

March 20, 2012

At a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at Charley's Waterfront Café, 201-B Mill Street, Farmville, VA, on Tuesday, the 20th day of March, 2012; at 12:00 noon, there were present:

William G. Fore, Jr.	Mayor Sydnor Newman, Jr.
Howard M. Campbell	Dr. Edward I. Gordon
Pattie Cooper-Jones	Donald L. Hunter
Don C. Gantt, Jr.	Thomas B. Pairet
Charles W. McKay	A. D. "Chuckie" Reid
Howard F. Simpson	Sally B. Thompson
Jim R. Wilck	David E. Whitus

Absent: Robert M. Jones, Otto S. Overton

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Gerald J. Spates, Farmville Town Manager; Sarah E. Puckett, Assistant County Administrator.

Chairman Fore and Mayor Newman called the governing bodies to order at 12:00 noon.

Chairman Fore stated:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I wish to thank Town Council, Gerry Spates and all of our guests for joining us today for this special joint meeting. The Board enjoys having the opportunity to meet with Council, especially when we have something to celebrate.

I think today is a celebration, because Joe Elton, Director of Virginia State Park, and Eric Houglund, Manager of High Bridge Trail State Park, are going to update us on the development of the Park and share with us how close we are to the opening of High Bridge.

It was in February of 2003 that we first learned that Norfolk Southern might abandon the Burkeville to Pamplin rail line through Farmville. Since that time, our community and our friends at Virginia State Parks have worked hard to make rails-to-trails a reality.

I believe that High Bridge will become a crown jewel in our community's tourism development program. And I am confident that High Bridge Trail State Park will generate untold economic opportunity for Prince Edward County and the Town of Farmville.

Please help me welcome Joe Elton and Eric Houglund.

Supervisor McKay offered the invocation.

After lunch, Chairman Fore turned the program over to Eric Houghland.

Supervisor Campbell left at this time.

Mr. Houghland expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to present the information regarding High Bridge. He said High Bridge will be open in a few weeks; however a specific date has not yet been set. A Grand Opening celebration is targeted for mid-May.

Mr. Houghland stated the entire park is 31 miles long, from Pamplin to Burkeville. He said the Park will continue to grow, and will provide an asset to all communities. He expressed appreciation for the efforts and support of the Town of Farmville and Prince Edward County has shown over the course of the project.

Supervisor Wilck stated spikes from the original tracks are available for sale at the Visitor's Center.

Councilwoman Thompson asked if the Night Walks on the trail would be held this year; Mr. Houghland stated there will be Night Walks this summer.

Supervisor McKay asked if there are plans to connect Twin Lakes State Park with High Bridge Trail State Park; Mr. Houghland said it is identified in the master plan as a pursuit at some point.

Councilman Gordon asked if there is cell phone service along the trail; Mr. Houghland said there is service along the entire trail, with one exception. The "dead zone" is where Route 610 crosses the trail on the east side of the county.

Mr. Joe Elton shared a brief history of the state park system. He said the Virginia State Park System is one of the best managed in the country. He said the history associated with this area will draw people not only from all over the country, but from all over the world. Mr. Elton commended the Town and County's staff for their assistance in the efforts made by the Park. Mr. Elton then thanked Del. Watkins Abbitt for his efforts in promoting and nurturing the project.

Mr. Elton stated within a year, approximately 100,000 people will have been on High Bridge; within three years, 250,000; within five years, 500,000 people; and within ten years, a million people a year. He added that estimate is conservative.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones left the meeting at this time.

(The Farmville Town Council and the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors then visited High Bridge.)

On motion of Supervisor Wilck and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	William G. Fore, Jr.	Nay: None
	Don C. Gantt, Jr.	
	Charles W. McKay	
	Howard F. Simpson	
	Jim R. Wilck	

Absent: Robert M. Jones, Howard M. Campbell, Pattie Cooper-Jones

the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.