



CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

# SHORELINE

*A Journal of Natural Resources, Public Affairs and Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

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## Neighbors See Impact of New Chicken Houses

by Sue Mastyl

For the past year, the dramatic increase in the number of poultry houses, although hotly debated, has been largely abstract. Now the reality is here, with several large projects in the works around Accomack County.

The largest current project is on Pungoteague Road (rte. 180) between Keller and Pungoteague, where 24 new chicken houses (each 66 x 600 feet) are being built on two adjacent parcels. The project has received approval from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), but is still awaiting several approvals from Accomack County and the Department of Transportation.

### Neighbors Protesting

Ten neighbors along Pungoteague Road live within a quarter- to a half-mile of the location, and they have voiced concerns over the project. One of the neighbors, Carlene Zach, has presented a petition signed by 35 local residents, protesting the location of poultry houses near their homes, to the Planning Commission in January. She has raised concerns over airborne contaminants, surface water contamination, and groundwater issues. Zach cited statements made by David Matson, MD, PhD, District Director, Eastern Shore Health District, at the January 13, 2016, Planning Commission meeting, in which he described the risk of airborne contaminants, although he believes the risk is reduced with distance, with diminishing

returns after 600 feet, and with vegetative buffers. He also indicated that there could be a risk of contamination to the groundwater from a concentrated number of poultry houses, although DEQ would be better able to assess that risk.

One concern raised is with potential contamination of surface waters, especially if heavy rainfall events overwhelm the stormwater structures. Within 500 feet of the edge of the property is the headwaters of Taylor Creek, which feeds into Pungoteague Creek and the Chesapeake Bay. Pungoteague Creek has a growing aquaculture presence, so maintaining the water quality in this area is critical. Another concern is groundwater. Zach notes that she has already had a dry well, with poor water quality from the new well, and the new poultry houses will draw 30,000 gallons a day each – or 720,000 gallons a day for the site.

Zach and her husband have now put their house up for sale. “Everything we have is tied up in this home, and we’re about to walk away,” she said.

### How Big Is Too Big?

One of the issues with this property is its sheer size. Although the new zoning ordinance specifies a maximum of 12 houses per parcel, with a density of one house per five acres, it is silent on the larger issue of how many total houses are allowed on a contiguous tract. In this case, the See “*Chicken Houses*,” cont’d on p. 2

## Who Won?

### 2016 Membership Drive & Raffle Results

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

At CBES, we take Margaret Mead’s quote to heart. During our 28 years, we’ve seen it at work in our own little world, the Eastern Shore. CBES is thankful that a strong membership has enabled us to empower our community with reliable information on local issues and keep citizen involvement at the forefront of local governance.

Continuing these efforts, we are happy to announce that our 2016 membership drive was a success. You helped us surpass our goal of 50 memberships – a total of 61 memberships – brings over 110 members from both

See “*Who won?*” cont’d on p. 2

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counties into the CBES fold. That’s a lot of Shore Love!

This year we ran a raffle with our membership drive. The prize was an amazing Barrier Island Adventure for five, donated by Seaside Ecotours and Captain Meriwether Payne. How fun and how fitting, since our membership has worked diligently to protect these beautiful and economically vital islands!

The winners (drum roll please) are John and Lisa Fiege of Onancock, VA. Welcome to these brand new CBES

members as well as others who are interested in a better Eastern Shore.

Many thanks to our new members as well as longtime CBES members. Our diverse membership builds a strong, unified voice whom those in authority hear. Ultimately, the big winner is our Shore community.

Missed the boat on the membership drive? You can still join CBES or renew your membership using the quick and easy online form at [www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org), or mail the registration form on page 7 of this issue.



*“Chicken Houses,” cont’d from p. 2*

landowner combined three parcels and then re-divided them (which was technically legal) to get the two 60+ acre lots they needed to meet the density requirement.

