

**Public Statement from the Albemarle County Planning Commission**

June 10, 2009

On May 28, 2009 the Free Enterprise Forum (FEF) released a report titled *Places 29 Reality Check Report*. The report contrasts an approach of discussing Places 29 costs in terms of current dollars with an approach using projected future dollars, with assumptions made by FEF about future increases. While we respect and understand FEF's approach in using assumptions about future increases to project costs into the future, the Planning Commission's intent was to provide as reliable an estimate as possible in terms of what we absolutely know, which is current dollar values. We certainly realize that there will be an escalation factor, as there would be with any road construction project envisioned for the future here in our community. We thoroughly discussed this very fact at our last work session on Places 29 on May 12, 2009 (at which FEF was present), a full two weeks prior to the FEF report release. We discussed and vetted the issue in a public venue and an open Planning Commission meeting which was duly recorded in our minutes for that meeting. These minutes are available to any interested member of the public for their review.

Given that, it was very concerning to us to read the comments in the statement which accompanied the release of the report, which portrayed the Planning Commission's approach as "beyond bad project management, it is deceitful." That is an irresponsible, accusatory, and false statement which is at odds with the type of civil discourse about critical community issues that FEF promotes by its mission. According to the FEF website, that mission is "providing clear positive balance to the discussions of important issues of the day." FEF's statement is not positive, balanced, or accurate.

We welcome FEF's continued involvement in and scrutiny of the Places29 Master Plan, as much is gained by energetic public engagement in this type of process and many suggestions from FEF and others have helped shape the plan to this point. We also hope that the tone of FEF's participation improves and becomes mutually respectful and mindful of the fact that reasonable and well-intentioned people can differ in how they view community issues.