  
 PJ Leary  
 Stella Lilley  
 Jeff and Linda Millington  
 Dan Moore  
 Mary Perrine  
 Dennis and Carol Sherman

Missy Smith  
 Rebecca Thistlewaite  
 Wyatt Thorpe  
 James W. Timberlake V  
 Swee Tsai  
 Anthony Vassalo  
 Roseanne L. Woodroof

## Board Members from page 2



Ben Smith

League of Conservation Voters, a bipartisan nonprofit focused on conservation and the environment. Lori, whose farm is in conservation easement, is committed to preserving and protecting our area.

Ben Smith is a 4th generation farmer and Fauquier native who lives in Remington. Before 2013 when he returned home to his family's Cool Lawn Farm, he worked in other domestic and international farming operations. He is currently the dairy manager at Cool Lawn, where he oversees the largest dairy in the county. Additionally, Ben owns and operates his own grain and

hay business. He purchased his first farm in 2017 and immediately put it in Fauquier County's Purchase of Development Rights program to protect it permanently. Ben is a board member of the Fauquier County Farm Bureau and Virginia Holstein Association.

As you can see, CFFC chose well. While welcoming Dave, Lori and Ben to our board, we want to thank past president and long-serving board member, Mimi Abel Smith, as well as Sally Semple and Jessica Swan for their many contributions to our organization's success. 



## PLEASE JOIN US

**Please support Fauquier County's oldest conservation nonprofit dedicated to preserving the county's rural character.** CFFC is a strong advocate for open space, historic preservation and a healthy agricultural economy. We track every land use rezoning or special exception before the Planning Commission and are quick to engage when inappropriate development threatens to bring Northern Virginia sprawl to Fauquier. Planning Commission developments are covered monthly in CFFC's exclusive Land Use Report.

Fauquier County is under tremendous pressure to grow as regional population soars and residents flee neighboring, built-out counties. Help protect Fauquier's future by joining CFFC, a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Visit [citizensforfauquier.org](http://citizensforfauquier.org) and become involved.