However, it is still essentially 24 houses on one parcel – they are sharing the same road, they are sharing drainage ponds, and they may even share equipment and staff. What’s to stop someone with a large enough property from stringing together multiple 60-acre parcels, and having 50, 60, or 100 houses on a single contiguous tract (albeit with property lines dividing them)?

This would seem to warrant further discussion with the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, especially since they are currently discussing adding additional poultry-friendly language to the Comprehensive Plan.

**ShoreLine comment.** Last year, the Accomack Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors made the decision to allow a substantial increase in the size and number of poultry houses in the county, and the collateral impact to other property owners was considered an acceptable trade-off in light of the county’s economic dependence on the poultry industry. In public statements, Ron Wolff, Chairman of the Accomack Board of Supervisors, has indicated that the public and environmental groups are okay with the new ordinance; silence is interpreted as approval in this case. CBES has made it clear to Mr. Wolff that we were waiting for the promised “Phase Two” of the process, during which impacts on health, air quality, and surface waters would be addressed. Although much could be done right now, the county is currently waiting for the results of the nutrient mass balance study being conducted by VIMS.



*The winner of the 2016 Membership Drive will be enjoying a Barrier Island Adventure for 5 courtesy of Seaside Ecotours.*

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# VIMS

**Public Seminar Series**  
**Wednesday, August 3, 2016**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Wachapreague, VA**

**“Hormones and Migrating  
Blue-winged Teal: A Waterfowl  
Species that Migrates Like a  
Songbird”**

**Dr. Morgan Wilson**  
Associate Professor  
Hollins University

Can’t attend in person? Join the webinar on the date and time listed above at <http://vims.adobeconnect.com/afterhours>

# Northampton Town Hall Meeting for Districts 4 and 5

## Supervisors Murray and Duer meet with constituents

By Mary Miller

On June 22, residents from Districts 4 and 5 gathered at the Northampton Fire and Rescue hall to talk with their elected Supervisors. Spencer Murray (District 4) and Robert Duer (District 5) agreed that the first six months of their terms had been consumed by zoning and the county budget. After months of work, the FY2017 budget was adopted – with only a one-half cent tax increase, despite a 17.2% decrease in real estate assessment values, which was a result of the downward adjustment from the artificially high values in place since the real estate bubble.

A revised zoning ordinance was adopted which included several changes supported by the public – increased protection from industrial poultry impacts, accessory dwelling units and by-right commercial uses. Further revisions are expected, including the expansion of working waterfronts.

### What Next? County Management Concerns

The conversation quickly turned to county management – and questions about process, staff, policies, and what is, and what isn't being accomplished. Murray said the Board frequently asks itself, "Is the county being well managed?"

From the comments and questions that followed, it was apparent that county mismanagement was a big concern. From the uncertain status of EMS delivery to the delay in settling a USDA debt until a private citizen intervened, to the amount and condition of surplus county property, to the dissatisfaction with county staff, to the absence of public participation in the Comprehensive Plan review, to the failure of planning for the hospital move, to the continuing lack of county/town cooperation, right up to the lack of consistent administration of new state stormwater regulations, confidence in county governance appeared lacking. Both Supervisors then discussed the issues raised and how they were, or were not, being addressed.

### EMS – emergency transportation

- The county, with a population of about 12,000, budgets \$1.23 million to operate emergency transport services. There was a question whether that cost was excessive. *(Ed. Note: Review of five other rural Chesapeake Bay counties with similar populations, shows only one other had an EMS budget exceeding \$950,000.)*
- The Board has commissioned an outside consultant to review EMS procedures, staffing, and future needs. A report is expected by the end of June.

