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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting, Tuesday, April 18, 2023

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- Official meeting video (Prince William County, Granicus): https://pwcgov.granicus.com/player/clip/3296
- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): https://www.pwcva.gov/department/board-county-supervisors

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[00:00:10] Good evening. It is 7.30 on Tuesday, April 18th. For those who wish, please join me in a moment of silence. Thank you.

[00:00:27] If we could all rise for the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:00:44] Thank you. We have a short agenda tonight, And we are going to lead off that agenda with item number three, public comment time. Tonight, we have 10 people signed up for at least in-person public comment time.

[00:01:03] We probably have people also online. Let's see. Each speaker will have three minutes to share their views and opinions regarding matters before the board. We ask that all speakers state their name and magisterial district or generally where they reside at the beginning of their remarks.

[00:01:19] After the first 15 minutes of in-person public comments, we will close the in-person sign-up list. Madam Chair, do I read this now or is it late? You read it before markup. Markup, okay. Sorry about that. Excuse me. No worries. Well, you probably could read it now. We could probably cover the whole evening, but we'll wait and do it before markup.

[00:01:34] With that, let me call the first five speakers. Allie Stoger, Ken Meinelson, Nicholson, Teresa Minns, Sharon Danner, and Erica Romo. Alley Stoger, Gainesville District. The red bar that you can see represents 31 million square feet

[00:02:12] of data center space already zoned in Gainesville, Haymarket, and Bristow. The tiny green and purple bars represent what's been built or is operational in those communities. Less than 1% of what has been zoned has been built. Against this backdrop, we know we already have data center problems and red flags. Great Oak and Regency apartments have terrible 24-7 data center noise. Amberley,

[00:02:45] the international poster child of worst possible data center zoning. Horrible jackhammering, including on Saturdays and Sundays from the nearby Mango campus. And that's not even the campus that's going to engulf this community. Citizens exhibiting anxiety, depression, Insomnia, as they understand that once the construction noise ends, and it's going to take years before it ends, the 24-7 data center noise will start.

[00:03:19] Village Place and I-66-29-10 Tech Park, 10 mega data centers with the likelihood of 1,000 industrial HVAC chillers on the rooftops at the corner of 55 and Kithopan.

[00:03:36] And no one bothered to do a noise study for the adjacent community. These areas will likely face the same problems as Amberley, Great Oak, and Regency. Atlantic Research, EPA Toxic Superfund Site.

[00:03:54] Prince William County citizens near this area need EPA confirmation that the heavy construction for 10 more megacenters won't trigger release of toxic particles, especially since portions of this site are one-half mile from Gainesville High School. Gainesville Crossing, trees decimated with a huge concrete monolith that is only one-seventh of the final status of that campus. Picture this scene repeated 15 times on the Prince William Digital Gateway and all over huge swaths of

[00:04:33] Gainesville, and Bristol. Don't believe those QTS marketing materials. This will not be a few pretty wind turbines and smiling faces. This will be environmental and construction havoc. We are not just seeing the tip of the iceberg for data center problems. We are seeing a dot on the tip of the iceberg, and there are red flags all over this. We need to stop the frenzy, develop rules and

[00:05:06] regulations and fix the problems of zoning before we zone even one more. Next speaker please. Good evening Ken Michelson, Coles District. So Madam Chair, members, Honorable Members of the County Board of Supervisors, my name is Ken Michelson like I said before and I'm currently the President of Prince William Crew Association. Based on my understanding and review of last week's board meeting, the Honorable Kenny Bodie requested that perhaps there was funding available to

[00:05:46] conduct a feasibility study. What I'd like to do is just wrap a little bit more context around that. When we talk about a boathouse, what I review or what I see is a multi-purpose year-round facility that's capable of not only supporting the rowing community, as well as other things, and provide economic impact into the community.

[00:06:09] How we do that is through corporate events, other gatherings, events that fall after weddings and receptions and banquets and those type things, which would increase the number of people that we have in staying in hotels, our services industry, transportation, all those types of things.

