Public Hearing
Boundary Line Adjustments
November 21, 2005

A public hearing was held on November 21, 2005 in Council Chambers with Mayor Wayne E. Printz presiding. Mayor Printz stated the purpose of the meeting was to receive comments regarding changing the boundary lines between the County of Rockingham and the Town of Elkton, Virginia. The following Council members were present:

PRESENT
J. T. Dean
T. Pence
S. Sigafoose
R. Snow
P. Workman

ABSENT
C. McDaniel

Town Attorney Nathan Miller, Town Manager Dennis R. Donachy, Treasurer Clairen Sipe, Economic Development Director Emily Burner, Chief of Police Richard Pullen, and Clerk of Council Richard Carey were also present.

Cathy Murphy, 110 North Stuart Avenue, was present and stated the Town Attorney was instructed two or three years ago to proceed with the boundary line adjustment. Her position was that the "eleventh hour" rush had created "chaos" with the County. She questioned if the Angler contract contained a contingency for withdrawal if the County failed to approve the line adjustments. There was no clear answer to her question. She disagreed with the County's position of placing the "burden" of school expansion/construction on the Town of Elkton due to the County's "failure for long-range planning."

Richard Fields spoke in opposition to the boundary line adjustments. He described potential nightmares when the area became overrun by Northern Virginians and other out-of-area residents. He commented, "If this thing goes down and Angler does all they want to do, when they leave, they will leave the Town strapped, a landscape dotted with housing and a bunch of new people for us to deal with." He remarked, "The Town has put all its eggs in the Angler basket." Increased taxes and crime were also a concern.

Lee Dearing, 124 North Street, again addressed procedure. He believed the process had been reversed by the County having first vote of the adjustments before Elkton residents had voiced their opinions at the Town's public hearing. He agreed with Mr. Fields "that this will be a major impact just to get a golf course. Angler has got you hanging by...whatever you want to say." Initial negotiations, when he was Mayor, were to purchase 60 acres on each side of Mt. Pleasant Road. That was to be given to the County for school development, but it was rejected by Mike Breeden and Dan Breeden. He did not agree with "discounts" offered to Angler and forcefully told Council to say "enough is enough" and close on the Kite property.

B. W. Gooden, 302 Morgan Avenue, opposed buying the land from the beginning. He stated Dr. Kite had reserved land east of the Middle School for expansion. His experience was when developers came into an area with a plan for development, they were required to "preserve land for schools." He continued, "You are giving Angler everything anyway – all these sewer hook-ups and everything they requested they have received. The Town will be left with the burden." He strongly believed school land should have been part of the deal.

Mayor Printz read the following prepared statement:

Schools, Elkton, County, Angler

On Wednesday, November 16th I attended the Board of Supervisors meeting in Harrisonburg regarding a boundary line adjustment requested by the Town so Angler Broadland could move forward with the development of Elkwood, Miss Kite's property,

and the Phom Copra's property. There was considerable debate regarding the Town of Elkton's responsibility regarding communication and finances for schools, the level of growth our area will be subjected to, and the cost to the County for building new facilities. The County ultimately tabled the boundary line adjustment with the suggestion we review our position and return in 30 days with some answers.

First and foremost, it is not Elkton's citizens' responsibility in any way, shape, or form to be financially responsible to the County or the School Board, in essence subsidizing any new development, by suggesting Elkton citizens pay the cost of new schools. All the issues along with the funding and impact of a significant development on our community, our citizens, and/or schools were the responsibility of myself and the Council. This should have been addressed in negotiations with Angler. It was not.

Communicating with the County was, in my view, above the board in that the representatives were participants in the few inept negotiating sessions that were hastily and unprofessionally organized. A number of the sessions were questionably executed and I was specifically excluded from the meetings because I did not agree with the direction. I explicitly requested the Council to hire a professional land use expert and conduct an impact study. I presented the Council twenty six issues, such as schools, waste treatment facility, community impact, fire and rescue, protecting our seniors, and affordability. The answer to my request was total disrespect, more undermining, and backdoor planning to transfer power to the Town Manager through Charter changes and deceptive exclusionary rhetoric.

My thoughts were this: how are we helping our citizens? No one I know is going to buy a $350,000.00 home. There was a very successful effort to provide affordable housing for wealthy people from Washington and Richmond while allowing Elkton citizens to pay for this with a 2.5 million dollar waste treatment facility, higher taxes, traffic and, most importantly, the loss of the hometown environment our great little Town offers. Mr. Donachy and Mr. Snow insisted we continue in the direction of achieving our financial needs by receiving funds per unit built. If the housing bubble bursts then Elkton is left with the bill. This is not Angler's fault as they only dealt with issues that were on the table. It was our responsibility to have had a focused, resolute agenda with all the issues on the table. Protecting our current citizens should have been a priority. Then we should have hired a qualified, knowledgeable professional to negotiate. I requested this and was denied.

We have 30 days to work on this situation. We have been successful in the past. We should meet with our Town's people and ask their views, compile more information, and try to solve these very important issues which will affect our quality of life in our Town forever. I am angry. I tried to stop this freight train and was ignored. I declined to sign the last contract because we needed to solve these issues and others. Mr. Snow signed it and sent it anyway. We cannot be successful by deceptive tactics, holding private meetings, alienation of duly elected officials, and forming allegiances with clients for our own selfish gain.

Vice Mayor Snow had a one word reply to the Mayor's statement: "Poppycock."

Council member Dean had additional comments. "I have sat here and listened to that stuff. I was at that Board meeting and, people, guess what? The County gave approval for Quail Run. The County gave approval for Woodbridge. The County gave approval for Windsong Hills. The County did the zoning in Elkwood. The County did the zoning on the Fields' property, and the County set that trailer at the Middle School because the Middle School is overcrowded. Elkton has not built a house on any of those properties. The County says they need another high school. Guess where they are going to put it – between Peak View and Harrisonburg. We are working with the School Board trying to solve the school problem that was handed to us. Mike Breeden and Dan Breeden knew this property was coming in line. If they had a problem with their schools, they should have come to us. We didn't create the problem; the problem was created for us. Now we are expected to solve it. Give us a break. We can't do but so much."

Council member Pence addressed the Mayor: "Wayne, when we discuss this, you need to step down from that hammer and give it to somebody else before you can comment on anything."

Council member Sigafoose moved, second by Council member Workman, and carried to adjourn the Public Hearing

YEAS: J. Dean, T. Pence, S. Sigafoose, R. Snow, and P. Workman

Motion carried (5 – 0 roll call)

Mayor: _____
Wayne E. Printz, Mayor

Recorder: Richard D. Carey, CMC
Richard D. Carey, Clerk