



Discussion of the Crozet population resolution at the July 5, 2006 meeting of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

PUBLIC COMMENT

These are excerpts from two of the eleven speakers that spoke on the Crozet population resolution at the beginning of the Board meeting. Both Mary Rice and David Wayland asked the Board not to approve the resolution.

Mary Rice—Crozet area resident and appointed member of County’s Crozet Advisory Council

“It was clear from these reports that citizens thought the projected population was going to be 12000....The County never came back to the citizens and said, ‘No you’ve got it wrong, that’s only 20 years.’ So the master plan came out and we were all as satisfied as we could be. There was and is the place type map with all those colored squares indicating the different Crozet transect types with different range of densities associated with them. The consultants created that map. Well no citizens, and it turns out no one in the County really looked hard at those colored squares. We didn’t understand at that time, and I don’t think the County understood at that time, there was a range of densities and what the consultants included in the draft master plan, which was Appendix B which is now out of the plan, showed a total of about 4,500 homes which equals about 10,694 people—doesn’t include north area of downtown. We thought o.k. 12,000 people. So you could imagine our surprise after the Old Trail rezoning when we were told that those figures from the consultants were just an estimate and they were not correct....”

David Wayland—President of Crozet Community Association and appointed member of County’s Crozet Advisory Council

“If you think you are helping Crozet by passing this resolution, I feel you are mistaken. I see this resolution as a blank check that you are asking us in Crozet to endorse. A blank check allowing uncontrolled growth in Crozet for unlimited years to come....We and many others believe this resolution allows you to subvert the master plan and the stated wishes and desire of... today’s residents of Crozet. It allows our community to be so built out that it will destroyed in a matter of time....”

BOARD DISCUSSION

Podcast: http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2006/07/supervisors_dis.html

These excerpts are from the discussion by the Board of Supervisors on the Crozet population resolution. No resolution was passed.

Supervisor Dennis Rooker (Jack Jouett)

“There are a number of points where things don’t seem to connect correctly. One is that population projections are a theoretical, they are not actual. And there is also this presumption that every lot is going to be built out in a short period of time. In fact, Crozet has had by-right development potential, I assume it must have been around 9,000 before any rezonings had been entertained lately. The comprehensive plan [that existed] before the master plan was approved provided for, if you want to use these theoretical determinations, provided for an additional population of something like 17,000, additional over and above the 3,000 that was existing. So that puts you at 20,000 before you ever pass the master plan. But the presumption in all these theoretical determinations of population... is that virtually every piece of land get built out to its maximum potential density under the comprehensive plan, and it doesn’t happen....”

“We had in the information that went out during the master planning process, there were discussions of population and build out and what that meant, and I think that there was misleading information that went out. I myself didn’t completely understand how we were getting to the population numbers, and what we have is an inconsistency between the potential total build out if every piece of land develops to its maximum potential and some numbers that were mentioned during presentations to the public prior to the adoption of the plan. To me it is unfortunate that it occurred, but where we are now is you’ve got about 12,000, the build out of Crozet today with no further rezonings, ever, is about 12,500, if you want to call it that....If you’re going to say that numbers going to be 12,500 well, what you’re saying is that there will never be another piece of land rezoned in Crozet, whether or not that rezoning request matches the master plan perfectly. If we go down the road of saying the maximum population number of Crozet is 12,500, that’s what it means and I think we need to understand that and it means that the master plan will not be realized, because we will not have the capacity to require anyone to do anything since they’re not seeking re-zonings. That’s the dilemma. I’m not weighing in right now on either side. I’m just saying that we need to understand our dilemma.”

Supervisor Sally Thomas (Samuel Miller)

“I’d just like to elaborate on one side of that dilemma which is we talk about—sometimes the master plan gets talked about as if this is some developers dream and in fact this wasn’t the developers dream, although some developers participated, this was the community’s dream and I’m looking at the colored map that we all have seen lots of times. Those colors resulted from people drawing pictures saying what kind of community they would like to live in, of what they would like to see Crozet become, and so they wanted certain population centers, they wanted to have things they could walk to from where they presently live or where the new houses were going to be, so that’s

kind of the embodiment of the dream. At the same time, but separated from it, was this overriding conversation whenever anyone cared to talk about numbers of 12,000, 12,500. The fact that the two things don't fit together has given rise to the discrepancy in the figures, to the feeling that somebody pulled a fast one somewhere, but it also presents us with a huge dilemma because if we're faced with a rezoning in a place that's purple on this map and we say that's what the community said in the master plan, they'd really like to see a commercial district, and we rezone it to that, and yet are faced with, well, by making that commercial and mixed use and adding a greater density of housing you're going against the master plan because you're going to possibly increase the population beyond 12,000, then we're caught in this impossible situation...."

