



Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship

“Northumberland is going to grow. Let’s help it grow with order and beauty.”

NAPS News

Winter 2008

Volume 17, Issue 1

NAPS ANNUAL MEETING – SATURDAY, MARCH 8

Local Education Efforts in Focus

By SUE LINDSEY

With the new school buildings dominating the Claraville landscape, it is appropriate that the Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship (NAPS) should choose education as the focus for the 2008 Annual Meeting. This year, members will gather at St. Stephen’s Parish Hall in Heathsville on March 8 to listen to their superintendent of public schools, Clint Stables, and Rappahannock Community College (RCC) president Dr. Elizabeth Crowther discuss local education – as it is today and will be in the coming years.

Dr. Crowther will outline her vision of the community college and its role in the region during the next decade. RCC will continue to work with its university partners, Old Dominion University and Mary Baldwin College, which already have a presence on the campus, and will soon add the University of Mary Washington and University of Virginia to that list. RCC will also expand occupational training opportunities while offering increased opportunities for high school students to receive dual enrollment credit.

RCC is an educational facility that can provide instruction from freshman to doctoral levels. However, the college also has a commitment to serve students at risk. “We will work to develop programs to recover individuals who are at risk for secondary drop out and enhance the bridge to higher education,” states Crowther. A further objective will be to expand efforts to develop the region’s own residents as teachers through increased certification programs.

Superintendent Stables will explain some of the

consequences of the current dramatic financial crisis facing the county. However, he will also highlight some of the many successes achieved during the last 10 years, particularly in the areas of career and technical education and in post secondary education through the partnership with RCC. Stables will give updates on the status of the new buildings and explain the positive impact on staff recruitment that can be expected from state-of-the-art facilities. Like Dr. Crowther, he will also devote some time to addressing the needs of students who are not succeeding and will outline strategies for earlier intervention. Increased parental and community involvement will be key elements in achieving the goal of 100% success rates.



Dr. Elizabeth Crowther and Clint Stables will speak at NAPS Annual Meeting, March 8, 2008

The NAPS annual meeting provides an opportunity to listen to our top educators and learn more about the expectations for education in our county. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments, followed by the presentations starting at 10 a.m. *

The Building Height Debate

By LYNTON LAND

How tall should buildings be in Northumberland County? At the Feb. 21 meeting of the Planning Commission, a developer made clear that he wanted to construct a tall building at Glebe Point, and an artist’s rendition for a 5-story building, probably over 50 feet high, appeared on the front page of the Northumberland Echo on February 14, 2007.

Aside from the fact that the architectural design of the proposed building looks to me more like something appropriate for San Diego than it does for tidewater Virginia, tall buildings block people’s view. How would you react (See “Building Height” on page 3)

Inside:

High School Seniors..... Page 2
Outdoor Classroom Page 2

Distinguished Citizen Page 2
NAPS Calendar Page 3
Membership Application.... Page 3

Adopt-A-Highway Page 4
Marsh Grass Planting..... Page 4
NAPS Board/Officers..... Page 4

NAPS Meets with High School Seniors

By SUE LINDSEY

Every year, as graduation looms closer for the senior class, members of the NAPS Educational Committee visit Northumberland High School and spend a day meeting with each section of the senior government class. The committee's aim is to motivate the students as they contemplate the challenges and opportunities of life after graduation and to offer some guidance in preparing for interviews and college applications.

Earlier this month, NAPS director and School Board Vice President Myrtle Phillips together with NAPS Vice President Susan Lindsey visited the school. They were accompanied by local businessman Joe Thompson who joins the NAPS team every year to bring a fresh voice into the classroom to share some realities from the world beyond the school walls. The stu-

dents were offered tips on how to prepare for interviews, how to present themselves in any interview situation and how to make a positive impact in a competitive world. The NAPS team also addressed the benefits of volunteering, creating a resume, and behaving in an appropriate manner in different situations.

The students, unwittingly, provided material for the presentations. Body language can have a powerful impact, and students were made aware of the ways they were creating positive or negative impressions. Several students volunteered to respond to interview-type questions, and were shown how they could expand on answers and improve on the way they presented themselves. Many of the members of the senior class demonstrated that they had given serious consideration to their future careers, had developed clear

goals and mapped out a way to achieve their ambitions. For others, it was clear they needed to face up to the reality that the established routines of their school days would soon end and they would be required to take control of their own lives. Some appeared to be woefully unready for the transition that awaits them in just a few months.

At a future date, NAPS plans a weekend session for both students and their parents, to offer further assistance in navigating the decisions which may have life-long consequences. Our young people, and their families, need all the help we can give them in being well-prepared to face the future. NAPS believes that the future of our county and our region largely depends upon the quality of our workforce. Anything NAPS can do to support our schools is time and effort well spent. ✱

Outdoor Classroom is Taking Shape



An "outdoor classroom" is being erected on the nature trail behind the elementary school. Completion is expected in March.