[00:06:39] To put some numbers around it, just this spring alone, we will have 27 colleges row on the Occoquan River. When those colleges come to visit, they stay in hotels. When they have hotel rooms, it's two students to a room. That equates to, based off of my market research around the Potomac Mills Mall area, the low end is $100 a night, high end is $150 a night, which transcribes into roughly $125 a night as the median.

[00:07:13] If I take 10% off based on high-volume registrations, that's $115 per night. When UMass was here just over a month ago, they brought 33 rowers, six support staff. They stayed in hotels for a week, and their budget was $38,000.

[00:07:32] And that money went all into the local economy. We had UMass. We had URI, University of Rhode Island. We had a private school that came down for seven days that also put $43,000. They brought down 70 rowers to row on the Occoquan.

[00:07:49] My request of you as the County Board of Supervisors is to put partisan politics aside when you're reviewing this. Drop the lines between each one of your districts. Understand that the Occoquan is a resource that we have.

[00:08:05] It's noted as one of the best rowing venues on the East Coast. We have 12 miles of protected waterway to row on. We can make an impact economically into the community, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:08:21] Next speaker, please. Theresa Min's, the Potomac District. I'm here to remind you that we have major betrayal going on throughout America, and unfortunately, it is our politicians that are betraying us with the help of George Soros and China, okay?

[00:08:42] George Soros is within the Democrat Party, and you know I call out the Republicans, too. There's betrayal, and one of the things that upset me at the last meeting was when you all were bringing up about what we need to do for opioids.

[00:09:01] It's hard for me to say that word. Well, you know what? Knock off the open borders, because open borders support drugs, sex trafficking, cartels, and everybody's getting a kickback.

[00:09:17] You think I trust our politicians? No way. Our politicians want to live like the elite. No. You're living off the taxpayers' money. And every time you plan something, it is our dime. You all are looking for a major raise on this board.

[00:09:35] Well, you know who deserves the raise? Right here. The sheriff's law enforcement. Stop smiling, Wheeler. I don't like to see you. They're the ones. And you want to know why I call her out? Because at the last meeting, Franklin Wheeler and Bailey, when the Republicans had something to say, they were talking, You should have seen them laughing when the Republicans dared to open their mouth.

[00:10:00] So if you choose not to vote for Republicans for the board next year, we will suffer. Now, these Republicans, they know I call them out. I call them out all the time. They do not get a free pass with me. But unfortunately, Democrats are worse, okay?

[00:10:19] Just calling it like it is. Once again, when you're blowing our money, when you're blowing money, it is the taxpayer. And when you're harassing people that don't deserve to be harassed, I want to see the tables turn and you get the same kind of treatment that the Democrats love dishing out.

[00:10:39] Like the DA rag up in New York. Isn't that wonderful? But we have a lot of Democrats in office thanks to George Soros and China. I know I'm missing. Oh, and morality. Morality doesn't exist.

[00:10:57] And unfortunately, some of our churches are going woke. When you go and support all these sex changes and pedophilia and all that, that's morality. You have thrown the Bible out the door. Thank you for your time and stop wasting our tax dollars and stop giving yourself a raise.

[00:11:20] Law enforcement deserves a raise. Next speaker, please. My name is Sharon Danner. I reside on Cove Lane in Montclair and Supervisor Bailey's district. I've lived here for around 40 years.

[00:11:38] I'm a leader in Virginians organized for interfaith community engagement through my involvement with St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, which is a founding member institution. I'm here to lend my support for increased funding for our Public Defender's Office.

[00:11:55] I urge you all to fully support the increase in the county's supplement from the current 15% to a minimum of 25%. This is so important to strengthen the Public Defender's Office and to ensure its vital role in our community in the present and for the future.

[00:12:17] As a person of faith, I support this funding increase because of my personal commitment to justice. There is no justice when a defendant does not have access to competent legal representation. There is no justice when only those who have money can hire a defense attorney.

[00:12:35] voice worked hard to bring to help the public defender's office to our country our county and we want to see it continue to be successful thank you very much board for your support and leadership and prioritizing the public defender's office and the fiscal year 2024 budget thank you for all you do thank you and before our next speaker comes up i want to call up the second five kathy carne

[00:13:07] or Kane, Keith Savage, John Stirrup, Alicia Gloss, and Alan Gloss. Please proceed. Please proceed.

