

Community Forum

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Rappahannock Record
Kilmarnock, VA

Let's work together

I acknowledge Lancaster County resident and employer William Barnhardt and the extraordinary generosity propelling all of the bold and nimble actions of the grassroots, not-for-profit Save The Rappahannock Coalition along with its many enthusiastic supporters who turned out in their support at the last Lancaster board of supervisors meeting.

Now, We The People who live and work in 'river country' communities around our iconic Robert O. Norris Bridge have recovered our God-given right to be heard and to have our legitimate concerns considered, instead of being ignored by Dominion Virginia Power in its headlong rush to proceed with putting up gigantic, ugly, industrial towers (without consulting any of us or consider-

ation for the permanent impact such a visual blight would have on our shared viewscape for the entire region). With 2016 as the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Leedstown Resolves by our fore bearers and ancestors, we too take a united stand and raise our voices, to champion the shared values we hold dear as a community.

When board of supervisors chairman Jason Bellows asked constituents for help to stop Dominion. While our board of supervisors and the coalition incurred almost equal expenses in the process, the coalition achieved the resonating victory for all of us.

Independently, the Save The Rappahannock Coalition has already managed to raise funds covering more than half. The Lancaster County Economic Development Authority, in a strong vote of confidence, recently contributed \$20,000,

in recognition and appreciation for their efforts.

With the board of supervisors and citizens of the community working together in harmonious cooperation, the momentum is building. We are excited and encouraged by this. Let's carry it forward.

**J. Ethan Brent,
Irvington**

Tower opposition needs your support

The Lancaster board of supervisors has declined a request by Save the Rappahannock Coalition ("No Towers") to pay a portion of the costs incurred in the fight to prevent Dominion Power from installing monstrous steel towers across the Rappahannock River.

Those towers will carry power lines, replacing smaller towers alongside the Norris Bridge.

Every resident who prizes the scenic beauty of the Chesapeake Bay and Rappahannock River, and every visitor crossing the Norris Bridge is directly affected by Dominion's scheme. A casual onlooker will quickly appreciate the ugliness created by the new towers.

"No Towers" has had remarkable success, thanks to experts in engineering, conservation and legal matters. Dominion's effort to ram this project through has been derailed. Dominion has to address all issues before the State Corporations Commission, which may find that "No Towers" is correct, and the power lines must be run underwater, rather than being suspended from massive towers which destroy the

pristine viewshed permanently.

Another advantage of the underwater installation is that it will entail removal of the old towers, power cables, and supports which are visual detriments.

The tower structure proposed by Dominion involves massive piers and bulkheading under the center span of the bridge, creating burdens on vessel navigation, and disruptive effects on oyster grounds and other seabed features.

The view from the Norris Bridge never grows old—it is a delight and a curiosity on every trip across it, and a wonderful welcome to visitors and residents alike. It is by far the #1 entry point into Lancaster County. Don't let Dominion ruin it. Write a check to Save the Rappahannock Coalition now.

**Michael E. Merrill,
Irvington**

Blame it on the supervisors

When you cross the Robert O. Norris Bridge, sometime in the future, and a phalanx of Dominion Power towers destroys your view of our beautiful Rappahannock River, you can blame the Lancaster board of supervisors.

The supervisors are on record as opposing the towers in favor of underground cables. But they have taken no action to fight Dominion Power, a multi-million-dollar corporation with political clout. Instead, the board voted 4-1 last week to deny a mere \$20,000 to help the Save the Rappahannock Coalition, a grass-roots citizens' group formed to fight Dominion, with legal bills that now total about \$70,000.

I have never heard such whining and lame excuses by our elected representatives to avoid doing their duty. Only Jason Bellows, who was involved in organizing the "No Towers" protest while board chairman last year, voted to support the citizens.

To me, the supervisors seemed to resent Bellows and the citizens for taking the lead without them. One by one, they whined that they should have had some say over how money was spent. But there was only one possible action—hiring competent lawyers to fight Dominion.

The coalition was quickly formed last year when Dominion was discovered forging ahead to erect the towers without public discussion. Dominion almost succeeded, bypassing State Corporation Commission scrutiny by claiming the proposal was maintenance. A big barge was moved in to start drilling.

The owner of Willaby's restaurant near the bridge and the coalition citizens, using their money, stopped Dominion in its tracks. The barge is gone. The SCC ruled that Dominion's proposal was new construction, subject to SCC approval.

The supervisors could have followed their chairman's lead at any time. Instead, the petulant four chose to whine and make lame excuses at the expense of tourism and the public's scenic welfare.

**Jack Chamberlain,
Lancaster**