### Riverside-Shore Memorial Hospital

- The hospital is expected to close in December and be demolished by Riverside. But county records indicate uncertainty of the building's actual ownership. Riverside has so far failed to honor a commitment made in the state Certificate of Public Need application which would leave an urgent care facility in Northampton in return for state permission to move the primary and emergency care facilities out of the county. Riverside has also acquired the \$7 million endowment fund created for the old Shore Memorial Hospital.
- A primary care office will be left in the current Cancer Center, but the move will leave Northampton County residents without an emergency facility. Ambulances cannot transport patients to a doctor's office or even an urgent care facility. As Murray stated, "We don't have a primary care problem, we have an Emergency Room problem."
- The chair of the local Riverside Board stated several months ago that decisions regarding the level of medical care that will be provided in Northampton County would be made at the Board's July meeting. Information about that meeting was unavailable at press time.
- In an aside, Supervisor Murray discussed the newly formed Northampton Medical Services Foundation, which he helped found as a private citizen. The Foundation will seek to fund a satellite emergency room or similar emergency service. He stated that the lack of such service is both a "public health and an economic development" issue for the county.

### County Staff--Board's action plans

- The Board has prioritized 37 items for action. So far, two have been implemented: a zoning ordinance and a budget.
- Comments were voiced in quick succession about difficulty dealing with county staff, confusing information, lack of timely building inspections, difficult county/town relationships, and especially, the sense by residents that county administration staff fails to understand that they work for the people.
- Both Murray and Duer emphasized that the Board has the authority to hire and fire only one employee – the County Administrator. Virginia Code gives the Administrator complete control over staff hiring and firing, job descriptions and requirements, workplace policies, most timelines, priority of projects, job descriptions, employ-

See "Northampton Town Meeting" cont'd on p. 4



**“Northampton Town Hall Meeting,” cont’d from p. 3**

ee qualifications, staff interactions, work schedules, and budget creation. The Board’s only administrative powers are adoption of a budget and the hiring of a County Administrator. Both Supervisors stated clearly that it takes three votes for either action.

**Virginia Stormwater Act**

- The General Assembly has relegated administration of these complicated regulations to local governments, despite opposition from the Virginia Association of Counties.
- In May, 2014, a previous Board voted to “opt out” of responsibility for administering regulations and to hand over authority to the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
- Chesapeake Bay counties have been severely impacted. In Northampton, at least 4 businesses have had their plans delayed, disrupted, downsized, abandoned or have had exorbitant expenses added as a result.
- Engineers for builders, the county and DEQ have disagreed on requirements, and applicants have paid a heavy price.
- Planning and Zoning staff appear unable to work with applicants toward mitigation and compliance. Other localities have opted to take responsibility for new regulations and have produced guidelines for applicants and their engineers, assuring the same information and interpretation for all.
- The Board may reconsider its engineering resources and its administrative role in these regulations.

**Comprehensive Plan**

- The Supervisors were asked when the public input on the Comprehensive Plan would begin. They responded that they understood that the Planning Commission had already written a draft, but the Board hadn’t seen it. (See article in the May 2016 ShoreLine: “The Comprehensive Plan – the people’s roadmap for the future.”)

The evening ended with thanks to the Northampton Fire and Rescue service in Nassawadox for the use of their building, which is actually located in District 3, but has never been the site of a Town Hall meeting for District 3.

**ShoreLine Comment:** *Time will tell how long the Board will continue to allow county administration to sit on the sidelines of county governance. Without active participation by county staff in the Board’s initiatives, and responsible personnel supervision, as well as positive interaction with the Towns, businesses and the public in general, will it be possible to accomplish the many actions this Board has included in its strategic plan?*



**Too many tiny tomatoes?**

Shore gardens sometimes have a bumper crop of those delicious little tomatoes. Bright red and yellow varieties overflow kitchen counters. Here’s a great-tasting, easy lunch to use some of that harvest.

Right after breakfast, set oven to 300 degrees. Halve a lot of those tomatoes and spread, cut side up, on lined baking sheet. Two and a half hours later, remove tomatoes and let cool. Pour some good olive oil on platter, season with salt and pepper, add some sliced mozzarella and top with those cooled roasted tomatoes.

**Reader Response**

*In response to our article last month on “Details Debated About Poultry Buffer,” Melissa Ruhan of Waterside Land Trust provided the following comment:*

“I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your article. Poultry is a large business in Accomack County, therefore it is favored.