[00:13:31] Thank you very much. Good afternoon. My name is Erika Romo, and I'm here today. I live in Lake Ridge. I am very, very, I'm a very happy person, and I love Prince William. So today I'm here because I want to invite everyone, if possible, to remember the importance of integrating the Hispanic and people all over Prince William. I think that we're growing so much and we are becoming a part,

[00:14:06] a very important part of the community all around us. And today I'm here because I represent also the TV show, Panorama Latino TV, and we've been having the show for over 20 years, so it's been great. What do we do? Well, we'll help out the community. We are very blessed because we have the opportunity to be supported by the police department or the fire department, the sheriffs and everyone. What do we do? We communicate to the Spanish community everything that's going on

[00:14:42] in the Prince William County. For us, it's extremely important to let everybody know what's happening what's going on but we do it in obviously in spanish and that's where we need more support we need support to get panorama latino to keep going and we want to ask everybody who wants to talk about important subjects to the spanish community to come over to us and let us help you as well because we need to continue working hard we need to continue getting this tv show out we also have other medias that we use as well because we do want to communicate with everyone

[00:15:20] and I think it's vital. So Panorama Latino, we have a non-profit organization as well which is Hispanic Outreach and Cultural Diversity Education. It's a 501c3. So we would like to ask for help as well

and supporting this non-profit organization so we can still continue to produce this TV show which we consider extremely important so I'm here just to thank everyone that considers us as part of your community as well and that we are part of the community and that we want to

[00:15:54] keep working very hard very hard to help everyone and we just need to keep going and we're positive about it and well we're here to help you as well that's all thank you thank you very much next speaker, please. My name is Catherine Coray, and I live right outside of Haymarket in the Gainesville district. For the past 13 years, almost, my husband and I have lived in this county, and we voted in

[00:16:31] this county, and we bought a house in this county, and we started a family in this county. And my husband and I have both been public defenders for most of our careers. He's in Winchester, and I'm here as the senior trial attorney at the Prince William office. I'm here in this office because like you guys, I believe in helping my community. And the only difference is that I do it one client at a time. We, my family and I, believe in this county and we have made it our home. We have a

[00:17:10] six-year-old son. His name is Jack and he likes riding his bike to James Long Park. And he likes going to the Haymarket Gainesville Library and playing on that little wooden tractor in the kid's room. And next year, he's going to start Pennington right near the courthouse. And Jack is cute, and he's sweet, and he is extremely expensive. And my husband and I both expected that, right? Like, it is not any well-kept secret that child care in Northern Virginia

[00:17:42] is an arm and a leg right so we waited to have him until we were more established in our careers and for us that was 100 the right choice and i don't regret it a bit but that is not a decision that other people should have to make if you're a young attorney or you're a staff member at the public defender's office and you want a family what are your options you marry somebody who's

[00:18:14] rich, or you move to Spotsylvania or to Winchester where the prices are lower, or you go to the Loudoun Public Defender's Office or the Fairfax Public Defender's Office, or you work in private practice. And I've been there, and I've done those things, and I chose to come here. But the problem is younger attorneys and younger employees should not be forced to make that decision. We, as a community have already said that we value having a strong, capable public defender's office. And we

[00:18:52] as a community cannot risk losing that talent, dedication, and community activism that our younger attorneys bring. We all want the same thing, for Prince William County to be a great place to live and to work and to raise a family. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of my son for already giving us a supplement, and I hope that you increase it this coming cycle.

[00:19:20] Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening. Keith Savage. I reside in Nicole's district. To Chair Wheeler, to the entire board, to the county executive and county attorney, it is good to be here with you and to everyone who's here in person and who is online. I am a proud citizen of Prince William County. I've been a citizen here for over 20 years. I'm also proud to be a local pastor who fulfills the fullness of my clergy call and commitment to be priestly and prophetic and caring about our neighbors I'm also glad that I'm here as the co-chair of one of I

[00:19:56] believe in my opinion one of the greatest non-partisan social change organizations known as voice and so I want to continue in aligning with the young lady who just spoke before me I do want to thank this board for the incredible work you've done you've created great work in the initial supplement of 15 percent of what we have for the Public Defender's Office.

