

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -September 20, 2000 - 7:30 PM

Public Hearings - Planning Commission of Prince William County

Subject: Public Facility Review (PER)#PLN2000-00207, North Fork Sanitary Sewer

Speaker: Adrienne Crafton-Masterson, Chairman
Town of Haymarket Historical Commission
PO Box 11, Haymarket, VA 20168-0011

Contact phone #: 703-754-1166
e-mail: aihrcraft@earthlink.net

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Planning Commission:

As an independent Real Estate Broker in Northern Virginia since 1968, I have truly witnessed the major changes which have taken place in Prince William County both in population and economic expansion. Seven years ago I moved to Haymarket, where, you might say, I am now continuing to witness major changes taking place in this former sleepy little farming community on Prince William's western end. I have joined the Historical Commission to help preserve the historic Town of Haymarket which I have been happy to join others in calling "A Little Jewel of a Town."

Tonight there is at least one place at the foot of Jefferson Street just below the railroad tracks in Haymarket that is not "a jewel." It once was, but no longer. And now it appears that North Fork Creek, which was once a navigable stream used by residents of Haymarket for recreational purposes, will soon have the honor of becoming the spot where two major interceptor sewer lines meet. So this is considered progress and much needed public facilities.

Our historian, Sarah M. Turner, has written the history of North Fork Creek, and I'd like to quote from it because it would seem that somewhere along the line folks forgot that this natural resource existed in modern times for folks who appreciated it and fished in its waters, and refreshed themselves along its banks. No doubt, they picnicked there too and one lady whose picture we have from Victorian times is shown "wading in the stream".

Yesterday we joined the State of Virginia Fall River Renaissance 2000 campaign - a month long observance recognizing and encouraging participants to learn about, enjoy, and care for Virginia's rivers, lakes and streams. A representative of the Isaac Walton League will be visiting with us in the next two weeks to teach us more about monitoring the creek, and we are determined to seek out assistance from environmentally sensitive citizens and friends to help us in this effort.

While this major "sewershed" as it is now called - formerly North Fork Creek and the broad stream it was - is being further decimated to encourage the growth of industry in the Western Corridor, please take note of our historic past. At least your staff report on Page B-3 and B-4 refers to the important architectural and archeological features which may be on the sites to be impacted by this installation. We'd like to think we can one day soon go back to calling this a "Watershed", since the implication certainly prevails to our sensitive ears that Haymarket is now somehow being identified with "sewers" instead of "water".

Sarah Turner's wise assessment states: "The streams of the plains below the Bull Run Mountains

stream.

The Roadside Geology of Virginia by Dr. Keith Frye, is a book published for the layman. Yet, it emphasises the need for Virginians to be aware of the geologic importance of our State, which affects our environment, and to be crass about our geology can mean the destruction of mankind of Virginia.

Water is as necessary to man's existence as air. Do away with water, and man will disappear.

To quote the above mentioned book, "The great natural beauty of Virginia, from the Atlantic Coast on the east to the Appalachian Plateaus on the west, is the result of geologic processes that have formed this part of the Earth for more than one billion years". Great rivers wend their way through Virginia, cutting spectacular gorges through the mountains, in search of the sea". "An understanding of the Earth and the processes that are acting upon it is essential to modern man as he struggles to make wise land use decisions under the pressures of increasing population and advancing technology".

The fertile plains below the Bull Run Mountains were cultivated by the Sioux Indians long before the Europeans invaded the countryside. The Sioux were descendants of the Asiatics who wandered over the Bering Strait bringing with them the seeds of the riches of Asia—melons, fruits, and grains.

These Indians wandered on through the Blue Ridge Mountains and finally over the upper Piedmont to passes through the Bull Run Mountains where they found a mild climate and rich meadows on which to graze their buffalo and raise their succulent melons, squash, beans and maize.

The streams of the plains below the Bull Run Mountains conceal records of the past, for man settled on waterways. To destroy the lower Piedmont waterways is to destroy archeological treasures.

Far before the Indians made their way people of the northern reaches lived on the Virginia rivers. This knowledge is only beginning to surface. There is little doubt that North Fork Creek, once a viable, navigable stream, holds many secrets of the past. Archeologists have been busy with more southern waterways discovering amazing finds of the past. We need to preserve this historic waterway, as well as other streams in the Haymarket area.

NORTH FORK CREEK by Sarah M. Turner
Historian, Town of Haymarket Historical Commission

When John Dawkins bought his land from Thomas Lord Fairfax, in the early 1700s, the deed stated that the land bordered on North Fork Creek, Broad Run, and Licking Branch Run.

Later, Dr. John Savage, of Stafford County, purchased a large section of this tract. Captain Samuel Skinker purchased from John Savage a section of this land which was in newly formed Prince William County. The deed stated the land Skinker bought bordered on North Fork Creek, and Carter property.

The land Skinker bought in Prince William County below the Bull Run Mountains was called Green Hill Plantation.

North Fork Creek intercepted Green Hill Plantation, Samuel Skinker's plantation, on the south side of the property.

North Fork Creek was originally a tributary of Broad Run, a large body of water originating in Fauquier County.

Many streams interlaced the Bull Run Mountain plains. These plains watered the rich land once cultivated by Indians. Many were used for commerce, carrying light vessels to larger streams and rivers.

North Fork Creek was once a navigable stream, and in modern times was used by residents of Haymarket for recreational purposes. The stream was broad and harbored sunfish and mountain trout. Residents of Haymarket swam in the stream, and farms bordering the stream watered their livestock in the creek.

When the railroad was pushed through the western end of the County, the road bed cut through Haymarket, cutting the town off from the stream. Even so, until the Department of Transportation removed the bridge which covered the stream on the South side of Haymarket, the stream was still a clear running body of water.

It would appear there is an effort to dry up the stream. The culverts which replace the old bridge deter free running water.

This has deprived Haymarket of a scenic and recreational area. Many requests have been made to the town and to County officials to clean up the stream by the former Chairman of the Haymarket Historical Commission. There seems to have been no effort by the town to save this ancient, probably triassic age

conceal records of the past, for man settled on waterways. To destroy the lower Piedmont waterways is to destroy archaeological treasures. Far before the Indians made their way here people of the northern reaches lived on the Virginia rivers. This knowledge is only beginning to surface. There is little doubt that North Fork Creek, once a viable, navigable stream, holds many secrets of the past. Archeologists have been busy with more southern waterways discovering amazing finds of the past. We need to preserve this historic waterway, as well as other streams in the Haymarket area."

It is time for all of us to stand still for a minute and listen back to the pure running waters that once provided sunfish and mountain trout to the people of the Haymarket-Gainesville community along Old Carolina Road. We of the Town of Haymarket Historical Commission still believe there is hope the stream can be saved and reclaimed. We are pushing forward with our efforts to create an awareness of the history of North Fork Creek and for the next month we will celebrate with Virginia's Fall River Renaissance 2000 program our present and future possibilities for North Fork Creek.

Putting in the right scenic bridge at that southern approach to our Town or at the very least upsizing the old culverts which appear to be cutting off the flow of the stream at the foot of Jefferson Street would be a major step in the right direction toward that end.

Our Historian Sarah M. Turner, who was born and raised in Haymarket and lives just up the road from the Creek and our Librarian/Secretary Mary Louise Ransom are here with me tonight, and Commissioner Turner will read the history of the North Fork Creek she has prepared especially for this meeting. Thank you very much.