

Comments for the Public Hearing on the Water Supply Plan

November 19, 2007

Good evening

I am here tonight as a city resident to ask you, as you decide how to proceed with the water supply plan, to put the welfare of the city as your highest priority.

While the current plan may be good for the county and good for The Nature Conservancy, it is not good for the city. The price is simply too high.

Which may sound odd since we haven't yet been told how much the city will have to pay. We do know it will be some part of 143 million dollars.

But that is hardly the whole cost to city residents. And when it's done, we won't have any more water than what we have today. Not because it won't be available – rather because we don't need more water. In fact, the city is likely to use even less water in the future.

So, for this, what are we being asked to give up - besides some undisclosed amount of money.

For starters, 180 acres of mature forest in a city-owned recreational area at the Ragged Mountain Natural Area. It is clearly the most ecologically important of our city parks, arguably of the county too.

But that's not all -- they also want you to agree to give up our supply of the cleanest and clearer water in the city system. Because they are going to cut off the pipeline that links the city to the Sugar Hollow Reservoir – which you own. Which also means we lose direct access to the 360 million gallons of water in the SHR.

But that's not the only reservoir you need to give up.

Part of the plan is also to abandon the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir (SFRR). In your packet today, Mr. Frederick notes that fully 30% of the new water at the new Ragged Mountain Reservoir is needed just to make up for the loss at South Fork when we let it silt in. I don't need to tell you that not only is the SFRR the largest part of our current water system, it is a valuable recreational facility in this community. And according to the current plan, SFRR will be gone.

So now we've given up:
Some undisclosed amount of money
180 acres of parkland
The cleanest water in the system
The Sugar Hollow Reservoir.
And the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir

Why would we agree to this?

They'll try to tell you it's this or the James – that's simply not true. Right now there are options out there that haven't even been explored that could save all these assets.

Or you may hear, it's too late - we already approved the plan – that doesn't hold water either. City council approved a different plan in 2003 that never happened. In fact this plan changed dramatically at the last minute – and it can change again. You can make that happen.

Thank you.