By LYNTON LAND

The Northumberland School system obtained a grant to construct an outdoor classroom from the Chesapeake Bay License Plate fund. The 20 ft. x 30 ft. open structure overlooks the headwaters of Crabbe Mill Stream on the trail behind the elementary school. As of February 13 the frame and trusses have been erected, and all the material to finish the roof has been carried in. Volunteers from NAPS and the Lions Club are providing the labor. If anyone knows the history of the headwaters of Crabbe Mill Stream, please contact Lynton Land. There

is a "road" down to the creek and a causeway that extends across the floodplain of the creek, with a break in the causeway at the location of the creek itself. We would like to know if there was a mill at this location, or whether the causeway was just a dam for a mill further downstream. The beavers, and most of their dam, disappeared after Ernesto, but we hope they will come back. We anticipate continuing to develop the trail and the wetland for the benefit of the students, and are planning a second structure behind the new school for middle and high school students. ✱

Distinguished Citizen Nominees Requested

By KAREN CULP

At the NAPS Fall Social in September we will be presenting the 2008 NAPS Distinguished Citizen Award (DNCA). We need nominations and they should be submitted to NAPS at P.O. Box 567, Heathsville, VA 22473 by May 1, 2008. A submitted nomination should include a statement addressing the nominee's qualifications towards the criteria of the award, preferably in a format suitable for inclusion on the certificate.

The criteria for this award is as follows: "NAPS makes this award to focus public attention on contributions by persons or groups of persons which advance the specific organizational goals identified in the NAPS constitution and bylaws." Briefly sum-

marized, these include improving Chesapeake Bay water quality; fostering Northumberland's rural atmosphere; promoting and monitoring land use policies; encouraging Northumberland's economic growth to promote jobs; cooperating with others through educational programs to target these goals.

Sponsoring an annual Distinguished Citizen Award is a NAPS outreach activity. By recognizing outstanding contributions toward preserving Northumberland County's environmental heritage, NAPS underscores the worth of its organizational purposes and goals and strengthens and encourages progress and collaboration efforts by the whole community to these ends. If you have any questions, please call Karen at 804-580-4153. ✱

Building Height *(continued from page 1)*

if someone constructed such a building next to your property, and what would happen to your property value? Do you want to drive around and see tall buildings dotted along the shoreline?

Here is the wording of the first two paragraphs of the "Height regulations" in the current Northumberland County zoning ordinance for Conservation, Agricultural and Residential districts:

"A. For farms, buildings may be erected up to a height of 35 feet. For buildings over 35 feet, an approval shall be obtained from the Zoning Administrator. Chimneys, flues, cooling towers, flagpoles, radio and communication towers or their accessory facilities not normally occupied by workmen are excluded from this limitation. Parapet walls are permitted up to four feet above the limited height of the building on which the walls rest.

B. The height limit for buildings may be increased 10 feet, provided that there are two side yards for each permitted use, each of which is 10 feet or more, plus one foot or more of side yard for each additional foot of building height over 35 feet."

Why should buildings on farms be limited to 35 feet, but in residential districts they can be as high as 49 feet? Why should one person, the Zoning Administrator, dictate whether or not a tall building can be erected? Building height should be defined as the distance from grade to the top of the parapet or roof ridge because that is what blocks people's view.

In my opinion, buildings in conservation, agricultural and residential districts should be restricted to 35 feet in height, as is typical of rural counties nationwide where special fire-fighting equipment is not normally available. If more buildings like that proposed at Glebe Point are constructed, we will begin to look like Ocean City. Should the current zoning ordinance be changed to ensure



Rendering of a 5-story, 28-unit condo building accompanies proposed development plan on a 1.2-acre lot at Glebe Point near Wicomico Church.

Attention: Schedule Change

NAPS Board Meetings will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at 9 AM at the Northern Neck State Bank in Burgess. NAPS members and prospective members are always welcome.

NAPS Calendar

- March 8, Sat.NAPS Annual Meeting
- March 11, Tue.NAPS Board Meeting
- March 28, Fri.Adopt-A-Highway Clean-up
- April 8, Tue.NAPS Board Meeting
- May 13, Tue.NAPS Board Meeting
- June 10, Tue.NAPS Board Meeting

that all buildings resemble single-family dwellings as much as possible and that a single person is not responsible for such an important decision? Developers certainly make more money if they can tack on extra floors, but their profits must be balanced against our need to "maintain the desired rural character of the county..." to quote the preface of the Comprehensive Plan. It is unclear if these kinds of buildings significantly increase tax revenue over and above single-family dwellings, or even decrease tax revenue because adjacent property is devalued.