Supervisor David Slutzky (Rio)

"So far we are touching on many of the fundamental challenges that this Board faces in light of what is clearly a disconnect in the context of the master plan. But there's another piece of this that I don't want us to lose sight of and that's the relationship of the Crozet growth area to the rural areas. A number of years ago the Board could have chosen to, for example, downzone the rural areas in order to preserve the rural areas as they were instead they took a different tact. They decided what we're going to do is try and encourage good design of growth in a number of designated growth areas totaling only five percent of the County's acres, and in doing so hope to draw the development into those growth areas and in doing so keep it from populating the rural areas....[T]he idea was, well, let's develop some growth areas, try to make the growth areas wonderful, livable places. We'll concentrate our infrastructure there. We'll concentrate our population there and in doing so we'll preserve the rural areas but we won't downzone them because we choose not to...."

"When we decided to create the growth area in Crozet and go through a master planning exercise, there were a couple of variables that the public was to consider, one was the fundamental question of sort of form and design, what do we want this area to be like and that is a major dimension of the master planning process.. Do we want neighborhood model? Do we want mixed use? What are the things that we want, and the community reached a consensus on those issues and that is what the master plan reflects....I'm very sensitive to the fact that the public in Crozet is very clearly, not just disturbed, I mean they're perturbed, they're frustrated, some are even angry at the idea of Crozet building out much beyond 12,000 people. On the other hand I have great concerns about preserving the rural areas of the county and what I don't want us to do is to make the mistake, out of appropriate deference to the concerned voice of the citizens of Crozet is to in effect cap the population in Crozet at anything close to 12,000, without a reciprocal rural area protection strategy being implemented. Now, this fall we are going to consider serious rural area protection ideas. There are other ones, like down zoning, that we could also consider at that time. But absent having anything beyond our current rural area protections in place, my fear is if we put a ceiling in any form, even if it's a signal of intent in a resolution if we, in a sense, take the public's concerns, they don't want Crozet to grow beyond 12,000 and we articulate that back through resolutions and behavior where in effect we are electing to limit the population density in Crozet to anything close to 12,000 people, given the fact that the already

existing by-right developments in Crozet would aggregate I believe greater than 12,000 or around 12,000 we'd be, in effect, profoundly limiting the opportunity to support any development activity in the growth area of Crozet and my fear is, that what we get is the unintended consequence of having more proliferation of growth in the rural areas surrounding Crozet and in the rest of the county and to me that's a major concern. So, I would submit to this board that this issue of the population limits on Crozet is an important one that we need to consider both as we do other master plans, you know, lets not get bitten twice, and we probably do need to go back to the community at point of the review stage in the Crozet master plan or possibly even sooner than that to resolve the issues of what is going to be the maximum population density of Crozet, but I wouldn't want to go down that path until we have properly attended to the rural area protection side of that coin, because I fear what we'll do is by being deferential to a near term fear it will create a whole different negative dynamic."

Supervisor David Wyant (White Hall)

"One discussion I keep hearing over and over from the citizens is maintain Crozet. What was Crozet and what is it going to look like? I'm concerned that this is not going to look like the Crozet that I knew a year ago or five years ago or even fifty years ago. I know its not going to look like it did, but we need to have that discussion on how to maintain and that's why I have been harping about the ARB [Architectural Review Board] and the rezonings and everything to make the downtown work to keep the old downtown Crozet. I'm not sure that [the proposed resolutions are] going to accomplish that and that's a concern that these folks have had."

Supervisor Dennis Rooker (Jack Jouett)

"Even if we ratchet it back and we say that the twenty-year goal is 12,500, I think we need to be very cognizant of the fact that when we approve rezonings that: 1) we are taking it over that potential number in a twenty year period; and 2) are we approving rezonings that contribute to the fabric of this community first [i.e. ahead of other projects that do not]. It's a point I've been arguing for a while, and that's when you start approving projects on 250 and we start approving projects even though that little pocket might match the little pocket on the map, are we in effect using up the population? Are we in fact running the population numbers up without creating a sense of place, without assuring that the infrastructure is being built, and I would to suggest that we need to make certain that the rezonings we approve we think long and hard about, and that clearly over the next 10, 20 years those things are contributing significantly to the fabric of what that plan is, and primarily from the inside out and not the outside in, because we end up with a developed corridor along 250 that takes up all the population numbers we're willing to allow occur there over the next 10, 20 years, what have we accomplished? Basically we've created a community along 250, not in Crozet."