“Waterside Land Trust cannot continue to spend large advertising dollars for clients against the lack of reassurances that a neighboring property owner will be held to the zoning ordinance. Waterside Land Trust was certainly held to the ordinance when developing Waterside Village. Accomack County will now get a community of double-wides instead of the beautiful community we had planned at Waterside Village. We now have four pending contracts, all for double-wides. To secure those contracts, our prices were dropped from \$29,900 to \$18,000. Before news of the poultry industry building next door, the lots were sold (recorded sales) at \$50,000. Those are not perceived losses, as stated by Mr. Mallette, but very real losses to Waterside Land Trust and to the tax base of Accomack County.

“Thankfully we have been able to protect our other Accomack County communities by purchasing easements from adjoining property owners to never allow poultry farming on their property, and have no future plans for development in Accomack County.”



# Annual Bike Tour Fits Quilter to a “T”

By ShoreLine Staff

According to an old saying, “Those who sleep under a quilt, sleep under a blanket of love.” Ruth O’Lill shares that quilting love with the love of cycling, and in particular, CBES Annual Between the Waters Bike Tour, which she describes as “My favorite ride – ever!”

She has created a unique quilt of bike tour event T-shirts, including several CBES Tees designed by Shore artists. We hope to display Ruth’s quilt at this year’s Bike Tour on Saturday, October 22, at the Wachapreague Fire House, this year’s registration site.

In her own words, Ruth shares the inspiration for making her quilt:

“I have been sewing and riding my bicycle for as long as I can remember. Of course there were gaps – with babies, jobs, travel, and such – but I always swung back to the two things I love. In addition to bikes rides in the Florida Everglades,



Local artist Mary Miller has designed several of the Between the Waters T-shirts over the years.

through the middle of New York City, downtown Richmond at night, and along the Erie Canal and Lehigh Valley Trails, I have done almost every Between the Waters ride since 2007.

“In the last several years I have been learning to quilt. One day, while cleaning a closet, I opened my bag of t-shirts from all my rides, all my adventures, beautiful, colorful t-shirts that I coveted – but never wore. And then it hit me. A t-shirt quilt, a home-

made travel log of my wonderful, healthy passion that I can wake up to every morning and sleep under every night. And so, my t-shirts ‘came out of the closet.’

“Cutting them up was very hard, but finding fabric that matched, enhanced and framed each one was almost as much fun as the rides themselves. I even saved the pockets and sewed them at the corners. To cover my double bed, I used 13 t-shirts that represent hundreds of miles on my bike, about five yards of fabric for framing, bordering, and backing, and it took about a month of my time, including reminiscing, reliving, and glorying in my 100 % cotton history.

“But I’m not done yet. I’m happily 68 years old, I’m signed up for this year’s ride. and I’m already collecting t-shirts for the next quilt.

“See you at the ride!” 



Longtime “Between the Waters Bike Tour” rider Ruth O’Lill and her T-shirt quilt.



## REGISTER NOW!

24th Between the Waters Bike Tour

Saturday, October 22, 2016

Routes for all bike enthusiasts: 25, 40, 60 & 100 Miles

SAVE YOUR SPOT -SAVE \$\$

[Capped @1,000 Riders, Fee increase 9/15]

Information at [www.cbcs.org](http://www.cbcs.org) or email [biketour@cbcs.org](mailto:biketour@cbcs.org), 757-678-7157



# Entrepreneurship: Tools for the Eastern Shore Entrepreneur

Submitted by Curtis Smith, A-NPDC Director of Planning

Entrepreneurs, economic developers, business leaders, community members, and those who support entrepreneurship are invited to attend **Entrepreneurship: Tools for the Eastern Shore Entrepreneur**, and explore the aspects of building and growing a start-up business. This unique event will be held on Thursday, August 11, at the Eastern Shore Community College in Melfa and consists of three parts, including an educational workshop at 3:00 p.m., a networking reception at 5:00 p.m., and dinner with a keynote speaker at 6:00 p.m. Admission to any or all parts of the program is free but pre-registration is required.