If you believe that future buildings in excess of 35 feet should not be built "by-right" and without public scrutiny, contact the Board of Supervisors and urge that the height regulations in the current zoning ordinance be stiffened. Supervisors' contacts are posted at the County web site www.co.northumberland.va.us. *

NAPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Please fill out application, cut page at dotted lines, place into No. 10 envelope with a check made out to "NAPS," and mail to:

NAPS
P.O. Box 567
Heathsville, VA 22473

(Please pass this application along to interested parties.)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

E-mail _____

Membership Category* (check one):

- Individual \$15 Sustaining \$100
- Family \$25 Patron \$250
- Student \$1 Business \$ _____ (min. \$50)

* The Internal Revenue Service has determined that NAPS qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the code. As such, dues and contributions to NAPS may be deductible by donor for tax purposes.

I would like to participate in:

- _____ Adopt-A-Highway
- _____ Environmental Education
- _____ Finance
- _____ Fund Raising
- _____ Grass Planting
- _____ Monitoring County Boards
- _____ Membership
- _____ NAPS Exhibits
- _____ Phragmites Problems
- _____ Publicity and Newsletter
- _____ Special Events Coordination
- _____ Any Project Assignments
- _____ Other _____

Adopt-A-Highway – Join Our Spring Clean-up

By ANNE BÉLANGER

Spring is just around the corner and it's time to schedule another pick up along our route. Pencil in your calendars for Friday, March 28, 2008 (with a rain date of March 31) and stand by your computers and phones for confirmation.

For those of you who aren't familiar with our project, here's some background information:

We are responsible for about 2 miles along Route 200 (the Jessie Ball Dupont Memorial Highway) between Wicomico Church and the bridge over the Great Wicomico River. We've unofficially added the public boat landing to our assignment.

We schedule a roadside trash pick up twice a year – in the spring and in the fall. We've been doing it on a weekday morning, and always work in pairs. We start about 8:30 am and are generally all finished up by 11:30 am. Of course, the more people who show up, the less work for everyone and the less time spent "on the road."

We're always ready to welcome new folks to help. We have a fair number of names on our roster, but typically only a third of those people are available on a given trash pick-up day. And since I consider 10 to be a quorum – the least number of people needed to keep the effort and time of each individual to an enjoyable level – we really do need more people to become involved.

So please, if you're interested in this "no-strings attached" way to help NAPS and our county, please email me at blngr@kaballero.com or call me at 580-8905. The more the merrier. ✱

Marsh Grass Planting Scheduled for Spring

By LYNTON LAND

NAPS plans to purchase marsh grass plants this spring to help people in Northumberland County stabilize their shoreline and to recolonize marshes we have sprayed to eliminate invasive Phragmites. We plan to order about 70 flats of 50 plants each in early March, so if you think your shoreline could benefit, or you just

need advice, call Lynton Land at 453-6605 or visit the NAPS web site "Stewardship Tips" at www.napsva.org. The marsh grass planting program began in 2002, and 67 sites have received grass so far. We are also maintaining a list of sites to be sprayed for Phragmites this fall, so it's not too early to get on that list if you have a problem with the invasive grass. ✱



Northumberland
Association for
Progressive
Stewardship

P.O. Box 567 • Heathsville, VA 22473

Officers & Board Members

NAPS Officers

President Steve Tallent453-6832tallent@crosslink.net
 Vice President... Susan Lindsey580-4137kingdon@kaballero.com
 Secretary Shirley Smith.....580-8011sss@halois.net
 Treasurer Susan Carter Hughes ..453-7802flowers@kaballero.com

NAPS Board of Directors

Tommy Tomlin.. (Term Expires 2/2008)580-7112tommytomlin@rivnet.net
 Susan Lindsey... (Term Expires 2/2008)580-4137kingdon@kaballero.com
 Steve Tallent (Term Expires 2/2008)453-6832tallent@crosslink.net
 Mike Ahart (Term Expires 2/2009)580-9289mikeahart@kaballero.com
 Myrtle Phillips .. (Term Expires 2/2009)580-8097myrloo@kaballero.com
 Stan Cichowicz . (Term Expires 2/2010)453-3271microscopist@yahoo.com
 Nan Flynn (Term Expires 2/2010)436-0323nharvey@eConstructionServices.com
 Lynton Land..... (Ex Officio)453-6605jandl@rivnet.net

NAPS News Editor

Mike Ahart580-9289mikeahart@kaballero.com

NAPS Web Master www.napsva.org

Rita Johnson.....580-3052pjrl@crosslink.net

NAPS Membership Chair

Karen Culp.....580-4153kaarynhall@skyelink.com

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HEATHSVILLE, VA
PERMIT NO. 37