Supervisor Ken Boyd (Rivanna)

"But if you are going to do that you should make that clear to the development community. You should not lead them along....It's a complex issue that we're dealing with here and the thing I want to say to the people who are in the audience here is that I speak privately with these people and publicly with these people all the time and

everyone on this Board up here has very much recognized and listening to what the community of Crozet is saying to us and we're paying a lot of attention to it and we're talking to staff about it and we're trying to figure out a way that we can grow this community with the overall vision that we have and what we wanted to do. Now we could go back and say, OK we are going to scrap that whole plan. We're not going to do master planning and we're just going to go back to some other method. As David said we could go back to just restricting growth in the rural areas by down-zoning and say that's our approach to how we handle growth, but that's not what we decided to do. I'm not willing to give up our plan at this point, on the long range plan that we have, but my concern is that the people of Crozet think we are trying to do something behind closed doors, that we're trying to hide the facts from you. That's not the case. I wasn't here when the build out numbers were talked about. We've learned a lesson, we don't talk about build out numbers anymore. So on 29 North we are not talking about build out numbers. We are talking about the types of units we want and where we want them to be but we are not saying we're going to put a population cap, which is a thing I don't like to talk about anyway, because I don't think we can legislate procreation, and I don't think we can put a cap on population. So I guess what I'm trying to say is that this Board has a very detailed plan. It's a complicated plan, its not going to be accomplished easily. We are listening to you. We do hear what you are saying. There's no secret plan to run the population up to 24,000 in Crozet; the intent of this Board is to monitor that, to take this [under consideration] with each rezoning...."

Supervisor David Slutzky (Rio)

"My only concern with these two resolutions, I think its important for this board to make some kind of statement of intent to communicate with the public and these are a way to do it. My concern is the following, given that we don't have any shackles on the rural area growth, other than the enticement that the growth areas could represent, I'm very concerned that when the public met during the master planning process in Crozet and addressed the form and design issues that they wanted their community to look like they designed their place that they would want to live in, and that designed place as written, if built out to the absurd extreme, could be 24,000 people. That was the form that the community did give us. I suspect that in 2009 when the five year review is up, that the Crozet community may well want to revisit not just the form but the form and the aggregate, because it has implications for population and for build out that perhaps were not fully understood by everybody at the time, and it wouldn't surprise me if Crozet in 2009 during the review process gives significant input that says we like the sense of place that we designed but we want to scale back the densities over here, over here, over here, so that what we end up with has the feel that we wanted in 2004, and now that we are appreciating better the nuance of population and build out, it has some limits therein. My fear though, as a Board if we say alright, for the near term until that plan is revisited at the 5 year review point, we're going to almost never, or never, approve projects in the growth area because by definition they put us over this 12,000 population....So I caution this board to be careful, to be deferential, and appropriately so, to the community's concerns about population explosion in Crozet, but I'm thinking probably the appropriate way to do that absent tight rural area protections that we are going to entertain this fall, absent those, we probably are better off honoring the form of

design and densities that are in the master plan as is and not shackle ourselves by saying, oh and we'll also limit the population to 12,000, even though you've done a plan that in some ways contemplates doubling that...."

Supervisor Dennis Rooker (Jack Jouett)

"David, there is only so much demand for housing, county-wide, and only so much of that is going to go towards Crozet, and we have already approved re-zonings that provide for a large number of additional units in Crozet. In fact, the builder in Old Trail has said that he now projects a 30 year build out for Old Trail. I think part of the question here is ... if you read this master plan in the way that staff urges, the expected build out over 20 years is about 12,000. Over 20 years, the population might increase to 12,000 or so. Given the fact that demand for units is limited, shouldn't we approve re-zonings at this point only when we're certain that those re-zonings are going to contribute significantly to the fabric of what we're trying to create in Crozet; rather than creating isolated pockets of potential development around Crozet that don't necessarily tie together, that in and of themselves contribute little to the infrastructure of Crozet, the overall infrastructure, that's expected in that master plan. If we approve these isolated pocket developments that don't add a whole lot to the fabric of Crozet, that demand that's going to be in Crozet is going to be utilized in creating areas that don't create to the overall fabric of the community."

Supervisor David Slutzky (Rio)

"Dennis ... I think that's making a mistake. If we limit what we will allow to happen in the growth area, if that's where we concentrate our limiting behaviors, but we are silent in the rural areas, I think what you are going to find is real sprawl happening in Albemarle County, and that's what I don't want to see happen...."

Supervisor Dennis Rooker (Jack Jouett)

"The logic here is that you've got about 3,000 units that have been rezoned in Crozet and not built. How much more should be put in there before that gets built out? How many more rezonings are we going to approve? I mean I can certainly—I'll probably support a rezoning that comes in that I think is contributing significantly to the infrastructure of Crozet and the master plan and adding something significant to the community, but in the absence of that I don't think that it helps the rural area when you've already got 3,000 units sitting in Crozet that if somebody wants to locate in the development area they can go to in addition to other areas of the county. I don't think you're going to lose or gain one unit in the rural area by approving an additional thousand or two thousand units in Crozet that are un-built."