Afternoon workshop topics will include information on assessing business opportunities, financing, planning, licensing, and marketing. Attendees will hear speakers representing the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center as well as small businesses on the Shore, including Financial Solutions, Periwinkles Consignment Boutique, Eastern Shore Organic Farms and Kitchen Sync Catering.

A networking reception sponsored by the UVA Club of the Eastern Shore will be offered to allow prospective and current business owners to interact and share experiences. This part of the program will include showcase presentations from successful local entrepreneurs from Blue Crab Bay Company, Moonrise Jewelry, and New Ravenna Mosaics. Beer and wine will be available to attendees over 21 years of age.

The session will conclude with a keynote address by Dr. Gregory Fairchild, the E. Thayer Bigelow Associate Professor of Business Administration at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business, and Associate Dean for Washington, D.C. Area Initiatives and Academic Director of Public Policy and Entrepreneurship.

Several organizations are partnering to offer this event as part of a series of workshops supporting entrepreneurial efforts throughout the Eastern Shore, including the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, the Stronger Economies Together (SET) Entrepreneurship and Foundational Infrastructure team, Virginia Cooperative Extension, UVA Club of the Eastern Shore, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and USDA Rural Development.

The training is funded by the Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative. Launched in 2010 by USDA Rural Development, the nation's four regional rural development centers, the Purdue Center for Regional Development,

and its land-grant university partners, SET is now in place in more than 70 regions in 31 states. SET is intended to help strengthen the capacity of communities and counties in rural America to work together to develop and implement an economic development blueprint for multicounty regions, strategically building on the current and/or emerging comparative economic advantages of that region.

## About the A-NPDC

Created by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the County of Accomack and the County of Northampton and joined by the Town of Chincoteague, the A-NPDC is the Eastern Shore of Virginia's regional organization. Tasked with supporting local planning and community development efforts and providing technical assistance on behalf of the Commonwealth, the A-NPDC focuses on issues of regional importance.

By far the largest organization housed at the Enterprise Building in Accomack, the A-NPDC has the most diverse work program. With three organizations co-located in the office, it is quite common to hear us referred to collectively as the "Housing Office."

However, the A-NPDC has a larger role in the region. The A-NPDC provides regional planning and also assists various jurisdictions with diverse community development projects from grant-writing and financing of a regional and community broadband network and creation of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority to construction of the new Tangier Medical Center.



## Entrepreneurship Workshop

**Thursday, August 11**

**Register online by August 5**

**[esva-entrepreneur.eventbrite.com](http://esva-entrepreneur.eventbrite.com)**

**or contact Curt Smith at [csmith@a-npdc.org](mailto:csmith@a-npdc.org)**

**or 787-2936 for more information.**

**Space is limited, so register now  
to reserve your spot!**

# Keeping Track

## Real Estate Sales: Shore Counties

### Show Different Patterns

Recent property transfers in Northampton and Accomack counties appear to show a noticeable pattern difference. Sales information garnered from real estate information websites, county records and realtor publications reflect an increasingly active 2016 market in both counties. A local realtor who regularly reports sales data indicates that in 2015, home sales in towns sold for about 90% of the asking price – with Cape Charles and Wachapreague topping the percentages.

Comparing six-figure sales, Northampton shows sales of existing homes at prices higher than their recently assessed values, outpacing prices of homes sold at or below assessed values by 2 to 1. Cape Charles home sales account for most of this pattern. Records also show few sales of unimproved parcels.

In Accomack, home sale prices above assessed value are also starting to increase, with Onancock and Chincoteague accounting for most of those sales. But the biggest ticket items in Accomack have been large, undeveloped farm parcels, 60 acres plus, selling for more than half a million dollars each.