[00:20:16] And I want to ask that you continue that great support by increasing it to at least 25 percent for the Public Defender's Office. Public defenders are the champions who strive to be David when Goliath shows up. Without adequate funding, support for public defense, and equitable system of justice is just illusory rights. And for this board, it means believing in a system of justice that properly funds public defense to ensure the promise to provide competent counsel is more than

[00:20:51] just a good intention, but comes to fruition. Without it, our criminal legal system is doomed to violate people's rights. I want to finish by telling you something the newest U.S. Supreme Court Justice Katandri Brown Jackson said on this topic. She said, public defenders do not get to pick their clients. They have to represent whoever comes in. It is a service. That is what you do as a public defender, and you are standing up for the Constitution and the value of representation. And I want to say to this board, thank you for continuing to recognize the value

[00:21:30] of that representation in our budget and I'm so grateful. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Next speaker please. Thank you. I'm John Stirrup, Gainesville District. First I'd like to congratulate publicly Supervisor Weir on your election to the board. I hadn't had an opportunity to do that in public space before. I also want to congratulate Supervisor Lawson for stepping forward and announcing her candidacy for board chair. Leadership, transparency, and common sense public

[00:22:05] policy have been lacking at the board for quite some time. Recently, Chief Newsom, Police Chief Newsom, came and presented to the board about the increase in crime in the county. I place the increase in crime squarely on the five Democrats that sit on the board. I call it the trifecta of failure. The first leg of the trifecta is defund the police. Defund the police. Now, I recognize that perhaps not any of the Democrats on the board have actually said that statement publicly.

[00:22:41] However, you own it. Your party owns it, and it's the major reason that many jurisdictions throughout this country do not have the full complement of their sworn police officers. It's because they know that their elected officials do not have their back.

[00:22:56] The second leg of the trifecta of failure is Commonwealth's attorneys and prosecutors who operate what I call a catch-and-release program. Now, that's not a bad policy if you happen to be a bass fisherman, But it's a terrible and tragic policy if you're dealing with criminals and putting the public at risk.

[00:23:18] And then the third and final leg of the trifecta is your abandonment of the 287G program. When I served on the board, I initiated this program, this partnership with the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE. and we worked with ICE where the program, every suspect arrested post-arrest would be asked the question if they were here in this country illegally. The vast majority admitted it immediately. Once that was determined, that information would be transported to ICE.

[00:23:53] They'd make the determination based on the crime or the severity of the crime or the numbers of crimes that this individual committed, whether they would be deported after completing their sentence in the U.S. From 2007 to 2019, we did that thousands of times. Thousands. And crime dropped dramatically in this county. In 2019, the majority of the board switched from the Republicans to the Democrats. And you chose not to renew the program. We are going to take a recess.

[00:24:36] Good evening. We are back from recess. Mr. Shorter, would you like to make a short announcement and then thank you thank you madam madam chair and board just want to acknowledge that we have all witnessed a medical emergency this evening I want to first thank the first responders who were here tonight what we saw in this response was absolutely amazing and we want to thank you very

[00:25:08] much we were madam chair also briefed in the in the back for those the men and who are here tonight who would like some additional support we do have some

[00:25:45] staff from fire and rescue including chaplains if you would like to to provide if you if you would like some additional support I'd also just want to for those at home just acknowledge that we in this room for those who are present tonight we just went through a lot and we will we just want to acknowledge again for the men and women who need some or would like some additional support it is here for you and that is all manager thank you mr.

[00:26:21] shorter and we have come to the decision that it would be better just given the even just the emotional upset for for us and the things we have to do tonight we are going to recess and reconvene on Thursday night at 7:30 to continue hearing from the public we're in the middle of public comment time and then we'll continue with budget markup on Thursday at 7:30 we're gonna go into a recess thank you all for coming out tonight take care