And then there are the outliers. A 130-acre waterfront estate near Eastville was listed for more than \$40 million in the past, about eight times its assessed value at the time. It has remained on the market, but is now offered at \$13.9 million, very close to its current assessed value. An approximately 14-acre agricultural parcel on Rt. 13 at Eastville, with an average assessed value of about \$6,000/acre, sold for \$250,000 – about three times its assessed value per acre

as farmland. The parcel will be used for a commercial enterprise and its assessed value will increase accordingly. And in Accomack, in a subdivision just north of Exmore, lots assessed and previously listed at about \$28,000 are now on the market at the reduced price of about \$19,000 – in response to the property value impact of an industrial poultry operation about to be constructed on an adjacent parcel.

These sales data appear to show an increasingly diverse pattern of land use and property sales in each county.

### Recycling – Why Some Have to Give It Up

It has been noted at a few of the convenience centers in Northampton County that some folks are giving up on recycling – not because they want to, and not because they don't show up with their trash carefully separated for recycling. Then why? Two reasons.

First, on some weekdays, and on weekends, it's more often than not impossible to find room in the green recycling containers. Second, for many folks, especially seniors and those who are short of stature, the effort of reaching up and opening a heavy, hard-sliding container door is almost more than they can manage. And if they need to open and close four or five of those doors to find room for their recycling, the effort becomes so difficult as to be nearly impossible.

Two easy solutions. First, install more containers and/or have them emptied more frequently at the centers with the most traffic. Second, instruct the attendants to open one container at a time, close it when it's full, then open a second container, and so on.

Failure to make it easier for more citizens to recycle increases the cost of garbage removal to the county by adding those recyclables to the volume of garbage in the compactors, not to mention the cost to the environment in general.

Detach and return to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347 • Join online at [www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org)

### CBES Membership 2016

 New

 Renewal

For Office Use

*ShoreLine* is emailed unless otherwise noted. Please send by US Mail.

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**FUN! I would like to volunteer at the Between the Waters Bike Tour (4th Saturday in October).**

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the following:

- \* \_\_\_\_\_ Regular Membership (includes *ShoreLine*) \$ 25
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership (includes *ShoreLine*) \$ 500
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ Optional additional tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ *ShoreLine* subscription without CBES membership \$ 25

For our membership records, please tell us how many there are in your home 16 years or older: \_\_\_\_\_

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MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

# SHORELINE

## Community Calendar - August 2016

*Note: Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.*

CBES and Other Activities		Accomack County		Northampton County	
<b>Aug 3</b>	<b>VIMS Public Seminar</b> 7:30 PM, Wachapreague	<b>Aug 3</b>	<b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b> 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	<b>Aug 1</b>	<b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b> 1 PM, Conference Room
<b>Aug 8</b>	<b>CBES Exec. Committee</b> 5 PM, CBES Office	<b>Aug 10</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b> 7 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Aug 2</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b> 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Aug 11</b>	<b>Shorekeeper Meeting*</b> 3 PM, ES Chamber of Commerce, Melfa	<b>Aug 16</b>	<b>School Board</b> 7 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Aug 9</b>	<b>Board of Supervisors</b> 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Aug 11</b>	<b>Entrepreneur Workshop</b> 3 PM, ESCC, Melfa	<b>Aug 17</b>	<b>Board of Supervisors</b> 6 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Aug 17</b>	<b>Wetlands Board</b> TBA, Conference Room
<b>Aug 16</b>	<b>ES Groundwater Committee</b> 10 AM, Accomac	<b>Aug 18</b>	<b>Wetlands Board</b> 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	<b>Aug 23</b>	<b>School Board</b> 5:30 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Aug 16</b>	<b>CBES Board Meeting</b> 7 PM, Eastville			<b>Aug 23</b>	<b>BOS Work Session</b> 7 PM, Sup. Chambers

\* Alternating between the ES Chamber of Commerce and the Barrier Islands Center

[www.cbес.org](http://www.cbес.org)